



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Who framed Daniel Sancho?

**An analysis on the representation of crime (and reality) in the
news media**

Fátima Castro Franco

Supervisor: Fredrik Miegel

Examiner: Michael Bossetta

MSc in Media and Communication Studies

Spring 2024

Abstract

This thesis aims at exploring how reality is covered in the news media, by employing the murder of Edwin Arrieta, perpetrated by Daniel Sancho, as a case study. This particular incident was selected due to its extraordinariness and extremity, which made it the perfect base for this analysis both because of the richness of the material – exemplified in the 33 articles that composed the final sample of the analysis – and because of the generalizability of the findings obtained.

This research is grounded on four theoretical concepts – *news framing* by Robert Entman, *the society of the spectacle* by Guy Debord, *social typing* by Orrin E. Klapp, and *hyperreality* by Jean Baudrillard and Umberto Eco. Through a combination of frame analysis and qualitative textual analysis, this research explores the constructions of the individuals involved in this case, as well as the construction of the case itself, relating it to current general journalistic practices.

The findings obtained show a media paradigm in which the representation of the media is closer to reality than reality itself. Through the use of fictionalizing and spectacularizing narratives, focused on aspects like violence, sex or speculations, the news media crafts stories that will be appealing to the public, ensuring that their engagement will be long lasting. This thesis explores, therefore, how contemporary journalistic practices seem to be heading towards a state in which their construction of reality will take over the actual facts.

The field of crime was chosen to explore how news media frames reality due to its inherent controversy and spectacularity, which granted that the trends employed would be more obvious and explicit, thus allowing the research to be richer and as insightful as possible. However, the practices observed in the mediatic coverage of Daniel Sancho's case are potentially transferable to other areas of reality, and the consequences can be impactful.

Keywords: *journalism, crime, news media, framing, violence, spectacle, hyperreality, fictionalization, murder, news coverage.*

Table of contents

Abstract	2
1. Introduction	4
Why does this matter?	5
Research questions and aims	6
2. Literature review	7
2.1. Crime and the media	7
2.2. The spectacle of violence	8
2.3. High-profile cases & celebrities as criminals	10
2.4. Trial by the media	13
2.5. Murder as a genre: (true) crime in the media and its characteristics	16
3. Theoretical framework	18
3.1. News framing and media logics	18
3.2. Society of the spectacle	20
3.3. Social typing	22
3.4. Media's power	23
3.5. Hyperreality	24
4. Methodology & methods	25
The case	25
Sampling	27
Frame analysis and the news	28
Qualitative textual analysis	29
Analyzing the empirical material	30
5. The multiple frames of Daniel Sancho	31
5.1. Sancho (and Arrieta) as complex characters	32
The multiple identities of Daniel Sancho	33
A victimless victim	40
5.2. A case made spectacular	43
Violence	44
Speculations	46
Sex	49
Fictionalizing narratives	51
6. Conclusions	54
References	59
7. Appendix	70
7.1. Final sample of articles	70
7.2. Example of coding	76
7.3. Coding chart	76

1. Introduction

If at any point after the 5th of August of 2023 one turned on the TV or opened a newspaper in Spain, it was granted that they would encounter the case of the summer: the murder of Edwin Arrieta, committed by Daniel Sancho. A gruesome crime, perpetrated by someone fairly known to the public due to the fame of his family, committed for reasons unbeknownst and that also entailed several controversial aspects: the case combined different elements that ensured its popularity even before it made it to the news' spotlight. Most major media outlets put their focus on Koh Phangan, the Thai island where this case took place, and on the mystery, rather than of Edwin Arrieta's murder, of Daniel Sancho's behavior.

Firstly, an overview of the case is needed. Daniel Sancho, a 29-year-old Spanish chef, son of actor Rodolfo Sancho and grandson of another cinema legend, the late Sancho Gracia, murdered the 44-year-old Colombian surgeon Edwin Arrieta on the 3rd of August of 2023, during a trip they took together to Thailand. Of their relationship, not a lot is known: only that they had known each other for about a year before the crime happened, and that they had a relationship of complicated nature. There are numerous question marks in regards to the motivations of the crime, since Sancho had always been considered a stable, ordinary person within his relatively famous status. Although he confessed to having killed Arrieta a few days after the incident, the investigation is still ongoing – in fact, the trial only started on April 9th –, and there are still many unknowns to be unraveled. Moreover, the popularity of the case is still booming, as shown by the release of the documentary film *El Caso Sancho*, which premiered on HBOMax the same day the trial began.

The popularity of this case should not be surprising, for crime is one of the most popular genres that exists, whether it is in the form of fiction crime, true crime, or news about this issue (Cavender & Jurik, 2016). Crime as a genre has carved out an identity of its own (Seago & Lei, 2016), which is still easily recognizable despite all the changes it has been going through, achieving the overarching state of “globalised meta-genre” (Seago & Lei, 2014, p.315). For this reason, I thought it would be significant to explore how crime is reflected and framed in the news media, since it is also becoming one of the most popular topics within journalism.

The main issue at hand, however, is not the mediatic presence of crime, but the importance of how reality is framed in journalistic media. Given the state of “deep mediatization” that we are immersed in, where our conception and interpretation of reality is heavily influenced by the media and its infrastructure (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p.18), studying how it depicts the world, taking crime and the particular case of Daniel Sancho as an example, is as meaningful as it is relevant.

Why does this matter?

Media can be seen as a device that reproduces ideological, social and cultural types (Hunt & Jaworska, 2019), which might be assimilated by the public. This, paired with the fact that currently media is deeply embedded into our everyday lives (Silverstone, 2007), means that the impact it can have on the way we conceive reality is critical. Of special importance are the representations shared through the news media, particularly of individuals, for two main reasons: on one hand, these outlets have traditionally been considered a trustworthy medium, making the incorporation of ideas by the population smoother; by employing and giving relevance to certain “social, linguistic and other semiotic aspects of identity”, events and individuals are framed in a specific way, generally with the aim of perpetuating certain prevalent systems (Hunt & Jaworska, 2019, p.2). Media framing, then, is just another example of how power is executed (Meyrowitz, 2008).

Moreover, on the other hand, the way individuals are framed and represented in the news media can have long-lasting effects on their identity and public image. Once someone is ascribed a certain label in the public eye, it will stay with them indefinitely. A good example in the realm of crime is that of O.J. Simpson: when he recently passed away, in most news headlines his name appeared next to words like “murderer”, “trial of the century”, “accused of murdering his ex-wife” or “double homicide”; his identity as an actor and an athlete, two professions in which he excelled and that propelled him to fame, were relegated to the background. Although he was accused of murdering his wife, Nicole Brown-Simpson, and a friend of hers, Ron Goldman, almost thirty years ago – in 1994 –, and in spite of all of the professional success he gained before this case took place, in the public eye his name will forever be tied to the label of “murderer”.

Seeing the impact that mediatic framing can have both on individuals, in relation to their identity, and from a collective point of view, in terms of the sharing of discourses that contribute to the prevalence of hegemonic ideologies, an exploration of this practice can offer meaningful insights. By analyzing media frames, I am also analyzing social changes, trends and issues, since one tends to reflect the other.

Research questions and aims

This research aims to study how the news media frames reality, using crime as an example and a high profile murder as a case study, paying special attention to the way both victim and offender are represented, as well as to the practices employed in the construction of the murder narrative. An observation that has been done when exploring how media deals with crime issues is that it tends to rely on narratives that may trivialize and sensationalize the matter, giving priority to entertainment rather than to information. Furthermore, with this approach I also intend to explore how the framing shared by the media can potentially influence our own personal framing of reality.

In this way, the research questions that guided this study were:

1. How has the Spanish news media framed the pretrial phase of Daniel Sancho's case?
2. How are the victim and the offender of the case represented through the linguistic constructions employed in the press?
3. What implications can journalistic framing have for the audience?

The first question is concerned with the overarching frames that were employed when covering Daniel Sancho's case; with the second question, I intend to go deeper by focusing on the two individuals involved in this crime, since from the beginning the narratives around it have been heavily relying on both figures; lastly, the third question allows me to tie together this study with mediatic framing in general, taking into consideration its possible effects. All in all, my goal is to uncover how the mediatic discourses around this case have been constructed, and the implications this can have for journalism in the bigger picture.

2. Literature review

2.1. *Crime and the media*

Media has historically been interwoven with a wide range of cultural and social aspects, one of them being crime. As a matter of fact, we have reached a point in which it is impossible, as audiences, to imagine alleged criminals, their cases and their judicial processes without also thinking about their mediatic coverage and representation (Jewkes, 2009). This is caused because, as Couldry and Hepp (2017) argued, the social is completely dependent on the media, therefore making reality completely mediated.

Of all the range of crimes that have a space in the media, homicide is the one which has been more prominent (Greer & Reiner, 2015), although not all cases have the same volume and type of coverage. The popularity of crime from a mediatic point of view depends on a number of news values, such as the age, race and gender of the victim and the murderer, the inclusion of celebrities, the sexual character of the homicide, or the unusualness of the case (Chermak, 1995). What this means is that not all murders are going to be covered by newspapers – in fact, a study by Peelo et al. (2004) that analyzed a sample of over 2,500 recorded homicides by the police discovered that not even 40% were actually covered in the media at least once–, but those who have newsworthy characteristics will be exploited and overstated. This contributes to painting a picture that is far from reality.

There are some narratives, according to previous research on the matter– namely the usage of social typing by identifying a villain (which does not necessarily equal the criminal) and a hero/victim (Sacco, 1995) – which are used widely when covering crimes. In that sense, some stories are framed in such a way that prompts the audience to identify with the victim and to feel that they could, potentially, be victims as well, enhancing the emotional appeal of the story (Peelo, 2006). Reality is, thus, crafted in a particular way so as to specifically target the content to the audience.

Popular murder cases in the media usually touch upon some subjects related to intersectionality. Since this is a concept that will be employed in other parts of this study, it is important to define it. By intersectionality I refer to the confluence of “different systems of oppression” (Weldon, 2008), in regards to the gender, race, sexual orientation or social class

of individuals, among others. In this way, some criminals and/or victims are characterized not only by their condition as murderer or victim, but also by these categories aforementioned; it can be possible that the motive of the murder, for instance, is related to any of those systems of oppression as well. In any case, it is important to keep intersectionality in mind since it permeates most social scientific issues.

Related to the intersectionality and the confluence of different characteristics and issues within the same case, the media tends to focus on specific aspects in order to frame cases in diverse ways. For instance, a study by Jong and M'Charek (2017) about the press coverage of the disappearance and murder of Marianne Vaatstra found that depending on the focus of the content, the case could be framed as one of “senseless violence, safety at night, xenophobia or forensic DNA” (Jong & M'Charek, 2017, p.350). Therefore, murder cases should not be analyzed solely through a criminological lens, since in them several other social issues are intertwined.

Regardless of the focus of the case, it is frequent that murderers – and in some cases, victims as well – are represented in such a way that makes them become characters recognizable by the audience (Neubauer, 2023); some of them even becoming myths, like Ted Bundy or Jack the Ripper. This “mythical” narrative contributes to the glamorization of crime and, to some extent, to the spectacle that is created around this issue, by creating and reproducing stereotypes associated with criminals.

2.2. The spectacle of violence

The extensive coverage of murder in journalistic media can have detrimental effects both on the media itself and on the public, since the constant exposure to this type of content can trivialize the issue of violence (Chouliaraki, 2006). Not only that, but Chouliaraki (2006) also argues, in line with the main claim of this research, that the resources that the media generally employs when depicting criminal events make them seem less authentic and closer to fiction than to reality.

One fact that contributes to this “normalization” of crime is the discourses that are created around it: it is not rare to see trustworthy media outlets talk about speculations, perform reenactments of the facts or focus on aspects related to the personal lives of either the victim

or the perpetrator. All of these practices not only damage the media's credibility by interweaving information and entertainment without paying attention to journalistic values (Sacco, 1995), but by making violent content more "digestible" for the general public, they also normalize the issue. Although these borderline sensationalistic practices are deemed to be negative, giving a big platform and constant coverage to a case can aid to obtain a fair outcome (Gemzøe, 2021). Despite this, a critical analysis should be performed on the show that surrounds murder in the media, since it has an influence on the audience. In this research I argue that the framing of criminals and crime tends to contribute to this spectacularization of murder.

Business and economic matters are the main reason why journalistic outlets are currently opting for this spectacular treatment of criminal cases. In a time in which traditional informative media is evolving, influenced by the digital transformation (Rajendran & Thesinghraj, 2014), strategies that can help increase the audience's attention are needed. This does not mean that the coverage of crimes is something exclusive to modern media, since it has been a newsworthy issue for as long as journalism has existed; nonetheless, now sensationalistic narratives are employed in order to maintain the public interest (Florea, 2013). As Chancer (1998) put it, new content is shared through old, though unexpectedly modified, narratives – in this case, sensationalistic and spectacular ones.

There are numerous strategies that can be used when trying to identify a spectacle. Kellner, for instance, pointed out six characteristics that are present in most spectacular issues, which include its influence on public discourse and attention, the transformation of a private cause into a social one or the constitution of celebrities (Kellner, 2003; Kellner, 2008). Spectacles are also conformed through the use of images, and this is something that can be extrapolated to the coverage of criminal cases, which usually involves not only graphic descriptions of the incident, but also sensitive images (Brill et al., 2021).

Media outlets and journalists, however, are rarely held accountable for the part they play in the spectacularization of violence, nor for their sharing of a distorted reality. Rather, their desire to sell stories and the alleged demand of the public are used as justifications of their coverage (Hindman, 1999). The audience does play an important role in this issue, since their demand for violent and spectacular content fosters these practices. It could be argued that this spectacle, thus, acts as a "means of unification" (Debord, 1967, p.7), and the public's interest

in it does not come so much from their curiosity, but from their desire to form and belong to a community.

2.3. High-profile cases & celebrities as criminals

Among the thousands of criminal cases that are covered by the media on a frequent basis, there are some that because of their notoriety and newsworthiness are granted a different treatment: high-profile cases. High-profile cases are defined as those that “attract enough media or public attention that the court must or should make significant alterations to ordinary court procedures to manage it” (Hurley, 2017, p.1). They are highly mediatic and potentially controversial. There are several characteristics that can determine if a crime will be high-profile or not: Jewkes, for instance, pointed out news values like “individualism, risk, sex, celebrity, spectacle and graphic imagery, and children” which, if present in a case, will probably make it a popular one (Jewkes, 2009). However, the key characteristic that can make a case a high-profile one is “its capacity to shift and change and to engage other societal concerns” (Jong & M’Charek, 2017, p.360). Daniel Sancho’s case is a high-profile one due to many reasons: namely, the social status of its perpetrator, the speculations around it and the spectacular nature of the case; at the same time, it intertwines several social issues like sexuality or privilege, with the potential effects that that can have on society.

What makes a case notorious and, therefore, high-profile, is not so much its characteristics but the way the media frames it. As such, there might be cases that, despite containing several newsworthy values, will not be granted an extended coverage, whereas other very similar ones will. Jack the Ripper can be taken as an example: he is arguably one of the first criminals that became a celebrity, or rather a myth, achieving this notoriety not because of the extraordinariness of his acts, but because of the way the media constructed his crimes through spectacular frames, coverage and narratives (Luxx Mishou, 2019).

Why do media outlets resort to this type of practices? One possible explanation is the crisis that traditional journalism is facing, and how now, rather than casual readers, the news media is in need of actual fans or followers, who can be attracted through these narratives. By creating easily recognizable characters, and employing narratives that appeal to the emotional side of the public – whether that is through discourses that induce fear, anxiety, curiosity, empathy or fascination –, the media fosters a long-lasting relationship with its audience, who

becomes something closer to a fan and who keeps being engaged over time. Although it could not be stated that news outlets tend to write in a fannish way when dealing with crime issues, it is true that the limits between reality and fiction are now more blurred than ever (Fathallah, 2022). This fictionalizing style strengthens the link between media and public, by making the constructions of reality shared by the media more appealing.

Another way of making stories appealing is by including public figures. The involvement of celebrities in crimes can happen either because the individual was already a celebrity before the incident happened – a “criminal celebrity” (Steenberg, 2017, p.6) – or because they became famous through it. In any case, by committing a crime that later is transformed, through its mediatic coverage, into a high profile one, criminals are granted fame. Schmid went as far as to argue that murderers, serial killers in particular, are “the exemplary modern celebrity” (p.15), achieving that status because of what they have done rather than because they have actually earned it (Schmid, 2005). Criminals rise to fame because of the way they and their acts are portrayed in the media, but there is also a component of human fascination with these taboo topics that contributes to their popularity. This means that the general public does not necessarily have to like or identify with murderers in order for them to achieve celebrity status; they are usually not seen in a positive way, but that is also the case with more traditional celebrities, who represent the ‘otherness’ (Schmid, 2005) to which we can feel drawn to just because it is different. In that line of thought, Peelo et al. (2004) argued that “reporting of crime is best understood as a part of defining ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’, rather than about debating issues of justice and equity” (p.256).

Focusing on those celebrities who later became criminals, cases like the one involving O.J. Simpson or Oscar Pistorious are perfect examples of the mediatic treatment that these types of cases and the parties involved in them receive. Having a celebrity linked to a criminal case, especially a murder, can enhance its appeal to the audience (Sacco, 1995), not only because the individuals themselves are already known but also because this sort of behavior disrupts what was expected from them as public figures. As Klapp argued, celebrities are strongly socially typed, which means that once an individual rises to the celebrity status, a label is already assigned to them, and they are expected to live up to that character, even if that type might be different from their real persona (Klapp, 1962).

Celebrities, thus, are expected to follow a certain pattern, and when they take a detour it is especially shocking because of their notoriety as well as because of the fear of imitation (Klapp, 1962), since they are held to high standards. This does not mean, however, that all celebrities that deviate are judged equally. The treatment received by those celebrities whose personal characteristics do not align with negative types is much more benevolent than those who fit the stereotype (Klapp, 1962). This has to do with issues related to gender, race and class, and it explains why so many normative men have been able to get away with problematic behaviors. In this regard, Manne (2018) coined the term “*himpathy*” to refer to the preferential treatment that men receive after committing serious crimes, which perpetuates their privileges and undermines the victim’s experiences. Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out that if the celebrity who has committed a crime is condemned by the public opinion, then very rarely are they able to go back to their previous status; as Nunn and Biressi (2010) claimed, being a celebrity is an ongoing process that can change drastically.

The celebrification of murderers is also achieved through the dissemination of personal details. The audience access copious amounts of information regarding the criminal’s life, family or personal and professional affairs via the media (Jewkes, 2011). This practice is known as “personification”, and it refers to the presentation of an incident through an “emotional, personal, human” lens (Fox, Van Sickle & Steiger, 2007, p.30). Although this is a widely used strategy in media, it is especially problematic when it is used in criminal narratives, as it can paint a subjective and emotional picture of the perpetrator, while also influencing public opinion (Fox, Van Sickle & Steiger, 2007), and in the end, contributing to the banalization of such cases.

The mediatic discourse is not only focused on perpetrators but also on victims, whether they possess celebrity status or not. This happens even if the personal information shared about victims of crimes is, in general, not deep; in that line, some authors, like Sacco, argue that news about crime are now devoid of an emotional component and thus audiences have no connection with the victims (Sacco, 1995). Moreover, it has also been discussed how, from a journalistic point of view, content about crimes focuses more “on criminals than on victims” (Katz, 1987, p.70), which as a consequence facilitates the audience’s identification with the former. This criminal-focused position has changed in more recent years, although it is not an equal trend: certain types of victims, because of their personal characteristics, will be granted a more thorough and to some extent, compassionate treatment from the media than others

(Jewkes, 2009). All in all, there is a narrative of deserving versus undeserving victims/offenders.

As it happens with celebrities who are granted the right to fail and have a second chance, in the case of deserving/undeserving offenders and victims, their gender, race and social class play a key role (Jewkes, 2009). It is valuable to briefly discuss the implications that this intersectionality can have on the representation of crime. A clear example of this are the different justifications used if crimes are committed by white or non-white individuals, blaming personal issues or their communities and social environment, respectively (Hunt & Jaworska, 2019). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to reflect on the way media frames victims, offenders, and the crime itself; a positive and human representation of a victim can, for instance, increase the public awareness of the case, improve the image of the victim and even lead to changes in the trial process (Neely, 2015).

High profile cases have, from the moment they are put in the media spotlight, the potential to create celebrities. However, frequently the offenders are the ones that achieve celebrity status, because the focus is put on them as they arouse the public's curiosity due to their fascination with criminal matters (Schmid, 2005). This interest is fueled by the way the news media showcases violent content. Victims, on the other hand, are rarely granted the same level of attention, unless they fit the "ideal victim" type, who according to Van Dijk (2009) would be someone weak, blameless and forgiving. These victims are met with compassion and understanding, although in most cases they do not achieve a celebrity status, but a myth one.

2.4. Trial by the media

The vast media coverage that characterizes a high profile case will prompt a judgment from both outside and inside the courtroom. Although this research is focused on the pretrial phase of Daniel Sancho's case, he has in fact been judged since the day the news broke out. This practice is known as "trial by the media", and it refers to the way media coverage of a legal case affects the identity and reputation of the people that are in it even before it reaches the judicial process (Suresh & George, 2021). Greer and McLaughlin (2011) add in their definition of this phenomenon that individuals are "tried and sentenced in the court of public opinion" (p.27), since the constant attention paid by the media to these cases ensures that regardless of the outcome of the judicial process, the accused will be punished by society

(Johnson, 2015). A trial by the media is more likely to happen, and its effects are potentially more intense, if the victim and/or the offender are already public figures, since they are put on a pedestal and the audience follows their actions closely (Klapp, 1962); however, high profile crimes can also create celebrities out of previously anonymous people, as it has been argued.

There have been ongoing debates about the relationship between journalism and law, questioning if the presence of journalists in every part of a legal process is more beneficial than detrimental. The arguments in favor of this type of journalism claim that it works as an essential tool that enables the citizens to get to know the law system in depth, while at the same time allowing them to be part of the scrutiny of the alleged perpetrator(s) (Wittchen, 2023). Nevertheless, the limits that the media should have when dealing with issues of this nature should be studied and assessed, given the relevance it has in shaping public opinion (Hunt & Jaworska, 2019). Even if the media can help in maintaining “the fairness of a trial” (Johnson, 2015), its coverage still tends to “demonize offenders” (Hunt & Jaworska, 2019) and in general, to generate a verdict even before alleged criminals are taken to court.

Regarding criminal celebrities, the effects of the coverage of their cases are diverse, since it has not been confirmed whether it benefits or harms their public image (Brown, Duane & Fraser, 1997). Many high profile cases with a celebrity as a perpetrator have happened in recent years, but there is no evidence to assert that celebrities are judged more harshly than ordinary citizens, or the opposite. Since criminal cases cannot be compared because there are never two which are exactly the same (Chamberlain, Miller & Jehle, 2006), the only thing that research can do is analyze how celebrities are treated after committing a crime, but the findings obtained from this type of studies can never be compared to the judgment received by other citizens in similar circumstances. With that in mind, some generalizations extracted from previous research on the media coverage of criminal cases that achieved a high level of notoriety – and thus had their perpetrators publicly judged – can be made. Firstly, there is a tendency to sensationalize these types of narratives, focusing on personal and lurid details, and giving an intense coverage; this practice reached its peak during the aforementioned O.J. Simpson trial, although it began before that (Fox, Van Sickle & Steiger, 2007).

In this sense it is also worth exploring the attitudes that the public has in relation to high profile cases. Chouliaraki pointed out two different types of spectators of catastrophic news:

“the ordinary spectator”, who identifies with the event and acts as if they were part of it, and the “reflexive spectator”, who proceeds as if they were being heard and “judged” by others (Chouliaraki, 2006, p.45). This notion can be extrapolated to other spectacular news, such as those involving criminal celebrities. It is not uncommon to see, for instance, people siding with celebrities, unwilling to believe that they have committed a crime (Brown, Duane & Fraser, 1997); this usually happens when famous people are assigned the social type “hero”, since even if they do not behave in the way one would expect a heroic type to act, their characterization prevails.

Nonetheless, it is also common to see audiences react in the opposite way, and judge celebrities publicly and widely, mostly because perfection is expected from them, so any mistake they make can be used to set an example (Chamberlain, Miller & Jehle, 2006). The public treatment that individuals in general, and celebrities in particular, receive, depends on the framing executed by the media, hence the importance of exploring it through researches like this.

Media coverage will thus, inevitably, affect the identity and reputation of the people involved in crimes, whether that is through their criminalization or the complete opposite, the generation of public sympathy and the protection of their image. A salient example, also in the Spanish context, of the consequences of a trial by the media is the murder case of Rocío Wanninkhof, which happened in October of 1999 in Málaga (Spain), and for which her mother’s ex-partner, Dolores Vázquez, was accused of and wrongfully convicted, all because of the media panic which caused a public jury to deliver that verdict (Barata, 2003). Vázquez was convicted, to a large extent, because the news media of that time framed her as a villain, a vengeful woman who was just trying to “get back” at her ex-partner. Moreover, as it has been argued before, her condition as a queer woman might have contributed to her “public trial”. She spent six months in prison until it was discovered that the actual perpetrator of the Wanninkhof crime had been Tony King.

The case of Dolores Vázquez showcases how some anonymous citizens are put in the spotlight because of high profile cases, and how their public personas and reputation can be permanently damaged because of the mediatic circus created around them. Trials by the media are usually heightened when talking about celebrities. The public’s fixation with celebrities can be explained through the social role they play, as they “connect people in a

society where personal interaction has noticeably decreased” (Neubauer, 2023, p.96). Through the exploration of their lives in journalism, especially when this is attached to an attention-grabbing incident like a crime, we are allowed to explore “the self, the private and the intimate” (Neubauer, 2023, p.113). Celebrity journalism, therefore, contributes to the intertwining of everyday life and the media, in a way that one cannot be understood without the other (Smith, 2022). This embeddedness in the mundane also makes the media's impact on reputation stronger, and that explains why some celebrities go from being adored by the public to the complete opposite, or in turn, why some receive preferential treatment.

2.5. Murder as a genre: (true) crime in the media and its characteristics

Throughout this literature review it has been highlighted how popular crime is as a topic in the media; however, now I intend to analyze crime – and more specifically, murder – as a *genre* rather than a topic, since the core argument of this research is that news discourses around this issue seem to be more fictionalized than ever, showing a pattern which consequently creates a genre. The intersection between journalism, fiction and crime is not unexpected, as several crime fiction writers have a journalistic background, like Stieg Larsson, Michael Connelly or Laura Lippman. Moreover, the origin of the way news media frames crime can be found in crime fiction, so it is worth exploring how it has changed historically.

Phillips (2016) argues that crime fiction has been mainly evolving in regards to its purpose: before the detective novels, this genre was focused on fighting injustice; however, this moral character disappears with the rise of stories centered on investigators and detectives, where crime is seen more as a challenge or a quest rather than as a consequence of bigger, underlying social issues (Phillips, 2016). This phenomenon, which started in the 19th Century with the publication of the first detective stories, continues until the second half of the 20th Century, when another genre disruption takes place and brings the focus back to the ethics, morality and social implications of crime (Phillips, 2016). Currently, it could be argued that there is a combination of these two aspects in all content related to this topic: one more shallow and entertaining, and the other concerned with the bigger picture and the inclusion of crime in it. As such, it can appeal to two different types of public: on one hand, those who just want to be entertained without having to worry about social causes, and on the other hand, those who have a more critical mind when it comes to media consumption.

Although the popularity of crime fiction is still on the rise today, there is a new phenomenon which has taken the lead: true crime. This genre mixes reality and more liberal aspects, by using real stories as the base of the content, but exploring it and portraying it in a style closer to fiction. However, when the public consumes true crime products, they are aware that they are consuming a rather fictionalized and dramatized narrative. Focusing on the typical narrative of true crime stories, Punnett points out several different factors that can be found in it, which include “justice” – if there is a desire to fight an injustice –, “crusader” – if the content is concerned with ethical and social issues – or “forensic” – how detailed and deep the more technical details related to crime are –, among others (Punnett, 2018, in Gemzøe, 2021). Whether the narratives analyzed have these aspects embedded or not, it can be argued that, generally, true crime cases present the same type of stories, “involving higher status White victims who are often killed by related middle or upper-class White offenders (...)” (Durham, Elrod & Kinkade, 1995, p. 150).

One of the reasons why individuals feel so drawn to these stories, according to Wiltenburg (2004), is because they feel like an accurate representation of reality; after all, they are framed as narratives based on “true facts”, but which deviate from the actual course of events to make it more entertaining. Although it would be ethically relevant to portray a vision of reality which is as close to the truth as possible, the media tends to represent real crime stories through a distorted lens, which appeals to the public but also misshapes their conception of crime and reality.

In line with the mediatic representations of crime, it could be argued that we have reached, both as audiences and as producers of crime content, a hyperreality state. This concept, coined by Baudrillard, refers to the blurring of boundaries between what is real and what is fiction, creating products or signs that represent something that does not actually exist, even if it might seem the opposite (Baudrillard, 1981); hyperreality, thus, refers to the impossibility of distinguishing what is real from what is not (Baudrillard, 1981). By constantly representing real crime stories through a distorted lens, we are no longer able to decipher if what we are consuming is real or not, and thus our perception of reality is strongly affected as well.

To conclude this discourse about crime as a genre, it is worth pointing out the characteristics that can be found across both fiction and non-fiction content regarding this issue. Bruzzi

(2016) argued, in relation to true crime documentaries in particular, that they can serve different purposes, ranging from following “cases to their legal conclusions” to calling “for perceived miscarriages of justice cases to be reopened” (p. 266). While this is true, there is an underlying purpose common to all subgenres, and that is entertainment, more precisely, *infotainment*. What journalists, communication professionals and creators seek is not so much to inform the public about certain cases, but to entertain them by presenting these cases under a more dramatic light. This dramatization is enhanced by the narratives usually deployed, characterized by a dichotomy between good and bad – victims and offenders, heroes and villains – which, nevertheless, is full of moral ambiguities (Gilchrist, 2010). The plots are complex and intricate, and so are the characters, whether they are real or not (Berning, 2011). Furthermore, these narratives strive to reach a conclusion but are still left open-ended (Presser & Sandberg, 2015), so the public can extract their own outcomes.

Although this literature review has shown that extensive research has been done on the field of media studies related to crime, this thesis crafts and explores a hyperreal, fictionalized crime news genre, and that is where its originality lies. In this genre, the characteristics of all the pre-existing realms focused on criminal affairs are brought together, and are used by media outlets with the aim of fostering a constant engagement with the audience and standing out from their competitors. The analysis of this type of framing also matters because it can be transferred into other areas of reality.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. *News framing and media logics*

One key concept that guided both the formulation of this research as well as its execution and the analysis of the empirical material was that of *framing*. According to Entman (1993), “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p.52). This process, therefore, can act as a useful method when trying to uncover which ideas are transmitted through texts, and to examine the power that is embedded in that communicative construction (Entman, 1993). Frames are not only located in the text, but can also be found in the author of said text, the audience that receives it, and the cultural context, since all of them have already predefined frames (Entman, 1993). Framing, then, permeates our everyday life.

The potential influence that a frame shared by a news media outlet can have, in comparison with those shared by other smaller actors, is bigger, and its effects might last for longer. The reason why analyzing frames is so important is because, as audiences, we rely on the discourses shared by the news media and do not usually take into consideration what might have been left out, or how different reality might be (Kuypers, 2009). In this way, we might interiorize ideas and discourses that come from a distorted representation of reality. Notwithstanding, framing an issue or an event is necessary, since as Gamson (1989) claimed, it is through this process that facts are given an actual meaning.

The framing of an issue influences not only the way it is perceived by the public, but also how it will be dealt with (Sacco, 1995). Frames can perform different functions, such as pointing out problems and exploring the possible causes behind them, judge from a moral point of view the issue at hand and offer potential ways to fix them (Entman, 1993, p.52). All of these functions are strongly related to the cultural context and values of the place and the time that the frame belongs to; in this sense, Flyvbjerg (2001) argued that the context of an event actually renders it relevant or not. This explains the relation that journalistic framing has with framing in general, which was a concept developed by Goffman (1974) to explain how different individuals apply different cognitive structures to interpret everyday life. My

claim in this research is that these personal frames are now, if not dependent, at least heavily influenced by the frames shared by the media.

In this study, thus, framing will be used in a journalistic context, as a lens through which the construction of news and their portrayal on media outlets can be analyzed. Tightly related to journalistic framing is the *agenda setting* theory, which was developed by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. This theory states that the news media, by focusing on certain issues and ignoring others, establishes which topics actually matter and, therefore, the ones that the public should be interested in (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). One of the most famous claims of this theory is that the media does not tell the audience what to think, but rather what to think *about*. Even if it might sound similar to the process of framing, it is just a part of it, for as De Vreese (2005) explained, “while agenda-setting theory deals with the salience of issues, framing is concerned with the presentation of issues” (De Vreese, 2005, p. 53). In order to frame a topic, then, first it would be needed to make it relevant by highlighting it in the media, which can be achieved through agenda setting.

The last concept that is worth explaining in this regard, tightly related to the processes of framing and agenda-setting, is that of *media logics*, in particular news media logics. This theory was first developed by Altheide and Snow (1979), and it refers to “a set of criteria or a specific reference framework in the selection, presentation, and interpretation of social, cultural, or political issues in the media” (Blassnig & Esser, 2022, p.50). Media logic is part of the mediatization phenomenon that currently permeates our society, and because of that it not only influences the way different media outlets and formats present information, but it also has a strong impact on our everyday life (Altheide, 2013). The fact that cultural, social or political factors no longer can determine what matters to the media, but rather it is the media itself the one which chooses what issues are worth discussing (Blassnig & Esser, 2022), means that the power these outlets have nowadays is bigger than ever, since individuals are being influenced by media and not the other way around (Asp, 2014). It is also worth mentioning that media logic is a general criteria, although it can vary minimally depending on formats and frames (Altheide, 2013).

A practical application of media logics, which is frequently used when crafting the frame of an event, are news values, which are “factors (that) influenced judgements that journalists and editors make when assessing the level of public interest that a story will potentially

generate” (Brookes et al., 2005, p.3). Although there are endless ways to classify news values, I will be using the list created by Wilson et al. (2010), which includes threshold, predictability, simplification, individualism, risk, sex, celebrity or high-status persons, proximity, violence, spectacle and graphic imagery, children and conservative ideology and political diversion. The more or the stronger the factors are in a given event, the more likely it is that it will be covered by the media.

3.2. Society of the spectacle

Underlying the framing and representation of crime and criminals in contemporary news media is the concept of the spectacle, notably in relation to violence. Debord was one of the first authors to talk about the spectacle, in general, as a means of unifying society (Debord, 1967). This concept can still be applied currently when trying to decipher why media resort to spectacular violence, and why this type of content is so popular among the audience. The spectacle is related to its visual representation, although that is not its only manifestation, and it gives the issue depicted an eternal character (Debord, 1967), since once it is portrayed in the media, it will stay there forever – the possible effects of the spectacle, then, are also timeless. Debord’s spectacle can be more clearly seen nowadays through media representation and the audience’s engagement with it.

The spectacularization of ordinary matters carries with it their banalization, which can be exemplified through stars and celebrities, who act as mere representations of actual human beings (Debord, 1967). Celebrities are, from the moment they are created, ascribed a predefined social role, allowing them to “act out various lifestyles or socio-political viewpoints in a full, totally free manner”, which at the same time prompts the public’s identification with them (Debord, 1967, p. 29). Spectacle and celebrities intertwine, almost creating an alternative reality in which the boundaries between self and world, and between true and false, are blurred (Debord, 1967). All these ideas are still relevant now since the way the news media handles and portrays crimes can be compared to the spectacle that Debord described half a century ago.

Throughout this thesis, the concept of spectacle will be based on Debord’s conception, but also paired with Kellner’s (2005) understanding of “media spectacle”, defined as a phenomenon which is unpredictable, shapes “economy, polity, society, and everyday life”

(p.58), and can reach such a magnitude that constitutes a new era. It shares, thus, the principles upon which Debord constructed his theory, but it is adapted to this ever changing, highly mediatized ecosystem.

By combining this theory with the aforementioned framing theory, in this research I argue that the news media, when dealing with crime, tends to focus on and highlight the more spectacular parts –generally by focusing on newsworthy values like sex, violence, high-status people, or simplification –, which responds to a need to be more competitive and generate a stronger engagement with its public. Debord argued that the spectacle is “both the meaning and the agenda of our particular socio-economic formation” (p.9), and this idea could be extrapolated to the mediatic realm: the spectacle as a newsworthiness value determines which events should have a space in the media – and therefore, in the public opinion –, and by granting a constant presence to striking issues, they become embedded into our everyday life, so much that we might not even react when faced with more ordinary matters. The spectacularization of crime, and the consequent celebrification of criminals, affect the way the media frames this matter.

3.3. *Social typing*

Mediatic framing usually entails some sort of social typing; that is, the individuals portrayed in the news or other media outlets are frequently ascribed certain characteristics that makes them easily identified in relation to some predefined roles. A theory that explains this kind of labeling and the cultural consequences it can have is that of *social typing* (1962), which was coined by Orrin Klapp and has been consistently used in this study. Klapp develops three major social types – hero, villain and fool – that correspond to three main characteristics: “praise, condemnation and ridicule” (Klapp, 1962, p.2). Typing is a more prevalent practice among celebrities and famous individuals (Klapp, 1962), and it goes beyond the characterization of a person, since it is related to bigger concepts and social structures such as “oligarchy, democracy, conformity, individualism, leisure, social climbing, secularization, anomie and alienation” (Klapp, 1962, p. 8). It is also worth pointing out how they differ from stereotypes: according to Klapp, social types are embedded into social relations, they are familiar to us and represent roles that we can take; meanwhile, stereotypes function as a dividing strategy, focusing on negative aspects that should not be part of a functional society (Klapp, 1962).

Social typing not only matters because of its prevalence and central part in our current society, but also because it can drastically change the view that the public has of a person. As typing is more frequent among celebrities, and thus its effects are more prominent, mediatic discourses run the risk of elevating to the “hero” category individuals that do not have the characteristics that a hero should have, or the opposite, villainize innocent people. Klapp (1962) points out that most modern celebrities are famous just because of their quirks rather than by their skills or talent, and that usually engage in problematic behavior while still being held as role models. Exploring the way individuals and facts are framed in the media, and how some social types are reproduced through these narratives, is of utmost importance given the influence that these outlets have currently in shaping public opinion.

In regards to that, social typing and social types could be seen as framing tools, since through these practices we focus on and highlight certain aspects of an individual, creating an image that often does not correspond with reality, almost transforming real people into fictional characters. In that line, the media tends to type certain crimes or criminals as spectacular or mysterious – even if perhaps, from a more objective point of view, they are not – in order to make the stories more attractive to the public. Additionally, it could be argued that some criminals that attract high volumes of media attention and reach a mythical status, like Jack the Ripper, Ted Bundy or the Zodiac killer, also become new social types, to which future criminals will be compared to and typed as.

3.4. Media's power

An overarching theme of this research is the role that (news) media play in today's society and the power they excerpt through their practices and discourses, since all of the information to which we have access too has most likely been shared through – and thus influenced by – the media. Ideally, the news media should play the role of a “watchdog”, closely following the actions of governments and bodies of high power, and ensuring that justice and fairness always prevail (Hindman, 1999). Nonetheless, reality is far from this idea, since now what drives journalists' actions is not so much the desire to give voice to those who need it, but rather the pursuit of economic and business opportunities. Moreover, the competitiveness between different media outlets drives them to strive for the most eye-catching pieces, which usually translates into sensationalism and the spectacularization of issues, like violence and crime, that should not be spectacularized in the first place. This new paradigm seems to place

more power in the hands of the media, although with the advent of practices like “citizen journalism”, the audience seem to be reclaiming their agency back (Maxian, 2014).

Even if this research does not intend to analyze the consequences of media consumption on the audience, it is still worth to at least briefly touch on the characteristics of the current relation between media and audiences. There are several perspectives from which this relation could be analyzed: Meyrowitz, for instance, decided to use three different approaches – critical/cultural studies, uses and gratifications, and the medium theory – in order to uncover the ways media influences the public (Meyrowitz, 2008). The overall finding was that three different narratives, focused on the characteristics they have and the the ideas that the audience could get from their engagement with the media, could describe this mediatic relation: “the power and resistance narrative, the purposes and pleasures narrative, and the structures and patterns narrative” (Meyrowitz, 2008, p.645). Thus, from this study it could be stated that power, pleasure and structure are the main characteristics that define and explain the media’s influence on audiences. However, this is just one of many researches on this field. Throughout this research, the power that the media potentially has over the audience will be analyzed and contested, particularly through the lens of framing and the construction of inaccurate, fictionalized representations of reality.

3.5. Hyperreality

The purpose of this research is to explore how the news media tends to share a construction of crime, using the coverage of Daniel Sancho’s case as an example, which relies heavily on spectacularizing and fictionalizing frames, thus creating a new reality to which audiences feel drawn to. All of these ideas are permeated by the concept of *hyperreality*, which was developed by Jean Baudrillard. The idea of hyperreality will be adapted from his original conception into the current news media paradigm, in which, in line with what Baudrillard (1981) argued, representations no longer have an actual referential, making reality an irrational, intangible state. In this way, “illusion is no longer possible, because the real is no longer possible” (p. 19); when we translate this into the media realm, it can be argued that the representations that the audience see on the news are understood as the reality, even if frequently, these events have been framed through a distorting, sensationalistic lens. Moreover, linking this trend to the process of framing, Entman (2007) stated that frames might “fall into persistent, politically relevant patterns” (p.164), so if crime follows the

pattern of always being depicted in a hyperreal, spectacular way, then we reach a point in which, in line with Baudrillard's thoughts, the real loses its value.

This practice is particularly relevant if we take into consideration the highly mediatized society in which we are currently living. As Eco (1998) claimed, the reproductions of reality – in his case called *absolute fakes* – make the public feel like they no longer “need the original” (p. 19). Consequently, these representations lose meaning as they are overly reproduced, in the end creating a reality that is far from what it actually is. Throughout this study, this trend is showcased through and analyzed in relation to crime coverage, underlining how the crimes represented in the media are becoming something closer to a simulation, as Baudrillard would argue, of the actual event.

This blending of reality with fiction can also happen when we are faced with realities that are too harsh to be believed (Bruzzi, 2016), as it has happened in Sancho's murder case. My claim in this research, therefore, is that audiences feel now more drawn to the mediatic construction of crimes than to the crimes themselves.

4. Methodology & methods

The purpose of this research is to analyze how reality is framed in the news media, with the underlying assumption that, in most cases, the narratives lean towards sensationalistic or spectacular practices. It was thought that a case study would be the best fit for this type of research and for its purposes, as it enables the researcher to reach useful conclusions that could potentially be integrated into the bigger picture (Flyvbjerg, 2001) of media studies in this case, while offering a real view of a social, particular issue (Aragon, 2021). Moreover, since this a qualitative study, a focus on a single case is the best option because it allows findings and explanations to be transferred to the broader context that surrounds the issue at hand, while also mirroring “structural dimensions of social order” (Bazeley, 2013, p.6), connecting the case with reality.

The case

The case study selected for this research is that of Daniel Sancho. This event took place in August of 2023 and it involved the murder of the Colombian plastic surgeon Edwin Arrieta, perpetrated by the Spanish Daniel Sancho, in the island of Koh Phangan (Thailand). This case quickly became one of the most popular topics in the Spanish news media due to several reasons, although it could be argued that the fact that Sancho comes from a family of renowned actors, the gruesome nature of the crime, and the speculations around the relationship between the two parties involved played a key role in the popularity of the case.

The reason why this case was selected for this research goes beyond its spectacularity and its fame, and actually lies in the purpose of this study. My claim is that the news media tends to frame murder cases in a fictionalized way, with the consequence of creating a new, mediatized and spectacular reality, to which the audiences feel intensely drawn to. Because of the fictionalized narratives around crime, thus, this issue is elevated to a hyperreal state in which its mediatic construction ends up overpowering the reality. This is a practice that, arguably, is not exclusive to the crime field, for we live in an era of “deep mediatization” (Couldry & Hepp, 2017) where communication is interdependent and interconnected; nevertheless, it is in the coverage of this issue where it is more easily seen, hence why I opted to base my research on this case study.

By exploring an extreme case, my research purposes will most likely be met, while the findings will still be generalizable to the principles of journalism from an analytical and a theoretical perspective. Besides, the case is still ongoing, which means that the results are fresh and original, and as it happens with most, if not all, crimes, it is a unique event, and thus a once in a lifetime opportunity to perform this analysis. Flyvbjerg (2001) argued that by selecting cases studies strategically, their potential to be generalized is powered; therefore, choosing a case that will most likely illuminate clearly the areas I am researching will also allow me to translate the findings into the broader context of critical media studies, contributing to expanding the knowledge or setting a base for the exploration of the mediatic framing of other realms.

From a more personal point of view, the selection of this particular case was influenced by my ties with Spain, as a Spanish citizen, and with our national journalism, as a Journalism undergraduate. My curiosity on this field has grown in the past years, so because of the high volume coverage of this crime, it felt like the perfect opportunity to dive deeper into the practices embedded into the Spanish news media. In spite of the geographical and cultural characteristics of the case, the insights obtained from its exploration and the debates it can spark are valuable, not only because of the generalizability of case studies but also because globalization can be now understood as a phenomenon “rooted in the everyday practices” (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p.51), and since the media is part of this everyday routines all across the globe, the consequences that this trend can have are equally relevant, regardless of the physical space.

In order to analyze the empirical material, which is based on news articles pertaining to the case of Daniel Sancho, two methods were used: frame analysis and qualitative textual analysis. The selection of the methods was based on the fact that this is a research focused on “investigating communications and media content” (Hansen & Machin, 2013, pp.40-41), thus there were needed tools that focused on the text and the discourses and ideas conveyed through them.

Sampling

The sources of the data collection were selected following a purposive sampling, since I opted for those media outlets and articles that were most likely to illuminate the research

problem at hand (Bazeley, 2013). However, as it has been mentioned, my theoretical framework also strongly guided my approach, which meant that at certain points, due to the new trends that emerged within the data or the changes that the aims of the study went through, the criteria for the selection of the sample was adjusted, which would correspond to what Bazeley (2013, p.49) called a “theoretical sampling”.

In this way, the selection of the articles that were to be part of the sampling of this research was conducted by looking at the most read newspapers and tabloids in Spain. According to data from GfK DAM (2023), the top five most popular media outlets in Spain in November 2023 – the most recent data that could be accessed when the sampling was being constructed – were *El Español*, *El País*, *La Vanguardia*, *El Confidencial* and *20 Minutos*. Since I wanted to depict a representation of media framing that was as close to reality as possible, I decided to also include tabloids, due to their popularity in the Spanish mediatic context. As such, the three most popular magazines of this genre in Spain according to Statista (2023), *Hola*, *Pronto* and *Lecturas*, were also included in the sampling. The number of newspapers chosen is higher than that of tabloids because the purpose of the study is to explore how mediatic constructions of crime shape what the audience identifies as the reality of crime; in that sense, the traditional news media, represented here by newspapers, is arguably the most reliable source of information for the public, which means that its influence on individual conceptions of crime might be bigger than the tabloid’s one.

To briefly contextualize the media outlets chosen, their differences in terms of longevity and ideology should be noted. From the newspapers chosen, *La Vanguardia* is the oldest one, since it was founded in 1881. *El País* is another classical newspaper since its creation in 1976, while *El Confidencial*, *20 Minutos* and *El Español* have all been born recently, in this century. In terms of political ideology, *El Confidencial* is the only one which is actually conservative, while the rest of them are situated in the center/center left, with *20 Minutos* being perhaps the least political of them all. In regards to the tabloid press, the three selected magazines are classics, since *Lecturas* was created in 1917, *Hola*, in 1944 and *Pronto*, the “newest” one, in 1976. However, from a political point of view, these tabloids do not really take stances, and focus more on the social chronicle.

Of each media outlet, around 50 articles related to the case were skimmed. Only articles published between August and October of 2023, which was the peak of the case in terms of

popularity, and that had either the offender and/or the victim as the main focus of the piece, and not their families, friends or other individuals, were selected. In total, around 300 articles were checked, but the final sample was composed of 33 articles that both because of the topic and the way it was covered, fitted the research's purpose best. More information about the final sample and the media outlets selected can be found in Appendix 7.1.

Frame analysis and the news

The news media tends to modify reality ever so slightly in order to “tell a story”, as Gamson (1989, p.157) argued. This modifications are usually embedded into what is known as frames, which could be described as “powerful discursive cues that can impact cognition, individual socialization via interpersonal discussions, public opinion formation, and group use of media messages to achieve their goals” (D’Angelo, 2002, p.873). Moreover, extrapolating the outcomes of frames to the news media context, they help uncover the deeper meanings embedded into journalistic texts, as well as the ideas that each media outlet is trying to convey. When analyzing news frames, then, the focus is usually not put on the text itself, but on the “interpretive commentary that surrounds it” (Gamson, 1989, p.158), which at the same time bring together the cultural, political, economic and organizational factors that, as Gamson (1989) argued, influence the way frames are constructed.

Although frames affect the whole character of a text, they are more explicitly seen through smaller “devices” used when constructing a piece of news, such as metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, and visual images (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Frame analysis, then, allowed me as a researcher to pay attention to smaller, usually overlooked details, that can be, nevertheless, loaded with meaning.

By performing a frame analysis on newspapers and tabloids, I was able to explore how reality is constructed and presented through these outlets, since frames are used in a journalistic sense to “condense information into convenient packages that are easy for the audience to interpret” (Baranauskas & Drakulich, 2018, p.3), thus highlighting certain aspects and leaving out others. This method brings together cultural influences and myths, media practices and media logic, ideologies, and many other factors that can affect what is considered news nowadays (Gamson, 1989); therefore it also helps paint a realistic picture of the way media outlets work and how this affects society, and vice versa. All in all, analyzing

the frames that permeate the coverage of a specific case not only sheds light on the way that case has been dealt with, but it also offers insights in relation to the bigger picture and context into which that case is integrated.

Qualitative textual analysis

With the aim of reaching a saturation of data and performing a thorough and deep exploration, I combined frame analysis with a qualitative textual analysis (QTA). Following Kuckartz's guidelines, and based on Grounded Theory, I explored the meanings and interpretations shared through the written text by performing an open coding, letting the empirical material speak for itself (Kuckartz, 2014). However, the theories I have based my research on indirectly guided my coding, leading me into focusing on certain words or expressions that, were my study to have other purposes, would not have been of importance. I do not consider this theoretical influence to be a negative aspect, for it shows that the research is focused on issues that matter, providing me with the necessary base to deal with these issues in a way that matters as well, as Flyvbjerg (2001) argued, which should be the core of social scientific research.

After the open coding process, I proceeded, through an "axial coding" (Kuckartz, 2014), to the construction of categories, paying attention to the connections between the different codes extracted, which was also influenced by the "conditions, context, strategies, and consequences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, in Kuckartz, 2014, p.25) that surrounded the text, taking the general perspective into consideration. Lastly, all the previous analysis was brought together and given a stronger meaning through a "selective coding", in which all the categories extracted were compared and contrasted, and which allowed me to give the study an extra qualitative character by focusing on the "analysis story" (Kuckartz, 2014, p.26).

Qualitative textual analysis helped me analyze the news articles in a thorough, meticulous and reflective way, connecting my research questions and my purpose to the empirical material, and exploring the text beyond its linguistic constructions (Kuckartz, 2014). When paired with frame analysis, this multi-method approach takes into consideration the explicit and the implicit messages that the texts studied shared, as well as other external factors, offering a realistic and complex paradigm of the current news media practices, and shedding light on how hyperrealistic narratives are achieved.

Analyzing the empirical material

The analysis of the articles was performed starting from their basic components, and thus with the qualitative textual analysis. Guided once again by Kuckartz's (2014) work, I started by reflecting on the goals of my research, and with my theoretical toolbox in mind, I read all the articles, focusing on the words, expressions and linguistic constructions employed, and extracting those that seemed interesting, following an "open coding" process (Kuckartz, 2014). During this task, I also took brief memos and case summaries of more abstract and general ideas that also helped me understand the meanings associated with each text.

With all the open codes extracted, I then constructed the main categories by connecting the exact words and expressions used in the articles with bigger issues and concepts that also influence news texts. This was a long and reflective process, in which I had to go back to the original data to double check what ideas stood out more, and in which the purpose of my research was brought to the forefront constantly. My categories were constructed abductively, since I combined the empirical material with the existing ideas and theories that supported my research.

I then went on to perform the frame analysis, which proved to be as insightful as challenging due to the lack of consensus in regards to how to perform it. I decided to combine Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) and Tankard's (2001) framing devices, and thus approach the articles focusing on nine different aspects: *headline, subheading, lead, quotes, sources, metaphors and examples, depictions, visual images and concluding statements*. By subdividing my analysis into these smaller sections, I ensured I was paying attention even to the simplest and smallest details, as well as the most relevant journalistic conventions, which in the end was reflected in complex and rich results.

I divided each article into heading, subheading, lead and body of text, and I numbered each paragraph, so as to be as precise as possible. However, framing analysis is based on a holistic approach to the text, paying attention both to what was included and what was left out (Connolly-Ahern & Broadway, 2008, in Linström & Marais, 2012), so the construction of my final frames was based on the combination of patterns and trends generally perceived in the articles analyzed. Choosing news pieces as the sampling units was an optimal choice if one wants to obtain rich insights, since newspapers are "able to communicate more complex

ideas” (McNair, 2000, p.136) than perhaps those conveyed through other mediums or platforms.

The identification and construction of the frames was also a reflective, abstract and lengthy process, influenced by the categories I discovered while performing the qualitative textual analysis. Inspired by Wimmer and Dominick’s technique to identify frames (2006), I compared and contrasted the memos, codes and expressions extracted from each article, paying close attention to the links between the different pieces, and bringing everything together in a coding chart. In this way, I identified two major frames in the news coverage of Daniel Sancho’s case: *Sancho (and Arrieta) as complex characters* and *A case made spectacular*. The crafting of these frames was heavily influenced by my research purposes (Linström & Marais, 2012); as such, it would have been possible to identify more and/or different frames from the same sample of articles, but the aims of this study and the time constraints I had to deal with lead to these results, which are nonetheless extremely relevant and insightful. Extended information about how the methods were performed, as well as the final coding chart, can be accessed in Appendices 7.2. and 7.3.

5. Analysis: The multiple frames of Daniel Sancho

The main claim of this study is that the news media coverage of crime issues, in particular murders, includes its framing through a spectacular, far from reality lens. This trend is strongly tied to Baudrillard's conception of hyperreality, which explains how mediatic constructions are occupying the space of reality, making events feel closer to their representation on the media than to the real facts. In this sense, the audience might also feel more connected to the content they engage with in the media than to reality, blurring borders between facts and fiction. Media representations matter, and as such, it is of utmost relevance to pay attention to how they are crafted. In this research, I aimed at uncovering what practices are employed by the media to achieve these sorts of hyperreal narratives, while also exploring the possible consequences this might entail for the characters of the news stories, the public, and for journalism as a whole.

My approach to the analysis of the empirical material was guided mostly by Klapp's (1962) *social typing* theory, especially when exploring the constructions of Daniel Sancho and Edwin Arrieta; the *society of spectacle* by Debord (1967), which helped me analyze news articles and the events from a spectacle lens; the concept of *framing*, from the general perspective of Goffman (1974) and Entman's (1993) journalistic angle, which permeates the entire research; and lastly Baudrillard's (1981) *hyperreality*, which favors representations over reality and was prevalent during the formation of final categories and the extraction of conclusions.

The results of the analysis showed that there were two major frames employed by the most prominent Spanish media outlets when covering Daniel Sancho's case: *Sancho (and Arrieta) as complex characters*, that highlights the multiple layers that shape both individuals; and *A case made spectacular*, which takes into account more cultural and contextual practices that contributed to the spectacularity of this case. All in all, fictionalization and spectacularization were found to be the main tactics the Spanish media relied on when framing this case; at the same time, within these strategies there were smaller practices that also contributed to their formation, such as the construction of complex characters, the focus on violent and sexual content, or the use of linguistic constructions typical of fiction pieces.

5.1. Sancho (and Arrieta) as complex characters

One of the key factors for a successful story is to have rich and complex characters. We see this often in fiction pieces, but it could be argued that this trend has reached journalistic narratives. This can be paired with the tendency media outlets have, especially when dealing with high profile cases, of “serializing” the case, whereby they divide a crime into “microcapsules”, which keeps the thrill and the excitement of the readers, fostering an “emotional involvement” (Luxx Mishou, 2019). This practice is easily seen in this case study, in which the mediatic coverage transformed a rather simple case into a story that has been going on, constantly, for over eight months now. The contemporary journalistic realm, thus, seems to be the perfect one to experiment with the construction of characters that because of their complexity, can help sustain stories for a longer time; at the same time, a prolonged narrative also gives more space to the media to build detailed characters. Daniel Sancho’s case illuminated both how intricately the parties involved were framed and built, as this section will show, as well as how these elaborated depictions also helped maintain a simple narrative for a long time – in fact, there are still daily articles being published.

In this case study, there are two aspects that stand out from the character perspective. Firstly, the weight of the narrative is put on the alleged perpetrator: only 5 out of the 33 articles analyzed, for instance, were focused mainly on Arrieta, even though “Daniel Sancho” and “Edwin Arrieta” were both used as the keywords to select the articles. Even if Edwin Arrieta’s construction as a character will also be taken into account, it is worth pointing out this imbalance in regards to the attention paid to the individuals directly involved in this case. Secondly, Sancho and Arrieta can be seen as many different individuals depending on which outlet, article or (micro)frame we focus on. This layered depiction contributes to creating a representation of them which can feel close to reality.

The multiple identities of Daniel Sancho

Throughout the sample of articles analyzed, Daniel Sancho was constantly personalized, which also enables a story to be prolonged as much as possible, in line with the serialization trend aforementioned. The personalization technique is based on the focus on personal details pertaining to the victim and to the criminal; by getting to know more about the latter, the audience also gains an understanding in regards to why and how they committed the crime. In the end, this practice contributes to the intertwining of identity and crime: the criminal cannot

be understood without taking his crime into account, and his personal circumstances both affect his criminal endeavors and his life outside of them (Schmid, 2005).

Via this personalized discourse, then, the readers were able to access vast accounts of information about Sancho's life, like his interests – “Since he was a young boy, he has had a passion for sports as he has practiced boxing, muay thai, surfing and skiing” (E.E. #6, 2023); “Daniel was a fan of what is commonly known as 'the good life': yachts, luxury, adventure sports surrounded by friends...” (20M #21, 2023) – and even his relationship with his dad:

They didn't see each other enough because of Rodolfo's continuous filming, who used to make up for the absences of hugs, kisses and affection with money so that the young man could give free rein to his passions and whims. However, some of Dani's friends have confessed to *EL ESPAÑOL* that the relationship between father and son was not very close. (E.E. #6, 2023).

With these types of narratives, he becomes the center of the story, taking attention away from the case itself (Gutiérrez San Miguel, Rodríguez Fidalgo & Gallego Santos, 2010). The personalizing technique is frequently employed when trying to create a spectacular narrative, and it seeks the audience's emotional connection with the individual (Gutiérrez San Miguel, Rodríguez Fidalgo & Gallego Santos, 2010). Moreover, by giving personal information about the characters of a crime story, the issue feels simpler, “more realistic and approachable” (Brill et al., 2021, p.72), strengthening its hyperreal character. However, these practices can also work in the opposite sense, portraying a character that is more flawed than readers initially thought. In Sancho's mediatic coverage, these two positions coexist. For instance, he is depicted negatively as an unsuccessful tennis player:

Daniel used to go to the Chamartín Tennis Club, one of the most elite in the capital, because his greatest dream was to become a professional tennis player. But he did not succeed. And yet some of the teachers and other staff at the venue saw in him an astonishing potential on clay courts (E.E. #6, 2023)

His unclear professional career is explored as well, since at first the media was convinced he actually worked as a chef, but later that was confirmed to be a lie – “Sancho is not a chef in any restaurant - although he did graduate from the prestigious haute cuisine school Le Cordon Bleu” (L.V. #19, 2023) –. This sort of private information, albeit not useful when dealing

with crime or justice issues (Fox, van Sickel & Steiger, 2007), is a surefire way of achieving a stronger rapport with the public.

One popular resort that Spanish media outlets used to put Daniel in the center stage of this story was to bring his family to the forefront. Sancho comes from a saga of popular actors – both his father and his grandfather, Rodolfo Sancho and Sancho Gracia, are extremely popular in the Spanish audiovisual context –, so by constantly linking his name to his relatives, not only did they make sure to give the case greater popularity, but they also influenced the emotional factor related to the nostalgia and affection that these figures enjoy. In almost all of the 33 articles analyzed, Sancho was referred to at some point as “the son of Rodolfo Sancho”, or even as “grandson of film legend Sancho Gracia” (E.E #4, 2023), and even if it was deliberately chosen to not select articles that focused specifically on his family, this topic still came up in a great number of pieces. Some outlets decided to go back to his childhood, reminiscing about, for instance, the first photo shoot he did as a baby with his father and grandfather, and pointing out how “now everything has changed” since “the first-born of Rodolfo Sancho and Silvia Bronchalo is away from his loved ones, awaiting a sentence” (H #24, 2023).

Sancho’s family was similarly used as a means to explain why he had to commit the crime and end Edwin Arrieta’s life. An argument that he used, as shared by several outlets, was that Arrieta was blackmailing him with some intimate content that, if it was shared publicly, would destroy his “father’s reputation” (E.E. #10, 2023). Other pieces go further, suggesting that Arrieta’s threats would “cause serious damage to the image of his father and grandfather” (E.E. #4, 2023). In that line, several articles claimed that he had to murder Arrieta because “he threatened to harm close members of his family, whom Daniel loves very much” (20M #23, 2023).

Overall, through the constant referral to Sancho’s well-known family, the emotional framing and construction of him as a character and the engagement of the readers with the story is achieved in a double way. On one hand, the concept of family in general is usually used to “legitimize” and give a context and a background to victims (Jewkes, 2009), so by receiving this “victim treatment”, Sancho is allowed to be identifiable and personalized, which also contributes to the potential understanding of the public of him and his situation, and to creating a positive image around him (Jewkes, 2009). But that is not all, since his family is

not an ordinary one: by focusing on its famous character, the public strengthens their parasocial relations with it (Steenberg, 2017), which also impacts Sancho's image positively. Ultimately, what this focus on personal and emotional aspects shows is the commercialization of news media, which sees the audience as consumers (Blassnig & Esser, 2022) and thus creates content carefully crafted to foster their engagement.

Another lens that can be used to analyze Sancho's framing as a character is that of pity. Although Klapp (1962) did not include this among his major social types, Sancho stands throughout a big number of articles as the perfect example of a martyr, which could be considered another social category. How does the media, then, create this pity discourse and frame around him? A key strategy is the depiction of Sancho's future in the Thai prison system, and his prospects in life in general, through a pessimistic and negative perspective. There are several articles referring to the living conditions that the Spanish will have to endure while in prison – for instance, *Daniel Sancho: the hard life that awaits him after the macabre crime* (P #25, 2023) or *What awaits Daniel Sancho: this is the difficult life for a foreigner in a Thai prison* (E.E. #3, 2023) –. With these headlines, it can be understood that these articles, from the beginning, are centered on a pity frame, depicting him as the victim. This discourse is enhanced by the pieces published after his first images since he was admitted into prison were leaked.

In these series of articles, it is stressed how “deteriorated” (L #28, 2023) he looks in comparison to his more youthful, fresh and healthy appearance from before; furthermore, it is also highlighted how he has needed medication for stress and anxiety, and how his only goal is to fit in within the prison system. Several testimonies from prison workers and people close to Sancho also point out how he has been taken refuge in sport and in his case, becoming “obsessed” with the latter:

‘He takes refuge in the sport’, they assure from *TardeAR*. But not only in weightlifting, the culinary entrepreneur spends many hours studying his own case. ‘He spends hours of the day studying his case, it has become an obsession for him’ (L #28, 2023).

All this information about his life in prison helps paint a more realistic portrait of him, which in the long run could benefit him in the eyes of the public opinion, because he is being humanized. To humanize tragic situations, one only needs to grant those suffering the “power

to say or do something about their condition” (Chouliaraki, 2006, p.88), so by giving a center stage, a platform and a voice to Sancho, he is enabled to indirectly strengthen the engagement of the public with him. This treatment, however, is not conceded to Arrieta. On top of that, giving a “human face” to a story also adds to the spectacle that is created by sharing personal, intimate and emotional information through mass media (Gutiérrez San Miguel, Rodríguez Fidalgo & Gallego Santos, 2010, p.8).

The martyring discourse did not start the moment Sancho got into prison, but actually it had been implemented from the moment the media got access to his declarations to the police. In one of the most famous and quoted statements he has made, he described his relationship with Arrieta, and the reason why he felt forced to kill him, as follows:

“I’m guilty, but I was Edwin’s hostage. He held me hostage. It was a glass cage, but it was a cage. He made me destroy my relationship with my girlfriend, he has forced me to do things I would have never done before” (E.E. #1, 2023).

Moreover, Sancho goes on to claim that Arrieta was “obsessed” with him by adding:

“(…) he had me prisoner and was threatening my entire family. If I didn’t do what he asked me... He told me that he already knew what Colombia was and what a man with 100 million dollars was capable of doing” (E.E. #2, 2023).

Considering that there are always two sides of a story, by giving such relevance and attention to Sancho’s testimony solely, his image changes from criminal to victim, while the opposite happens to Arrieta’s. Hunt and Jaworska (2019) argued that critically analyzing the mediatic representation of “social actors” – in this case, Sancho and Arrieta –, illuminates how the discourses surrounding them might “perpetuate and legitimize hegemonic identities and practices” (p.2). In this case, as it will be explored later, the Spanish closely aligns with what could be considered the norm, hence why he might receive this preferential coverage.

Sancho’s mediatic representation, however, was not only created following a victimizing framing or trying to evoke positive emotions: some media outlets opted to focus on details about him and his life that framed him as a villain. Klapp argued that a “true villain lacks redeeming traits that confuse him with a hero” (1962, p.51); in some articles, Sancho is

represented in that way, as an individual who shows no remorse or guilt after having committed a crime.

A good example is how, during the reenactment of the murder that he had to perform for the Thai authorities, most newspapers and tabloids analyzed remarked his “coldness” as well as his “astonishing naturality and sincerity” (L #30, 2023), which were especially striking when taking into consideration the act he was describing. However, it should be pointed out that the articles that covered this part of the case also emphasized how, at some point, he broke down and “collapsed when talking about how he put the plastic surgeon's body in the refrigerator (...)” (L #30, 2023). This attitude contrasts with the image of him we have, as a strong, stable and detached individual, which arguably also corresponds with the traditional idea of masculinity we have in our society. Such an unexpected change of behavior could generate public sympathy, as Hunt and Jaworska (2019) stated in relation to Oscar Pistorious’ attitude during his trial.

Setting this more empathetic character aside, the reality is that the Spanish media was as devoted to make Sancho a martyr as to make him a villain. As such, among the coverage of the case we can find articles focused on his body language during his detention, which state that he showed “an emotional detachment in regards to the victim” and that he was secure and focused on himself, “being aware of the image he was projecting” (E.E. #5, 2023). Furthermore, his behavior both while he was in Thailand but also in his past was put under scrutiny. The media claimed that the murder was planned, since Sancho was seen buying knives and other useful material in the days before the crime took place:

The supermarket cameras were key when identifying Sancho as the main suspect in Edwin's murder. They captured Daniel entering the supermarket at 17:03 and paying for the groceries at 17:14 in the afternoon. In other words, Sancho made the purchase in only 10 minutes, so he must have been very clear about what he was going to buy. This point is key to confirming premeditation in the murder (E.E. #8, 2023)

Additionally, it was stated that mere hours after having killed Arrieta, he was partying and having fun, which was described as “such a strange way of proceeding” (E.E. #7, 2023). This sort of attitude aligns with Klapp’s idea of villains having an unredeemable character,

damaging Sancho's image, since the audience struggles to find aspects through which they can empathize with him or understand his behavior.

Sancho's past was also used as an explanation of his acts, implying that his dangerous behavior had been a trend rather than an anomaly. In this line of thought, one can find articles like *Daniel Sancho was expelled from a tennis club at the age of 15 and his father had to intervene: 'He is a somewhat conflictive boy'* (L.V. #19, 2023), in which several conflictive events from his past are explored, ranging from his expulsion from a tennis club to other fights in which he had been involved that took him to court. He is described as someone rude, who "led a life at full speed" and used his privileges – not only was he the son and the grandson of two important cinematic figures, but he was also attractive and wealthy - to get what he wanted at any cost.

His social media posts were also intensely analyzed: for instance, his tweets from around ten years ago were brought back to the surface, since among many problematic discourses and opinions, he joked with the idea of killing someone, to what the article *The thousand and one faces of Daniel Sancho, the rich boy who dreamed of tennis and ended up in prison for killing his lover* asked: "Was it a joke in very bad taste or was something evil brewing on a mental level?" (E.E. #6, 2023). Other articles focused instead on his Instagram account, and using a picture he posted of him being dressed up as the popular DC villain the Joker, compared both figures by describing them as "murderers with mental disorders" (20M #21, 2023) – that expression is written in bold, so it could be assumed the author of the article wanted to convey that association clearly.

In this way, it is clear that a personalizing frame can as quickly paint a humanizing, positive portrait of someone, as it can be employed to find negative details and enhance bad traits. Usually, though, the focus on positive or negative aspects is not an "either/or" situation, but rather both are used to create a realistic image of the individuals involved in mediatic cases, which fundamentally also contributes to reinforcing the engagement of the audience with it, because of an emotional but also a simplistic aspect – if we see offenders and victims as normal individuals that we could even identify with to some extent, complex issues such as crimes might be easier to understand. In this hyperreal media ecosystem we are navigating now, the complex constructions of the parties involved in a crime prompt the audience to take

sides, immersing themselves in the narrative and forging a strong connection with the case and its mediatic coverage.

Putting all the layers of Daniel Sancho together, and all the different characters he has embodied throughout the framing of this case, we obtain a complex, rich and deep character that evokes sympathy and despise in equal parts. It could be argued that, by combining all these different (micro)frames, the media is portraying him in a realistic way, flawed but human in the end. However, the complex construction of a murderer, and the search for explanations of his behavior in his past, or counterarguments to it through the exploration of the relation with his family and his suffering, can also be a response to such an unexpected crime: Sancho does not fit the “murdering” type (Klapp, 1962) and, because of that, both the media and society, reflecting each other, try to create convoluted and intricate narratives that might give a plausible explanation as to why this happened.

A victimless victim

All crime stories need at least two characters: an offender and a victim, and that is where Edwin Arrieta’s figure comes into play. Berning (2011) explained that an usual driving force of literary action was that of the interpersonal conflict between two characters, coined “character versus character” (p.90). This is the strategy we see in the coverage of Daniel Sancho’s case, where there is a constant opposition between him and Edwin Arrieta. It is important to note, nonetheless, that Arrieta’s character does not take as much space as Sancho’s in this narrative, perhaps because he no longer has an active voice, perhaps because the media is not interested in him as a victim, since he does not fit the “ideal victim” type – namely, someone innocent, vulnerable, relatable, helpless and morally correct (Van Dijk, 2009). As a result, his portrait is not as deep and complex as Sancho’s, since it is mainly done through the words of his family and friends, on one hand, and through the declarations of his alleged murderer, on the other. Despite his representation not being close to how he might have actually been, because the media frames it in such a realistic way, the audience can associate this representation with the actual Edwin.

A fewer number of pieces opted to shift the focus from perpetrator to victim, focusing on Arrieta as a person rather than just a man who had been murdered. Among these articles one can find *Edwin Arrieta, the self-made surgeon who dreamed of seeing the whole world* (E.P. #11, 2023) or *This is what Edwin Arrieta, the Colombian surgeon allegedly murdered by*

Daniel Sancho, was like: 'He went to mass every Sunday'. (20M #22, 2023). The discourse in these pieces is marked by the inclusion of people close to the Colombian, like his sister or the mayor of his hometown, as sources, emphasizing his qualities and his value as an individual, as well as the impact that his death has made on his community. In one of the articles Arrieta is described as follows:

Arrieta went out of his way for his friends. Those closest to him remember that when they were looking for him “he didn't walk, he would run”; he loved celebrations and being a host. “He was very sociable, very kind,” says his sister. Traveling made him feel alive. (...) “He was a dreamer who wanted to travel the world. He worked to travel.” (E.P. #11, 2023)

Furthermore, the mayor of his hometown stated: “We are deeply saddened by Edwin's departure. Great human being, friend and excellent professional” (E.E. #1, 2023). His professional performance as a plastic surgeon was also highlighted by one of his colleagues, who asserted that “he was dedicated to his patients, a perfectionist in what he did. He was cheerful, spontaneous and fun” (E.P. #11, 2023). Bringing the voices of those close to a victim to the center stage also increases the potential success of a news stories (Chermak, 1995).

By focusing on these positive and human details, Arrieta is represented as an actual human being who had a life, a community and interests before his murder happened. Previous studies have shown that this type of coverage, in which the victims are portrayed through a humanizing lens, allows the audience to “empathize with the victims and to view them as undeserving of the violence they suffered” (Neely, 2015, p.18). Therefore, the correlation between victim blaming – or the opposite, representing a victim as a “worthy” one – and the way they are framed in the media is clear, which is why the underrepresentation of Arrieta as something more than a victim is so striking in the analysis of this case. In most pieces, it feels like he is just a commodity, a necessary background element to maintain the murder-mystery narrative, but he actually has no relevance. Even though news media tends to foster the audience's identification with the victims (Peelo, 2006), in Sancho's case, the victim is used as a *scapegoat* perhaps due to the inability of the media to grasp why the Spanish committed the crime.

On top of that, he is frequently represented, in an indirect way, through a negative lens, changing his identity from victim to villain, or at least, to an unworthy victim. Daniel Sancho's declarations about their relationship shape the Colombian's image in the public's mind. Namely, following Sancho's claims, the surgeon can be seen as someone obsessive and toxic:

He was obsessed with me. He deceived me, made me believe that what he wanted was to do business with me, to put money into the company in which I am a partner. That we should do things together, go to Mexico, Chile, Colombia, to open a restaurant. But it was all a lie. The only thing he wanted was me, to be his boyfriend. (E.E. #2, 2023)

Some articles focusing on the months immediately before the crime also emphasized how he was trying to get the Spanish away from his friends (E.E. #9, 2023), which contributes to creating a negative, or at least questionable, image of him.

As it has been stated along this research, it is important to explore how media frames crimes, criminals and victims, since this can heavily influence how the public creates their own frames and opinions about these aspects. If we take a general look at the sample of articles analyzed, it could be argued that Arrieta is represented, majorly, as an unworthy or deserving victim, which corresponds with discourses about how "the victim asked for it" (Neely, 2015, p.17). Deserving victims are traditionally aligned with individuals who do not belong to the hegemonic norm of white, heterosexual and upper-middle men in regards to ethnicity, sexual orientation, class and gender respectively (Gilchrist, 2010). Arrieta was, arguably, a middle-class man at least, since he was an established professional in a successful professional field. However, his condition as a Latino, queer man – although his sexual orientation was not public –, especially when compared with Daniel Sancho, who on the surface seems like the perfect representation of the norm, might have affected negatively the coverage he received. Peelo et al. (2004) argued that the news media, concerned with a construction of crime that is far from reality, selects by highlighting different details, "who is included and who is excluded from the public concern" (p.274); in this case, the Spanish mediatic discourse relegates Edwin Arrieta to a secondary role.

The portrayal of Arrieta as an unworthy victim was not only achieved thanks to the focus on negative aspects of his persona, but there are also characteristics inherent to this case that

contributed to this situation. A key feature of contemporary media is how it blurs borders, even geographical ones, making events that happened far away from us feel closer just because they have been granted a thorough journalistic coverage (Chouliaraki, 2006). This is clearly showcased in Sancho's case, since even though it took place in Thailand, a country over 10.000 kilometers away from Spain, it still caught the attention of the Spanish public.

This also applies to individuals, to whom the audience might feel more or less close due to several factors, most of them based on the way they are framed by the media. In Arrieta's case, he already starts from a disadvantage point since, as opposed to Sancho, he is not known for the Spanish audience; but his distant self is fostered by the narratives about him being a villain shared by the media outlets analyzed. By putting the effort in deepening the knowledge about situations and people affected by them, the media could achieve a "proper distance" (Chouliaraki, 2006, p.172), which ultimately contributes to a more ethical and fair treatment of the suffering of others (Chouliaraki, 2006). This, however, might feel like an utopian practice at some points.

This first frame can be seen as a tool to type, as Klapp would say, Sancho and Arrieta, bringing to the central stage not only their part in the case itself but also their past lives and their personal characteristics. In that way, they are stripped away from their actual identity and transformed into characters that seem to just serve the purpose of entertaining and maintaining an engagement with the audience; as it has happened previously with murderers and victims that achieved a mythical status, both individuals become pure representations, with which the audience connects despite their inaccuracy. This constitutes a perfect example of a hyperreal narrative. Eco (1998) argued that the audience's desire to be close to reality makes them rely heavily on its representations, and this idea could be extrapolated to the media realm: the fascination with crime we have as a society makes us crave the most realistic reproductions of it, within some ethical limits, we can find, and this consequently fuels the hyperreal mediatic framing. However, the media no longer acts as a mirror of reality, and instead it shares different images or versions of real individuals crafted in a way that can feed into the audience's desires.

5.2. *A case made spectacular*

While the first frame identified in the mediatic coverage of Daniel Sancho's case was centered on the figures of both Sancho and Arrieta as the main characters of this "story", this second frame focuses on questions related to the practices used to narrate and contextualize the facts, which in the end contributed to the spectacularization of this case. One of the main arguments of this research is that contemporary news media tends to frame crime cases, in particular murder cases, in a spectacular way, focusing on aspects that, while not being particularly newsworthy from a traditional or objective point of view, are guaranteed to create a reaction in the audience. These practices are motivated because of business-interested motives – spectacular stories sell more – and because the audience is fascinated by topics revolving around death, violence and spectacularity (Bock, 2021). Accordingly, the media crosses the limit between facts and fiction, opting for a hyperreal treatment of the cases by emphasizing those aspects bound to appeal to the public.

Gutiérrez San Miguel, Rodríguez Fidalgo and Gallego Santos (2010) argued that the construction of spectacular events in news media can be achieved through the use of different strategies, namely the presentation of information in a dramatized, almost literary way, providing each story, whether it fits or not, with a beginning, a middle and an end, while at the same time focusing on personal details, as it has been discussed in the previous section; they also mention the emphasis on gruesome and "morbid" details (p.8), which is constantly exemplified throughout the coverage of Daniel Sancho's case and the high volume of articles focused, among other things, on how the murder took place –e.g. *Autopsy reveals Arrieta's throat slit by Daniel Sancho, Thai police say* (L.V #14, 2023) or *Macabre murder on the island of excesses: this is the crime confessed by Daniel Sancho* (E.C. #31, 2023).

In the analysis of the empirical material, it was found that the spectacularization in Daniel Sancho's case was achieved through the highlighting of four different factors: graphic violence, speculations, sex, and fictionalized narratives. The combination of these components, paired with the aforementioned frame centered on constructing complex characters, creates a narrative that, despite being based on true facts, at some points feels closer to fiction than to reality (Silverstone, 2007), while being depicted as an accurate representation of the facts. Nonetheless, the success of this type of spectacular stories has been proven, as this case has been avidly followed by the Spanish audience.

Violence

The first factor that contributes to the spectacularity of this case is *violence*. One can assume that when covering murders, violence will be inevitably involved in it. However, there are different ways to deal with this sort of information. Events including some sort of violent acts are very attractive for the news business, since they “fulfill the media’s desire for drama” (Brookes et al., 2015, pp. 3-4), and because of this, media outlets tend to focus almost exclusively on this aspect. The overly violent representation of this case illuminates how framing, according to Entman (2007), can act as a bias mechanism, by giving prevalence to certain aspects and thus skewing the actual course of events. It is up to debate how necessary this type of information is, or what insights it offers to the public.

Throughout the coverage of Daniel Sancho’s story, the violence of his case is remarked upon. The crime itself is described as “violent”, “most macabre thriller in history” or “creepy”, expressions which are loaded with content and very explicit. These linguistic constructions are mostly used in the headlines, subheadings or the lead of the articles analyzed, which means that they are setting the violent and uneasy tone of the story from the beginning, as it can be seen in this excerpt from an *El Español* article: “The case of Daniel Sancho (29 years old) has been taking plot twists and turns as if it were the most macabre thriller in history” (E.E. #10, 2023). Violence becomes, from the very beginning of the pieces, the red thread of the narrative of this case.

The violent content is exalted when talking about how the crime happened: we can see vivid descriptions of the fight that allegedly took place between Sancho and Arrieta, based both on Sancho’s declarations and the research done by the journalists:

“I stood up, he stepped backwards and I started to talk *more gesticulating* [sic]. And I pulled back and punched him (in the jaw) (...) I had him against the toilet. So, then, he grabbed me, bit me. I picked him up off the floor and slammed him again (against the corner of the toilet). Then he went unconscious, everything was full of blood in a short time” (L #30, 2023).

He then turned the body in the shower and turned it upside down so he could dismember it. (L.V. #17, 2023).

“I turned on the shower so the water would wash away the blood because there was a lot of blood coming out. I turned the hot water on full blast so the blood wouldn't coagulate and stick” (L.V. #17, 2023).

All these depictions are so clear and explicit that one might feel as if rather than reading a journalistic article, they were watching the events unfold in real life. The violence is both magnified and made more tangible via the inclusion of descriptions, including images, of how Sancho performed the dismembering of Arrieta; there is at least one article per media outlet analyzed that dealt with this issue in depth, as this extract from one of the pieces shows:

The head, torso, upper arms, lower arms, hands, genitals, thighs, legs and feet. A total of 17 cuts. This was the modus operandi that Sancho carried out before disposing of the remains in the sea and in the landfill last August 2, the day of the crime. As it can be seen in the image, each cut had a motive and it was not a decision taken lightly. He already knew he would end up dismembering Edwin. (E.E. #10, 2023).

These thorough descriptions of an act of such gruesome nature serve no informational purpose, but rather an entertainment one. As Chouliaraki (2006) argued, the heavy amounts of violence that are shared through the media on a constant basis do not raise any awareness or start a debate, but they actually make it seem like a normal issue to the extent that audiences are no longer impacted by it. As a consequence, they attend the broadcasting and narration of real crimes feeling as if they were a fictional horror story, exemplifying once again how the mediatization of reality is reaching all levels. This constant exposure to violence, and the consequent banalization of it, also contributes to perpetuating the “wound culture”, as coined by Seltzer (1997). This concept refers to the fascination with violent private affairs, which has become an essential part and tool of socializing (Seltzer, 1997). The “wound culture” has found in the showcasing of explicit violence in the media the perfect way to exist. This intersection between public and private, and reality and fiction, seems, thus, inevitable, as it is the base of the mediatic spectacle.

Speculations

The confluence of private and public affairs does not only thrive in relation to the fascination with violence: the discourses surrounding this case have been filled with *speculations* about

not only the development of the crime and the motives behind it, but also the private lives of both parties involved. Debord argued that one of the consequences of the spectacle is the reduction of everyday life to “a universe of speculation” (1967, p.11), and this can be extrapolated to the “universe” of Sancho’s case, where most information has not been proven to be true and where everything seems to be possible. Following Debord’s line of thought, speculations act as the base of the spectacle, especially when dealing with high profile cases.

Gossiping and speculating have a social function from an anthropological point of view, since they help perpetuate “morals, values, and unity of social groups” (Merry, 1984, pp. 273-274), with the end goal of fostering the existing social norms and hierarchies. Taking a look at the speculations that saturate the coverage of this case, it could be argued that they are trying to foster traditional hierarchies, since as it was seen when exploring the victimhood of Arrieta, he is further from the norm than Sancho. Moreover, this idea could be taken to the next level, claiming that through these sorts of speculations, what the media is doing is reproducing the structures traditionally used to talk about crime in fiction pieces, bringing together two genres that used to be apart.

The motivations of the case were one of the main roots of the speculations, arguably because they allow the audience to investigate and try to uncover the multiple questions behind a crime, which at the same time reinforces the hyperreal state by incorporating the public into the narrative. One of the first hypotheses, supported by Sancho’s statements, was that he felt trapped in a relationship of complicated nature with Arrieta, and he believed his only way out was to murder the Colombian surgeon. In addition, according to Sancho’s account, Arrieta had been blackmailing him with the dissemination of intimate content if he decided to leave the relationship:

(...) His defense will try to argue that these coercions or blackmails could have been the motivation that led the chef to commit the murder. “Daniel, in his statement, says that he was afraid of Edwin, that Edwin coerced him. And this is the novelty, he did it with a sexual video (...)” (20M #23, 2023)

In line with this version, Sancho planned their trip to Thailand with the idea of murdering him, which was somehow proven by his purchase of knives and cleaning products days before Arrieta’s arrival; this theory reached the Thai justice system, which declared this case as a premeditated murder rather than an accident.

Although some of the speculations, as shown by the previous example, might actually serve a useful purpose and help the authorities to solve a case and make sure justice is imparted, there are other details that are brought to the forefront only because they generate curiosity and enhance the spectacular character of the story. An example of this is how the Spanish news media offered different versions of the precise reason that prompted the alleged fight between Sancho and Arrieta that resulted in the Colombian's death. For instance, in an article from *La Vanguardia* it was asserted that the conflict started when Sancho demanded Arrieta to break off the relationship because he was going to marry his long-time girlfriend: "Sancho told investigators that he had a fight with Arrieta last Wednesday after he asked him to break up because he was going to marry someone else" (L.V. #13, 2023). However, in another article from the tabloid *Pronto*, the starter of the fight was apparently Arrieta's desire to have sexual relationships with the Spanish, to which the latter refused:

His friend would have wanted to have sex with him, but he refused. Blinded by anger, he threw a punch that caused Edwin to fall and lose consciousness after hitting his head on the sink (P #27, 2023).

These hypotheses do not lead anywhere, but from an entertainment point of view they are useful strategies to keep the audience engaged. Gossiping tends to be associated with private and intimate matters, so when this sort of information reaches the public level through its dissemination in the news media, it forges a closer relationship between the audience and the media outlets, because the former feel they are being granted the access to information restricted to trustworthy and close people (Merry, 1984). Speculations then serve a double purpose from a media perspective: they attract the public because they are offering curious, although not completely reliable, information; and by sharing this exclusive content, the audience feels privileged and strengthens its connection with the media.

The speculations also reached both individuals' lives before the crime took place. The public and the media were equally interested in the details surrounding how the two met, and how their relationship was before the tragic incident. Some articles implied that Sancho and Arrieta actually had a relationship, and that in the midst of it, the crime happened:

What we have been told by one of the heads of the investigation is that the crime was a crime of passion, that the two did not understand each other and that they believe that Sancho was planning and preparing this crime (20M #23, 2023).

Nevertheless, we see confronted positions, since other outlets claimed that the relationship had just been sporadic and Arrieta was the only one clinging to it, as Sancho stated that “Every time I tried to get away from him, he would threaten me” (E.E. #1, 2023). It is known that they met at some point in 2022 through Instagram, and it has even been asserted that Arrieta was planning on moving to Spain to be with Sancho:

“Don't forget to look at the apartment in Barcelona, I want to disassociate myself from Madrid because of my partner's friends (...). As I already told you, I want to make my life with Dani, but not in Madrid. Send me the budget of common law couple, do not worry about the money, I have a bank account in Spain. In September we will do all the paperwork”, are the sentences, in three messages, that Edwin sent by last May. (E.E. #9, 2023)

It is especially interesting to explore the sources that were used to support most of the speculating content: the previous quote was extracted from an article that was based on some texts that Arrieta allegedly sent to a friend speaking about his relationship with the Spanish; but one can also find pieces based on the opinions and thoughts of friends of the pair, such as *Daniel Sancho and Edwin Arrieta: the whole truth about their relationship* (P #27, 2023), in which an alleged friend of Sancho states:

All relationships are difficult, but theirs was a relationship that... That played with a lot of feeling, because one day they were good, one day they were bad. We never thought this would have happened.

As a matter of fact, speculations find their foundation in “uncertain, neither publicly known nor easily discovered” facts (Merry, 1984, p.275), so it could be argued that speculations are usually supported by sources which might be not entirely reliable.

Sex

There was a common element to all of the speculations as well as to many of the articles analyzed, and that was the focus on *sex* and *sexual orientation*. This should not come as a surprise, for it is one of the defining characteristics of crime news (Schmid, 2005), and like

violence, it is guaranteed to attract and engage with curious audiences, especially when combined with the aforementioned speculations.

The sex component tends to play an important part when dealing with crime issues, but in the case of Daniel Sancho, there is a particular aspect that stands out, related to his sexual orientation. Through multiple articles it is claimed that the relationship between him and Arrieta was, essentially, a sexual one – “Sancho planned to kill Arrieta, with whom he had been in a sexual relationship since, a year ago, they met on Instagram” (P #25, 2023) –, and actually one of their sexual encounters was the possible origin of the crime, given that Sancho has justified the murder claiming that he was being blackmailed with the dissemination of intimate content featuring him. For this reason, it is particularly striking how the Spanish has denied being homosexual or to have been in any type of relationship with the surgeon:

The Spanish chef, according to this media, has assured that he is not homosexual and that he has a girlfriend, which is why he tried to break off his relationship with Arrieta (E.E. #4, 2023).

This discourse around him being a victim somehow forced into a homosexual relationship corresponds to what is commonly known as the “gay panic defense”, which is a legal strategy used in cases that involve “a heterosexual individual losing control and violently responding to unwanted sexual advances from a gay man” (Tomei et al., 2017, p. 4240), and that usually works as a mitigating factor. This “panic” is usually used as a justification of states of “insanity, diminished capacity, provocation, and self-defense” from the alleged perpetrator (Lee, 2008, p. 475). Although this strategy is only legal in a limited number of places, it can still be used in a mediatic context, constructing a discourse that damages the victim’s public image while attempting to justify the criminal’s actions. This is exactly what it can be seen in Sancho’s case, since in a great number of the articles he is stripped from his murderer persona and is instead typed as a victim, who had to defend himself against a homosexual man and was forced to kill him:

He said that if the conversation (*about ending their relationship*) didn't go well he thought he was going to have to kill him because he had a partner waiting for him to get married (L.V. #13, 2023).

The “gay panic” defense takes the focus away from the crime and the criminal and puts it on the victim, questioning who they were and their personal characteristics, coming close to the

phenomenon of “victim blaming” and finding explanations as to why the victim “deserved” what happened to them (Russo, 2019). By bringing their (sexual) identity to the forefront, and tying it to a crime, it serves as a causal explanation, thus taking importance away from the crime itself and victimizing, to some extent, the actual perpetrator (Russo, 2019).

Furthermore, this strategy also perpetuates different privileges: it seems that only white, straight and younger men can benefit from it. Historically, the “gay panic defense” has been mostly used in cases where the alleged criminal was younger than the victim – who, at the same time, was the one that initiated the homosexual acts that prompted the crime, reproducing the stereotype of the gay man as a “predator” (Lee, 2008). Moreover, most individuals that have benefited from this strategy were white men, which goes to show how this would not be a plausible defense were the criminal a person of color, or the victim, a woman (Lee, 2008). Once again, this case exemplifies how the “gay panic defense” works, as Sancho takes advantage of his state as a white, wealthy, and young man, whereas Arrieta could fit the stereotype of offenders who are older, homosexual, and also in his particular case, a racialized person, who allegedly initiated the non-consensual act.

The sharing of a narrative that so closely aligns with the “gay panic defense” is as harmful and dangerous as it is outdated. While it is true that this sort of intricate plots and moral ambiguities will surely catch the public’s attention, it can also reproduce and perpetuate toxic stereotypes and damage entire communities. The framing of Sancho’s case as “crime of passion”, on top of the construction of Arrieta as a villain who was forcing the Spanish into an unwanted relationship, showcases how the media, with the aim to transform everything into a spectacle, shares a discourse that might belong to the fictional realm, while paying no regards to the ethical consequences of these practices.

Fictionalizing narratives

Combining all the aspects that have been analyzed so far – violence, speculations and sex –, we obtain the perfect recipe for a spectacular case which, in all probability, will launch its characters to fame. As it has been argued, spectacular crime nowadays has become one of the most foolproof formulas to become a celebrity, since it gives the victims and the offenders a huge platform, constant coverage and creates a show around them, which at the same time attracts attention. Nonetheless, the treatment of crime in news media and its spectacular practices also run the risk of becoming too artificial, too shallow and, in the end, too close to

fiction. By basing the coverage of real crimes on practices extracted from crime fiction, we are perpetuating Baudrillard's (1981) simulation, that is, the representation of something without an actual referential. Consequently, due to the trust that the audience puts on news media, the (fictionalized) construction of crime becomes their point of reference when thinking about the reality both of the case that is being covered by the media, but also of the crime issue in general.

The employment of literary practices is not something new to journalism nor something negative if it is used in a sensible way. With the advent of the *New Journalism* in the 1960s and 1970s, the boundaries between fiction literature and journalistic writing became more blurred than ever, since this movement aimed at blending these two worlds together (Eason, 1982). This phenomenon has left some imprints in contemporary journalistic practices, especially when looking at richer and more complex pieces such as reportages. In the mediatic coverage of Daniel Sancho's case, several formulas that could be described as fictionalizing or literary were used, probably with different purposes in mind. Among the examples one can find excerpts like:

The case of Daniel Sancho (29 years old) has been taking plot twists and turns as if it were the most macabre thriller in history. Fact after fact and information after information that is revealed daily about the crime solves several unknowns and generates others. (E.E. #10, 2023)

Koh Pha Ngan (or Phangan) is a paradise and an island of excess. It is reached after 40 minutes by boat from the island of Koh Samui, bigger and with an airport. In its southern part, on a long sandy beach, takes place every month the known as *Full Moon Party*. People from all over the world come to the event, an international sprawl in which there is no lack of alcohol or the forbidden and highly persecuted drugs. But everything forbidden can be done in Thailand and everything forbidden must be practiced at the *Full Moon Party*. That is the scenario in which the macabre and violent murder of the Colombian surgeon Edwin Arrieta, 44, took place, at the hands of, according to his own confession, the Spanish chef Daniel Sancho Bronchalo (...) (E.C. #31, 2023)

Creating narratives that feel closer to fiction than to reality, even when dealing with real-life issues, might generate some sort of distance between the audience and the content they are engaging with (Chouliaraki, 2006), which can reduce the anxiety and fear that is tied to crime news in particular. Being enabled to take a more relaxed approach when consuming violent content, the rapport between media and public is empowered since the pressure surrounding

the need to act after witnessing a crime is diminished. Hyperreal narratives, then, can also affect the audience positively, even if they are inherently distorted.

Some of the strategies that can be observed in the articles analyzed, following Chouliaraki's "elements of fictional storytelling" (2006, pp. 77-78) are the narration of the facts following a chronological order – which can also help "serialize" the case and thus maintain the engagement with the audience for a longer time – and the usage of traditionally literary formulas to open or close the pieces – for instance, using "To be continued..." at the end of one article (E.E. #6, 2023) or beginning a piece as "There's a new plot twist in the macabre story of the Thailand murder" (E.E. #7, 2023) –. In this regard, Eco (1998) states that this sort of unfinished, edging narratives, in which it seems there is always *more* to come, are related to the current obsession we as a society have with accessing extra information; through practices as the ones described, the media fosters this informational insatiability, feeding the audience smaller doses which keeps them engaged for a prolonged time.

In addition to this, the written news media also tends to put an important weight on images when trying to emphasize the spectacular character of an event (Gutiérrez San Miguel, Rodríguez Fidalgo & Gallego Santos, 2010). Even though the focus of this research was put on the written text, it is of special importance how both the official reenactment of the case that Sancho had to perform for the Thai authorities, and the more liberal reproductions that some media outlets decided to execute when they gained access to the crime scene, occupied a central space in the mediatic coverage. The latter is exemplified in articles like *Images of the room shared by Daniel Sancho and Edwin Arrieta come to light* (L.V. #12, 2023), which is at the same time based on some images shared by the TV programme *El Programa del verano*.

The piece focuses on key places and objects present in the crime scene, such as the fridge, which is explored in depth, pointing out how it was organized by the alleged perpetrator "to have more space to store the plastic bags (*that contained Edwin Arrieta's remains*) before taking them to the sea" (L.V. #12, 2023). By performing this remake of the murder case, the narrative comes closer to reality, offering almost an immersive experience to the audience who feels, inevitably, as if they were witnessing the unraveling of the case – when it is actually just a representation of questionable accuracy. These sensationalizing reproductions are one of the clearest examples of how the "absolute fakes", as Eco (1998) would argue,

work in today's society, taking up the place of their real reference in the mind of the public because they are unable to access the "real thing" (Eco, 1998, p.8).

Prado (1999) claimed that between the boundaries of information, entertainment and fiction, a new genre had been born, that of the "info-show" (p.9). This hybridization was and is more clearly seen in audiovisual news media, but it has also permeated written newspapers and tabloids. The mediatic coverage of Daniel Sancho's case is just one of the many examples of this info-show phenomenon that can be seen in nearly all media outlets. As such, it has been transformed from an especially newsworthy crime into a murder mystery, a "whodunnit", as Noel Ceballos rightly claimed in the article *The morbid video of the Sancho crime (and what the police want to cover up with it)* (E.C. #20, 2023), in which he explains that even though there should not be any doubts to be solved, the little new information that journalists can access is exploited until the very last detail.

Following Entman's (2007) conception of framing as a process through which some aspects of reality are carefully selected to craft a narrative based on their connections, this second frame shows how the news media, when trying to give a spectacular character to an event, tends to focus on and overstate common newsworthiness values such as violence, sex and speculations. In Daniel Sancho's case, the emphasis on these aspects creates a narrative that, albeit far from the facts, feeds into the public's curiosity to access vast accounts of information, assuming that the content shared by the news media equals reality. By fostering a long-lasting relationship with its audience through the constant coverage of the case, the media outlets secure almost a *fan* audience, which positively impacts their economic situation. However, the possible consequences that this spectacularized construction of reality might have are yet to be discovered.

6. Conclusions

This study was elaborated with the purpose of analyzing how the most prominent Spanish media outlets have framed the murder case perpetrated by Daniel Sancho, which helps illuminate the general function of framing in journalism and how it is currently being executed. The main conclusion extracted from this study was that the news media tends to construct discourses in a spectacularizing manner, which fosters a powerful engagement with the public while also creating a hyperreal narrative in which mediatic representations have more relevance than the reality they reproduce. The findings were obtained through the use of a frame analysis and a qualitative textual analysis, which allowed me to uncover the different meanings hidden within the news texts part of the sample, while being constantly guided by theories like the society of the spectacle, social typing, framing, or hyperreality.

One of my goals was to study what frames could be extracted from the coverage of Sancho's case. In that line, two major frames were found. The first frame is concerned with narratives that represent Daniel Sancho and Edwin Arrieta as complex characters, providing them with different identities and personal characteristics depending on the angle of the story. The second frame, in turn, focused on practices that enhance the spectacular character of this case, which were found to be based on four pillars: graphic violence, speculations, sex and fictionalizing narratives. Through the employment of these two frames, the Spanish press transformed a real, rather simple and solvable case into a spectacle.

Through this research I came to the conclusion that the news media, because it exists in an ecosystem which is dominated by an extreme competitiveness, is prompted to use these hyperreal narratives, which make stories more marketable. In the end, it is the need to attract and maintain a public which might induce media outlets to rely on spectacular frames. This practice tends to be more popular in audiovisual media, so the fact that it was easily seen in the press analyzed showcases how explicit and spread it is.

The insights obtained from this research, then, are extrapolable, since the case study analyzed, embedded into a popular and striking field such as crime, was chosen with the aim of extracting generalizable conclusions. In any case, there are still many aspects that, due to the nature of this study, were not dug into. Future research on this matter could focus on how the translation of these fictionalizing and spectacularizing frames could potentially affect

other areas of reality, as the current conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, or Israel and Palestine, have been depicted through rather spectacular lenses. Furthermore, although in this case both newspapers and tabloids were taken into consideration, and no major differences were found in their mediatic coverage of the case, a comparative study between different types of media outlets might shed some light on how the medium also influences the discourse. Lastly, it could be interesting to include the perspective of the audience, exploring how they have been critically engaging with this type of mediatic coverage.

Frames are usually used to convey a specific meaning within texts (Baranauskas & Drakulich, 2018), guided by a specific purpose. The frames found in this research seem to perform an entertaining function, steering away from journalism's most traditional purpose. This could be seen as another example of how journalism nowadays is no longer concerned with acting as a mirror of reality, but it has become an actual literary genre, in which journalists take more artistic license. The issue, thereby, lies in the fact that the audience might not be aware of this more liberal approach, and in that case, the relation between them and the media is an unbalanced one, in which the latter consciously distorts their conception of reality.

It could be argued that the news media paradigm is no longer concerned with sharing a true version of facts – in part because what we consider the truth is highly influenced by mechanisms of power and knowledge, thus it is inherently biased (Foucault, 1980) –, but instead it is a “political process that curates knowledge, and gives form to reality and to identity” (Cover, Haw & Thompson, 2022, p.53). In this way, journalistic media distances itself from its traditional purpose of informing and keeping a neutral stance, and influenced by society's desire, as Žižek (2002) and Eco (1998) argued, of the fake and the unreal, crafts news stories in a spectacular and appealing manner, making the entertainment factor prevalent over other functions like education or information.

This research has shown that the crafting of a hyperreal narrative is achieved through the use of factors like spectacularizing and fictionalizing discourses, which at the same time tend to be more easily observed when covering potentially controversial issues like crime, violence or gossip-related topics. Nevertheless, hyperreality can be transferred into other areas such as economics or politics. The need to maintain an engagement with the audience, paired with the highly competitive market in which the news media is immersed now, makes these practices

an apt strategy for journalists to stand out while creating something close to a fanbase. When dealing with the fictionalized framing of reality, it is important to stress that I am not referring to the dissemination of *fake news*. As Cover, Haw and Thompson (2022) claimed, fake news refer to discourses that do not represent a different version of reality, but actually “replace it” (p.49); in contrast, *hyperreal* news are based on true facts which are portrayed through a distorting lens.

Taking one of Flyvbjerg’s (2001) questions upon which social scientific research should be based, *Where are we going?*, it could be asserted that journalism seems to be heading towards an unavoidable hyperreal state, in which the constructions shared by media outlets will be considered the equivalent of the events they are covering. With the purpose of upholding the public’s interest, it is likely that media frames will focus on spectacular details, as has been the case in regards to Daniel Sancho’s murder, and thus convey meanings that might not be completely unreal, but will not align with the truth either. If these fictionalizing practices are transferred into political or economic realms, it could have a detrimental effect on civic engagement – namely, the public would notice that the reality does not correspond with what the media is sharing, and they will consequently lose their trust in this system. Some previews of this have already been seen through, for instance, the mediatic coverage of Joe Biden’s victory in the US presidential election in November of 2020, which arguably culminated in the riots of the Capitol of the United States in January of 2021 (Jeppesen, Hoechsmann & ulthiin, 2022). Similarly, an exaggerated, controversial and far from the truth treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic also led to a surge in the anti-vaccination movement (Jeppesen, Hoechsmann & ulthiin, 2022).

These two social responses were caused, in part, due to the high volume of misinformation in regards to both topics, something that in the context of the pandemic has been termed as *infodemic* (Cinelli et al., 2020). The information regarding Trump’s defeat in the election, as well as the spread and the characteristics of the COVID-19 health emergency, were based on real facts, but framed in a way that aimed at provoking a reaction in the public by highlighting the most controversial and morbid aspects. Moreover, in the same way that Sancho and Arrieta were constructed as almost fictional characters, many politicians like Zelensky, Trump or Putin, are also being framed via a social typing perspective, nearly transforming them into pure representations. The translation of hyperreal practices into reality can have severe consequences, as it can influence opinion and decision making – as an

illustration, a mediatic coverage focused on a negative framing of the immigration issue and the European Union in general, reinforcing “pre-existing attitudes”, contributed to the success of the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom (Gavin, 2018, p.840).

Notwithstanding, hyperreal coverage also has relevant effects even in more traditionally sensationalistic areas like crime. The frames that shaped the mediatic coverage of Daniel Sancho’s case, for instance, represented both the offender and the victim following social types that are recurring – victimized villains and unworthy victims are part of the contemporary mediatic zeitgeist – but that might not necessarily reflect their real identities. It has been proven that the sharing of these discourses that can potentially evoke strong emotions will also foster a strong relation between outlets and audiences, even if these discourses are usually constructed upon the prevalence of the normativity and the rejection of everything that deviates from it (Cover, Haw & Thompson, 2022). While reproducing ideas that are questionable from a moral and ethical point of view, media outlets also ensure the loyalty of their readers.

A hyperreal news paradigm serves mainly the purposes of media outlets, even if it might seem as if it is the audience’s curiosity that prompts this treatment of reality. Considering that knowledge is power, in this case the media is the only one who can access reality as it is, and by conveniently framing it, it disrupts the public’s conception of it. Even if currently the audience has high levels of agency, the influence that news media can have on it is unquestionable. Moreover, the individuals represented in news stories through these *hyper* frames are not empowered either, since their image and reputation will be permanently affected, for better or for worse, by the discourses surrounding them. In that line, and as it has been argued throughout the research, once a person becomes a criminal, especially a murderer, in the eyes of the media, they are very rarely able to get their previous identity back.

Given that these new media practices seem to be unavoidable, we should reflect, not only as researchers but also as both communication professionals and audiences, about whether or not this is the direction we want to be heading towards. Several authors have asserted that the news does not attempt to reflect reality, but actually it is just an extension of media and journalistic practices (Fishman, 1982; Tuchman, 1978). Moreover, Molotch and Lester claimed that the news media is based on the practices of those “having the power to

determine the experience of others”, which includes media outlets and individual professionals (1974, p.105). In this way, it seems that through the dissemination of an altered, spectacularized version of reality, media outlets impose their own perspective and enlarge the power imbalance with the public.

With this research I offer a new approach to the exploration of mediatic framing of reality, by putting the focus on an usually spectacularized area like crime, and translating the findings into the general journalistic paradigm. The hyperreal framing that was found through this study will, surely, forge a stronger engagement between outlets and public, maybe even creating the sort of followers that traditional news media is in need of in order to thrive in such a competitive environment. However, what is at stake here is the credibility and trust that we as citizens put on the news media and its construction of reality. Baudrillard (1991) argued, thirty years ago in the context of the Gulf War, that wars were fought equally in the media and in real life. Now that we are immersed in a media environment in which it seems that everything has to be a story, let us not fall into fictionalizing, spectacular and, in the end, hyperreal narratives that will kill victims more than once.

References

Altheide, D.L., & Snow, R.P. (1979). *Media Logic*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Altheide, D.L. (2013). Media Logic, Social Control, and Fear, *Communication Theory*, vol. 23, n.3, pp. 223-238, <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12017>

Aragon, C. (2021). Building a Case for Social Justice: Situated Case Studies in Nonideal Social Theory, in Grasswick, H., & McHugh, N.A. (ed.) *Making the Case: Feminist and critical race philosophers engage case studies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 23-45.

Asp, K. (2014). News media logic in a New Institutional perspective, *Journalism Studies*, vol.15, n.3, pp. 256-270, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.889456>

Baranauskas, A.J., & Drakulich, K.M. (2018). Media Construction of Crime Revisited: Media Types, Consumer Contexts, and Frames of Crime and Justice, *Criminology*, vol. 4, no. 56, pp. 679–714, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12189>

Barata, F. (2003). Los mass media y la información criminal: El ‘caso King’ y las perversiones mediáticas, *Quaderns del CAC*, n.17, p.49-55, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=860757>

Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and simulation*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

Baudrillard, J. (1991). *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Bazeley, P. (2013.). *Qualitative Data Analysis: Practical Strategies*. London, Sage Publications

Berning, N. (2011). *Narrative Means to Journalistic Ends*, Wiesbaden: VS, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften

Blassnig, S., & Esser, F. (2022). The “Audience Logic” in Digital Journalism: An Exploration of Shifting News Logics Across Media Types and Time, *Journalism Studies*, vol. 23, n.1, pp. 48-69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2021.2000339>

Bock, M.A. (2021). *Seeing Justice: Witnessing, Crime and Punishment in Visual Media*, New York: Oxford University Press USA

Brill, J., Guenther, L., Ehrhardt, W., & Ruhrmann, G. (2021). Crime in Television News: Do News Factors Predict the Mention of a Criminal’s Country of Origin?, In Wiest, J. B. (ed) *Mass Mediated Representations Of Crime And Criminality*, Bingley: Emerald Publishing, pp. 67-92.

Brookes, M., Wilson, D., Yardley, E., Rahman, M., & Rowe, S. (2005). Faceless: High-profile murders and public recognition, *Crime Media Culture: An International Journal*, vol.11, n.1, pp. 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659014567969>

Brown, W.J., Duane, J.J., & Fraser, B.P. (1997). Media coverage and public opinion of the O.J. Simpson trial: Implications for the criminal justice system, *Communication Law and Policy*, vol.2, n.2, pp. 261-287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10811689709368625>

Bruzzi, S. (2016). Making a genre: the case of the contemporary true crime documentary, *Law and Humanities*, vol.10, n.2, pp. 249-280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17521483.2016.1233741>

Cavender, G., & Jurik, N. (2016). Crime, criminology and the crime genre, In: Knepper, P., & Johansen, A (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 320-338

Chamberlain, J., Miller, M.K., & Jehle, A. (2006). Celebrities in the Courtroom: Legal Responses, Psychological Theory and Empirical Research, *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, vol. 8, n.3, pp. 551-572. <https://scholarship.law.vanderbilt.edu/jetlaw/vol8/iss3/2/>

Chancer, L.S. (1998). Playing Gender Against Race Through High-Profile Crime Cases, *Violence Against Women*, vol.4, n.1, pp.100-113.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801298004001007>

Chermak, S. M. (1995). *Victims in the News: Crime and the American News Media*, Boulder: Westview Press

Chouliaraki, L. (2006). *The Spectatorship of Suffering*, London: Sage Publications

Cinelli, M., Quattrocioni, W., Galeazzi, A., Valensise, C.M., Brugnoti, E., Schmidt, A.L., Zola, P., Zollo, F., & Scala, A. (2020). The COVID-19 social media infodemic, *Scientific Reports*, vol.10, n.1, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-73510-5>

Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). *The Mediated Construction of Reality*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Cover, R., Haw, A., & Thompson, J. (2022). *Fake News in Digital Cultures: Technology, Populism and Digital Misinformation*, Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited

D'Angelo, P. (2002). News framing as a multiparadigmatic research program: A response to Entman, *Journal of Communication*, vol.52, n.4, pp. 870-888,
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2002.tb02578.x>

Debord, G. (1967). *Society of the Spectacle*, London: Rebel Press

De Vreese, C.H. (2005). News Framing: Theory and Typology, *Information Design Journal*, vol. 13, n.1, pp. 51-62, <https://doi.org/10.1075/IDJDD.13.1.06VRE>

Durham, A.M., Elrod, H.P., & Kinkade, P.T. (1995). Images of crime and justice: Murder and the “true crime” genre, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, vol.23, n.2, pp. 143-152.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2352\(95\)00002-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2352(95)00002-8)

Eason, D.L. (1982). New Journalism, Metaphor and Culture, *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol.15, n.4, pp. 142-149, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-3840.1982.1504_142.x

Eco, U. (1998). *Faith in Fakes: Travels in Hyperreality*, London: The Random House Group Limited

Entman, R.E. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm, *Journal of Communication*, vol.43, n.4, pp. 51-58, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>

Entman, R.E. (2007). Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power, *Journal of Communication*, vol.57, n.1, pp. 163-173, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00336.x>

Fathallah, J. (2022). Reading Serial Killer Fanfiction: What's Fannish about It?, *Humanities*, vol. 11, n.65, <https://doi.org/10.3390/h11030065>

Fishman, M. (1982). News and Nonevents: Making the Visible Invisible, in Berkowitz, D. (ed.), *Social Meanings of News*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 210-229.

Florea, M. (2013). Media Violence and the Cathartic Effect, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 92, pp. 349–353, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.683>

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, New York: Pantheon Books

Fox, R.L., Van Sickel, R.W., & Steiger, T.L. (2007). *Tabloid Justice: Criminal Justice in an Age of Media Frenzy*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers

Gamson, W.A. (1989). News as Framing: Comments on Graber, *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 33, n.2, pp. 157-161. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764289033002006>

Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 95, pp. 1-37, <https://doi.org/10.1086/229213>

Gavin, N.T. (2018). Media definitely do matter: Brexit, immigration, climate change and beyond, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol.20, n.4, pp. 827-845. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118799260>

Gemzøe, L.S. (2021). The Kim Wall Murder Serialized: Ethics & Aesthetics in High-Profile True Crime, *Series: International Journal of TV Serial Narratives*, vol.7, n.1, pp. 81-90. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2421-454X/12483>

Gilchrist, K. (2010). “Newsworthy” Victims?: Exploring differences in Canadian local press coverage of missing/murdered Aboriginal and White women, *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 10, n.4, pp. 373-390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2010.514110>

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Boston: Northeastern University Press

Greer, C. & McLaughlin, E. (2011). ‘Trial by Media’: Policing, the 24-7 News Mediasphere and the ‘Politics of Outrage’, *Theoretical Criminology*, vol. 15, n.1, pp. 23-46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480610387461>

Greer, C., & Reiner, R. (2015). Mediated Mayhem: Media, Crime and Criminal Justice, In: Maguire, M., Morgan, R. & Reiner, R. (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 245-278

Gutiérrez San Miguel, B., Rodríguez Fidalgo, M., & Gallego Santos, M.C. (2012). Analysing the development of TV news programmes: from information to dramatization, *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, vol.65, pp. 879-921, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41926496_Analysing_the_development_of_TV_news_programmes_from_information_to_dramatization

Hansen, A., & Machin, D. (2013). *Media and Communication Research Methods*, London: Red Globe Press

Hindman, E. B. (1999). “Lynch-Mob Journalism” vs. “Compelling Human Drama”: Editorial Responses to Coverage of the Pretrial Phase of the O.J. Simpson Case, *Journalism & Mass*

Communication Quarterly, vol. 76, n.3, pp. 499-515.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909907600307>

Hunt, S., & Jaworska, S. (2019). Intersections of nationality, gender, race and crime in news reporting: The case of Oscar Pistorius – Olympian and murderer, *Discourse, Context & Media*, vol. 30, pp.1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2019.100299>

Hurley, G. (2017). Managing High-Profile Cases, Trends in State Courts report, [pdf], <https://nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/Managing-High-Profile-Cases.pdf>

Jeppesen, S., Hoechsmann, M., ulthiin, i.h., VanDyke, D., & McKee, M. (2022). *The Capitol Riots: Digital Media, Disinformation, and Democracy Under Attack*, New York: Routledge

Jewkes, Y. (2009). *Crime and Media*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd

Jewkes, Y. (2011). *Media and Crime*, 2nd edn, London: Sage Publications Ltd

Johnson, K.A. (2015). Trial by Media, The Megaspectacle and the Competition of Narratives: The Framing of The Oscar Pistorius Murder Trial by News24, Master Dissertation, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town, <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/20058> [Accessed 18th January 2024]

Jong, L., & M'Charek, A. (2017). The high-profile case as 'fire object': Following the Marianne Vaatstra murder case through the media, *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal*, vol. 14, n.5, pp. 347-363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659017718036>

Katz, J. (1987). What makes crime 'news'?, *Media, Culture and Society*, vol.9, n.1, pp. 47-75, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634438700900100>

Kellner, D. (2003). *Media Spectacle*, London: Routledge

Kellner, D. (2005). Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle, *Fast Capitalism*, vol.1, n.1, pp. 58-71, <https://doi.org/10.32855/fcapital.200501.004>

Kellner, D. (2008). Media Spectacle and the 2008 Presidential Election, *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, vol. 9, n.6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708609347994>

Klapp, O.E. (1962). *Heroes, Villains and Fools: The Changing American Character*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Kuckartz, U. (2014). *Qualitative text analysis: A guide to methods, practice & using software*, London: Sage Publications

Kuypers, J.A. (2009). Framing Analysis from a Rhetorical Perspective, In: D'Angelo, P., & Kuypers, J.A. (eds.) *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, pp. 286-311.

Lee, C. (2008). The Gay Panic Defense, *UC Davis Law Review*, vol. 42, pp. 471-566, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1141875>

Luxx Mishou, A. (2019). Murder for a Penny: Jack the Ripper and the Structural Impact of Sensational Reporting, *The Wilkie Collins Journal*, vol. 16, pp.1-21, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26996133>

Manne, K. (2018). *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Linström, M., & Marais, W. (2012). Qualitative News Frame Analysis: A Methodology, *Communitas*, vol. 17, pp. 21-38, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351884528_QUALITATIVE_NEWS_FRAME_ANALYSIS_A_METHODODOLOGY_Communitas

Maxian, W. (2014). Power to the People? Emotional Components of Media Power, Mobile ICTs, and Their Potential to Alter Individual-Media Dependency Relations, *Mass Communication and Society*, vol.17, n.2, pp. 274-298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2013.830133>

McCombs, M.E., & Shaw, D.L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol.36, n.2, pp. 176-187, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2747787>

McNair, B. 2000. *Journalism and Democracy: An evaluation of the political public sphere*, London: Routledge

Merry, S.E. (1984). Rethinking Gossip and Scandal, in Black, D. (ed.) *Toward a General Theory of Social Control*, Cambridge: Academic press, pp. 271-302

Meyrowitz, J. (2008). Power, Pleasure, Patterns: Intersecting Narratives of Media Influence, *Journal of Communication*, vol.58, n.4, pp. 641-663, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00406.x>

Molotch, H., & Lester, M. (1974). News as purposive behavior: On the strategic use of routine events, accidents and scandals, *American Sociological Review*, vol.39, n.1, pp. 101-112, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094279>

Neely, C.L. (2015). *You're Dead—So What?: Media, Police, and the Invisibility of Black Women as Victims of Homicide*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press

Neubauer, T. (2023). *The Mediatization of the O.J. Simpson Case: From Reality Television to Filmic Adaptation*, Bielefeld: transcript

Nunn, H., & Biressi, A. (2010). 'A trust betrayed': Celebrity and the work of emotion, *Celebrity Studies*, vol.1, n.1, pp. 49-64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392390903519065>

Peelo, M., Francis, B., Soothill, K., Pearson, J., & Ackerley, A. (2004). Newspaper reporting and the public construction of homicide, *British Journal of Criminology*, n. 4, pp. 256-275, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/44.2.256>

Peelo, M. (2006). Framing Homicide Narratives in Newspapers: Mediated Witness and the Construction of Virtual Victimhood, *Crime Media Culture: An International Journal*, vol.2, n.2, pp. 159-175, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659006065404>

Phillips, B. (2016). Crime Fiction: A Global Phenomenon, *IAFOR Journal of Literature & Librarianship*, vol.5, n.1, pp. 5-15. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ijl.5.1.01>

Prado, E. (1999). Traficantes de emociones, *Diálogos de la comunicación*, n.55, pp.8-17, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=2701214>

Presser, L., & Sandberg, S. (2015). *Narrative Criminology: Understanding Stories of Crime*, New York: New York University Press

Rajendran, L., & Thesinghraj, P. (2014). The Impact of New Media on Traditional Media, *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, vol.2, n.4, pp. 609-616. <https://www.idosi.org/mejsr/mejsr22%284%2914/20.pdf>

Russo, O.T. (2019). How to Get Away with Murder: the “Gay Panic” Defense, *Touro Law Review*, vol.35, n.2, pp. 811-837, <https://digitalcommons.tourolaw.edu/lawreview/vol35/iss2/9>

Sacco, V. (1995). Media Constructions of Crime, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 539, pp. 141-154, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716295539001011>

Schmid, D. (2005). *Natural Born Celebrities: Serial Killers in American Culture*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Seago, K., & Lei, V. (2014). ‘Looking East and Looking West’: Crime Genre Conventions and Tropes, *Comparative Critical Studies*, vol.11, n.2-3, pp. 315-335. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3366/ccs.2014.0131>

Seltzer, M. (1997). Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere, *October*, vol.80, pp.3-26, <https://doi.org/10.2307/778805>

Silverstone, R. (2007). *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Smith, R.B. (2022). *The Spectacle of Criminal Justice: Mass Media and the Criminal Trial*, Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited

Steenberg, L. (2017). Crime and Celebrity, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.26>

Suresh, N., & George, L.S. (2021). Trial by Media: An Overview, *International Journal of Law Management and Humanities*, vol.4, n.2, pp. 267-272. <http://doi.one/10.1732/IJLMH.26050>

Tankard, J.W. (2001). The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing, in Reese, S.D., Gandy, O.H., & Grant, A.E. (eds.) *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, New York: Routledge, pp. 95-106

Tomei, J., Cramer, R.J., Boccaccini, M.T., & Panza, N.R. (2017). The Gay Panic Defense: Legal Defense Strategy or Reinforcement of Homophobia in Court?, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 35, n.21-22, pp. 4239-4261, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517713713>

Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making News*, New York: Free Press

Van Dijk, J. (2009). Free the Victim: A Critique of the Western Conception of Victimhood, *International Review of Victimology*, vol. 16, n.1, pp. 1-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026975800901600101>

Weldon, S.L. (2008). Intersectionality, In: Goertz, G., & Mazur, A.G. (eds.), *Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 193-218.

Wilson, D., Tolputt, H., Howe, N., & Kemp, D. (2010). When serial killers go unseen: The case of Trevor Joseph Hardy, *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal*, vol.6, n.2, pp. 153-167, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659010369952>

Wimmer R.D., & Dominick J.R. (2006). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*, 8th edn, Canada: Thomson Wadsworth

Wittchen, M.B. (2023). Between harm and sensationalism: Court reporters negotiating objectivity when reflecting on ethical dilemmas in the Submarine Murder Trial, *Nordicom Review*, vol. 44, n.1, pp. 106-122. <https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2023-0006>

Wiltenburg, J. (2004). True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism, *The American Historical Review*, vol.109, n.5, pp. 1377-1404. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/109.5.1377>

Žižek, S. (2002). Welcome to the desert of the real! Five essays on September 11 and related dates, London: Verso.

7. Appendix

7.1. Final sample of articles

In the table below one can find a list of all the empirical material that composed the final sample of this research, with links to the original articles.

Code	Title	Media outlet	Link	Date
E.E. #1	Daniel Sancho: “Soy culpable, pero yo era su rehén. Estaba obsesionado conmigo y quería que fuera su novio”	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elespanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230806/daniel-sancho-culpable-rehen-obsesionado-conmigo-queria-novio/784671585_0.html	6/08/2023
E.E. #2	Daniel Sancho: “La Policía me trata muy bien porque estoy colaborando. Mañana ya sí que voy a la cárcel”	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elespanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230807/daniel-sancho-policia-trata-bien-colaborando-mañana-voy-carcel/784921542_0.html	7/08/2023
E.E. #3	Lo que le espera a Daniel Sancho: así es la difícil vida para un extranjero en una cárcel tailandesa	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elespanol.com/enclaves/historias/20230808/espera-daniel-sancho-dificil-vida-extranjero-carcel-tailandesa/784921817_0.html	8/08/2023
E.E. #4	Caso Daniel Sancho: la versión de que Edwin Arrieta le chantajeaba con hacer públicas fotos íntimas	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elespanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230808/caso-daniel-sancho-version-edwin-arrieta-chantajeaba-hacer-publicas-fotos-intimas/784921760_0.html	8/08/2023
E.E. #5	Analizamos el lenguaje no verbal de Daniel Sancho antes de entrar en prisión	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elespanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230809/analizamos-leng	9/08/2023

			uaje-no-verbal-daniel-sancho-entrar-prision-no-tristeza-arrepentimiento/785171590_0.html	
E.E. #6	Las mil y una caras de Daniel Sancho, el niño rico que soñaba con el tenis y acabó en prisión por matar a su amante	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elsepanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230812/mil-caras-daniel-sancho-nino-rico-sonaba-tenis-aca-bo-prision-matar-amante/785171590_0.html	12/08/23
E.E. #7	Daniel Sancho, eufórico, bebiendo y saltando en la piscina horas después del atroz asesinato de Edwin	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elsepanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230814/daniel-sancho-euforico-bebiendo-saltando-piscina-horas-despues-atroz-asesinato-edwin/786671557_0.html	14/08/23
E.E. #8	Daniel Sancho compró un cuchillo de carnicero y productos de limpieza por 40€ el día antes del crimen	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elsepanol.com/reportajes/20230814/daniel-sancho-compro-cuchillo-carnicero-productos-limpieza-eur-dia-crime/786671529_0.html	14/08/23
E.E. #9	Edwin Arrieta quería vivir en Barcelona con Daniel Sancho como pareja de hecho: los 3 mensajes clave que envió	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elsepanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230821/edwin-arrieta-queria-vivir-espana-daniel-sancho-pareja-hecho-ven-luz-mensajes-clave/788421208_0.html	21/08/23
E.E. #10	Así fue como Daniel Sancho desmembró el cuerpo de Edwin Arrieta: el dibujo que trazó a la policía tailandesa	<i>El Español</i>	https://www.elsepanol.com/corazon/famosos/20230823/daniel-sancho-desmembro-cuerpo	23/08/23

			-edwin-arrieta-dibujo-trazo-policia-tailandesa/788921207_0.html	
E.P. #11	Edwin Arrieta, el cirujano hecho a pulso que soñaba con conocer el mundo	<i>El País</i>	https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-08-12/edwin-arrieta-el-cirujano-hecho-a-pulso-que-sonaba-con-conocer-todo-el-mundo.html	12/08/23
L.V. #12	Salen a la luz las imágenes de la habitación que compartieron Daniel Sancho y Edwin Arrieta	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/television/20230810/9161206/salen-luz-imagenes-habitacion-compartieron-daniel-sancho-edwin-arrieta.html	10/08/23
L.V. #13	Daniel Sancho “iba a casarse con otra persona”: el posible móvil del asesinato de Edwin Arrieta	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/television/20230817/9171530/daniel-sancho-iba-casarse-persona-posible-movil-asesinato-edwin-arrieta.html	17/08/23
L.V. #14	La autopsia revela que Arrieta murió degollado por Daniel Sancho, según la policía tailandesa	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/gente/20230821/9177617/autopsia-revela-arrieta-murio-degollado-daniel-sancho-policia-tailandesa-mmn.html	21/08/23
L.V. #15	El último audio de Edwin Arrieta horas antes de morir presuntamente asesinado por Daniel Sancho	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/television/20230824/9183307/ultimo-audio-edwin-arrieta-horas-morir-presuntamente-asesinado-daniel-sancho.html	24/08/23
L.V. #16	El dibujo que Daniel Sancho hizo para explicar cómo desmembró el cuerpo de Edwin	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/television/20230824/9183307/ultimo-audio-edwin-arrieta-horas-morir-presuntamente-asesinado-daniel-sancho.html	24/08/23

	Arrieta		184156/dibujo-daniel-sancho-hizo-explicar-como-des-membro-cuerpo-edwin-arrieta.html	
L.V. #17	Reveladas las imágenes de Daniel Sancho explicando a la policía tailandesa como mató a Edwin Arrieta: “Lo cogí hacia mí, lo tiré y se golpeó”	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/television/20230904/9204932/imagenes-daniel-sancho-explicando-policia-as-esinato-edwin-cogi-tire-se-golpeo-mm.html	4/09/23
L.V. #18	Daniel Sancho pide a la policía tailandesa recuperar únicamente esta prenda de vestir	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/gente/20230909/9215459/daniel-sancho-pide-policia-tailandesa-recuperar-prenda-valor-sentimental-pmv.html	9/09/23
L.V. #19	Daniel Sancho fue expulsado de un club de tenis con 15 años y su padre tuvo que intervenir: “Es un chico algo conflictivo”	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	https://www.lavanguardia.com/gente/20230918/9235321/daniel-sancho-expulsado-club-tenis-15-anos-padre-intervenir-chico-conflictivo-mm.html	18/09/23
E.C. #20	El vídeo morboso del crimen de Sancho (y lo que la policía quiere tapar con él)	<i>El Confidencial</i>	https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2023-09-07/caso-daniel-sancho-crimen-tailandia-video_3730287/	7/09/23
20M #21	Todo lo que su Instagram revela sobre Daniel Sancho, el hijo del actor Rodolfo Sancho acusado de asesinato en Tailandia	<i>20 Minutos</i>	https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/5162713/0/todo-instagram-revela-sobre-daniel-sancho-bronchalo-hijo-actor-rodolfo-sancho-asesinato-colombiano-tailandia/	5/08/23
20M #22	Así era Edwin Arrieta, el cirujano colombiano asesinado	<i>20 Minutos</i>	https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/5162713/0/todo-instagram-revela-sobre-daniel-sancho-bronchalo-hijo-actor-rodolfo-sancho-asesinato-colombiano-tailandia/	20/08/23

	presuntamente por Daniel Sancho: “Iba a misa todos los domingos”		162864/0/asi-era-edwin-arrieta-cirujano-colombiano-asesinado-por-daniel-sancho-tailandia/	
20M #23	Daniel Sancho asesinó a Edwin Arrieta “por amor”: “No se entendían y rumió este crimen”	<i>20 Minutos</i>	https://www.20minutos.es/television/daniel-sancho-asesino-edwin-arrieta-por-amor-no-se-entendian-rumiaba-este-crimen-5178809/	5/10/23
H #24	Recordamos el posado más familiar de Daniel Sancho en ¡Hola! junto a su padre y a su abuelo	<i>Hola</i>	https://www.hola.com/hemeroteca/20230818349268/daniel-sancho-posado-familiar-rodolfo-sancho-sanchogracia/	18/08/23
P #25	Daniel Sancho: la dura vida que le espera tras el macabro crimen	<i>Pronto</i>	https://www.pronto.es/noticias-del-corazon/famosos/daniel-sancho-dura-vida-le-espera-macabro-crimen-54651.html	13/08/23
P #26	Daniel Sancho: las primeras fotos en la cárcel de Tailandia dos meses después de su arresto	<i>Pronto</i>	https://www.pronto.es/noticias-del-corazon/famosos/daniel-sancho-primeras-fotos-carcel-tailandia-dos-meses-arresto-56250.html	12/10/23
P #27	Daniel Sancho y Edwin Arrieta: toda la verdad sobre la relación que mantenían	<i>Pronto</i>	https://www.pronto.es/noticias-del-corazon/famosos/daniel-sancho-edwin-arrieta-toda-verdad-sobre-relacion-mantenian-54530.html	8/08/23
L #28	La impactante imagen de un desmejorado Daniel Sancho tras dos meses en la cárcel	<i>Lecturas</i>	https://www.lecturas.com/actualidad/impactante-imagen-desmejorado-d	14/08/23

			aniel-sancho-tras-dos-meses-carcel-146331	
L #29	Las reveladoras palabras de Daniel Sancho a uno de sus amigos antes de ingresar en la cárcel	<i>Lecturas</i>	https://www.lecturas.com/actualidad/reveladoras-palabras-daniel-sancho-uno-sus-amigos-antes-ingresar-carcel-exclusiva_143295	24/08/23
L #30	El momento de la reconstrucción del crimen en que Daniel Sancho se derrumba por completo	<i>Lecturas</i>	https://www.lecturas.com/actualidad/momento-reconstruccion-crimen-que-daniel-sancho-se-derrumba-por-completo_144487#google_vignette	7/09/23
E.C. #31	Asesinato macabro en la isla de los excesos: así fue el crimen confesado por Daniel Sancho	<i>El Confidencial</i>	https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2023-08-06/asesinato-macabro-en-la-isla-de-los-excesos-asi-fue-el-crimen-de-daniel-sancho_3714270/	6/08/23
H #32	Así es la vida de Daniel Sancho en prisión: medicación para el estrés, corte de pelo y una petición denegada	<i>Hola</i>	https://www.hola.com/actualidad/20230810237158/daniel-sancho-primeros-dias-prision/	10/08/23
E.P. #33	La policía de Tailandia investiga los contactos de Daniel Sancho antes y después de matar a Edwin Arrieta	<i>El País</i>	https://elpais.com/espana/2023-08-11/la-policia-de-tailandia-investiga-los-contactos-de-daniel-sancho-antes-y-despues-de-matar-a-edwin-arrieta.html	11/08/23

7.2. Example of frame analysis

The below pictures show two examples of how the frame analysis was executed in articles from a newspaper (E.E. #10) and a tabloid (L #29) respectively. The different colors refer to different aspects – quotes and sources, metaphors, depictions... – that I paid attention to while conducting this analysis. Additionally, memos and case summaries can be found. No example of the qualitative textual analysis has been shown because all the findings are summed up in the Appendix 7.3; moreover, it felt tedious to just include lists of open codes with no context or meanings associated with them.

Overall: journalistic article that focuses on how Sancho shared with the police how the dismembering of Arrieta took place. Strong linear components, not info/educational purpose, but an entertainment one. Fictional-like narrative, good example of entertainment.

TEE #10

Así fue cómo Daniel Sancho desmembró el cuerpo de Edwin Arrieta: el dibujo que trazó a la policía tailandesa *headline*

El hijo de Rodolfo Sancho mostró a las autoridades de Tailandia cómo llevó a cabo el descuartizamiento del colombiano. *subheading*

El caso de Daniel Sancho (29 años) ha ido dando giros de guion como si se tratara del thriller más macabro de la historia. Dato tras dato e información tras información que se desvela a diario sobre el crimen resuelve varias incógnitas y genera otras. Han pasado 16 días desde que el hijo de Rodolfo Sancho (48) ingresó en la cárcel y 21 desde que, presuntamente, asesinó y descuartizó a Edwin Arrieta. *dead*

very fiction-esque, doesn't give too much info away

En un primer momento, se dijo que había dismembrado el cadáver en 14 trozos, después en 15 y finalmente en 17. Ahora, la policía tailandesa ha desvelado el dibujo que Sancho les trazó en el que mostraba cómo llevó a cabo su desagradable plan. *lots of detail*

El agente a cargo de la investigación, ^(source) Surachate Hakpam, se lo mostraba a la reportera de En boca de todos trasladada al país asiático. El también conocido como Big Joke revelaba el verdadero paradero de Sancho, el cual se pensó desde un primer momento que era la prisión tailandesa de Koh Samui. Según declaró, "Daniel no ha estado nunca en la prisión de Koh Samui", sino que dormía en la de Surat Thani y que sólo era trasladado a la de Samui para reunirse con su madre, Silvia Bronchalo (48) y realizar los interrogatorios. *contradiction, reputation of Thai of police!*

La otra noticia también desconcertó a los oyentes de Cuatro y a los propios periodistas. Y es que fue el propio chef, el que dibujó de su puño y letra el paso a paso del desmembramiento del colombiano. Una imagen que perturba a cualquiera. De todos los trozos que hizo del cuerpo, por el momento sólo se han encontrado ocho. Código 10 ha tenido acceso al boceto. La cabeza, el torso, las partes superiores de los brazos, las inferiores, las manos, los genitales, los muslos, las piernas y los pies. Un total de 17 cortes. Este fue el modus operandi que realizó a cabo Sancho antes de deshacerse de los restos en el mar y en el vertedero el pasado 2 de agosto, día del crimen. Como se puede observar en la imagen, cada corte tenía un motivo y no fue una decisión tomada a la ligera. Él ya sabía que acabaría descuartizando a Edwin. El día anterior, Daniel se desplazó a una tienda y fue captado por las cámaras de seguridad comprando varios objetos, entre ellos bolsas de plástico grandes, un gran cuchillo, guantes de goma, esponjas y detergente. *very detailed, not necessary though!*

No fue hasta el 5 de agosto cuando confesó el asesinato. "Soy culpable, pero yo era el rehén de Edwin. Me tenía como rehén. Era una jaula de cristal, pero era una jaula. Me hizo destruir la relación con mi novia, me ha obligado a hacer cosas que nunca hubiera hecho. El estaba obsesionado conmigo. Me engañó, me hizo creer que lo que quería era hacer negocios conmigo, meter dinero en la empresa de la que soy socio. Que hiciéramos cosas juntos, que fuéramos a México, Chile, Colombia, a abrir un restaurante. Pero era todo mentira. Lo único que quería era a mí, que fuera su novio. Cada vez que intentaba alejarme de él, me amenazaba", declaraba a EFE. *no premeditation, he's a villain*

Para él, su razón de peso por la que debía de sesgar la vida del colombiano radicaba en unas "amenazas" por parte de Arrieta con unos videos íntimos del chef si éste decidía romper su relación -la cual comenzó el año pasado- y que pondrían en jaque la reputación de su padre, Rodolfo. *Edwin as a villain, interesting use of metaphors... gay panic!*

Bringing dad to forefront gay panic one again

Biggie grandfather to forefront,
ity disburse, also dramatic because
he might not be able to avoid death penalty

Ahora, el nieto de Sancho Gracia se enfrenta a la condena más dura: la pena de muerte. La policía tailandesa ya ha descartado reducirla y conmutarla por cadena perpetua. No prepararemos ningún informe para pedir una reducción de la condena. No lo hemos hecho y no podemos hacerlo, subrayaba Big Joke a Efe

7

Overall: teasing article focused on a morbid aspect - Sancho's last words before he got in jail. The actual words aren't revealed until the middle of the article, showing the intention of the tabloid to keep readers on the edge. The words excuse the one asking the media to not believe all that they relate. The image pinned of Arrieta by Jancos contrasts with the one pinned that Arrieta's sister, who describes him in a positive way, and criticizes the way the media has been destroying her brother's image. Good that they included her voice and testimony.

LF#29
Las reveladoras palabras de Daniel Sancho a uno de sus amigos antes ingresar en la cárcel Headline

attention-grabbing + dramatic

Para sorpresa de muchos, tras ser detenido Daniel tuvo la oportunidad de escribir a personas de su círculo cercano. Lecturas.com ha tenido acceso a ese último mensaje Subheading

exclusivity of the info, being granted a preferential treatment

Daniel Sancho (29 años) se encuentra en prisión provisional desde que confesara el asesinato y desmembramiento de Edwin Arrieta en Tailandia, una tragedia que ha conmocionado a todos por la dureza de lo ocurrido. En medio de todas las informaciones y noticias sobre el hijo de Rodolfo Sancho y Silvia Bronchalo, muchos se sorprendieron porque el acusado de asesinato tuviera acceso a su teléfono móvil con el que pudo hablar con la prensa, su familia, amigos y entorno más cercano. "Creo que se portan bien conmigo porque mañana ya me voy a una cárcel de Koh Samui, a una celda con otras 20 personas", dijo en declaraciones a 'El programa del verano' antes de entrar en prisión. (JWC)

emphasis

preferential treatment bc he is privileged and famous

Lead

Lecturas.com ha tenido acceso a la conversación que Daniel Sancho mantuvo con una de las personas de su círculo más cercano. Las reveladoras palabras que el hijo de Rodolfo Sancho les transmitió instantes antes de ver cómo su vida se truncaba para siempre. Un mensaje emotivo y doloroso con el que el chef se despedía de los que han estado siempre a su lado hasta nuevo aviso. Tardará meses, posiblemente años, en conseguirlo. 2

extremely dramatic, paints intr as a martyr

La conversación de Daniel Sancho con su entorno más cercano

En medio de esta actitud participativa y conciliadora que la policía tuvo con Daniel -sin duda un trato de favor que ha sorprendido a todos por parte de las autoridades tailandesas que siempre suelen ser muy herméticas-, el acusado pudo hablar con su entorno más cercano. Entre todas esas palabras que pudo cruzar el hijo de Rodolfo Sancho, Lecturas.com ha tenido acceso a una conversación en la que después de darle ánimos en un momento tan duro, el empresario culinario contestó que sentía mucho que tuvieran que vivir esta complicada situación. "Siento que estéis teniendo que ser de esas personas que sufren esto", comienza diciendo el mensaje. 3

positive

the info of the words is constantly delayed

cliché

Pero además, Daniel tiene claro que todo lo que está llegando a la prensa desde Tailandia es a cuenta gotas y que no todo lo que se dice es cómo sucedió. El hijo del actor, en el mensaje al que ha tenido acceso esta publicación, dice que "algún día sabréis toda la verdad". Y aunque muchos crean que no hay ninguna manera de justificar que matara y desuartizara al cirujano plástico colombiano, Sancho ha explicado que "estaba defendiendo" su vida y "ya de las personas que quiero". Finaliza con un revelador: "Me estaba amenazando tanto a mí como a mi familia", en el que además dice "te quiero". Unas palabras que sin duda van dirigidas a una persona muy cercana que está preocupada por la situación que va a vivir en el país asiático. 4

cliché

message: I had to defend myself and my family, I'm not in the wrong, the media lies. ??

El mensaje del mejor amigo de Daniel Sancho (Source)

Hace unos días además, el periodista de 'Espejo Público' Alex Álvarez, también relató un mensaje en exclusiva que el mejor amigo de Daniel Sancho hizo llegar al programa de Antena 3. Alguien de su entorno cercano que pidió expresamente que se salvaguardara su identidad. (JWC)

exclusivity / delects

"Os pido de corazón que os aseguréis de que el que quiera hablar con vosotros de Daniel sea de su entorno y no cualquier persona que busque su momento de gloria. Cercanos a él somos muy pocos y en esta situación en la que estamos nadie quiere hablar nada hasta que se esclarezca algo. Evidentemente estamos todos sufriendo muchísimo y ninguno contemplamos la posibilidad de que si

taking advantage

all are suffering, be cautious

dramatism
+ justifi-
cacio's decision/action

lo ha hecho o reconocido no haya sido porque se ha visto involucrado en una situación de vida o muerte para él o su familia", contó al formato de actualidad de Susanna Griso.

Inclusion of an African voice!

Las dolorosas primeras palabras de Darling, hermana del Edwin Arrieta

Edwin depicted positively from a loved-one perspective

El pasado martes 8 de agosto Darling habló con 'Así es la vida' para contar cómo fue la última conversación que tuvo ella con su hermano, quien a diario hablaba hasta tres o cuatro veces con sus padres. "Fue una llamada como siempre cariñosa, me dijo que ya había llegado a Bangkok. Me contó su travesía, unos vestidos que iba a traer, una cosa que iba a comprar a mi hija, que es su ahijada. Eso siempre lo hacía: cuando iba a un lugar nuevo le traía algo a mi niña. Esa fue la última vez", confesó entre lágrimas a Sandra Barneda.

7

drama + emotion, identification w/ victim

→ emotionally appealing

Critic to the way the media has been treating the case

Además, rota de dolor, Darling hizo una petición en directo: "Justicia para mi hermano y que le traigan el cuerpo a mi madre. Que su muerte no quede impune. Es un ser humano. No entiendo cómo se están diciendo tantas atrocidades de mi hermano, que ha sido a quien han descuartizado. ¿Quién hace eso? ¿Quién puede torturarlo así? Él no se puede defender y Daniel puede decir de él lo que quiera, por eso tenemos que defenderlo nosotros y los medios", relató entre lágrimas, muy triste tras la tragedia familiar que están viviendo. Pero no solo eso, la hermana del cirujano plástico terminó con una frase que dejó a la presentadora y a los colaboradores de plató sin palabras, entendiéndose cómo se están sintiendo en estos momentos: "Lo han desmembrado y ahora todos los días desmembran su nombre de manera horrenda poco a poco". Sin duda una expresión muy dolorosa con la que busca explicar que lo único que quieren es que el nombre de su hermano quede limpio

he it wot the villain!

8

very strong metaphor of the influence of media on identity!

aka they want the media to stop distorting reality and giving voice to questionable sources

7.3. Coding chart

The following chart condenses the findings from both the Qualitative Textual Analysis and the Frame analysis.

Frame 1: Sancho (and Arrieta) as complex characters

Category	Subcategory	Definition	Open codes/examples
Portrait of a victim	<i>Arrieta as a undeserving victim</i>	Arguments and information that justify why he, indirectly, deserved to be murdered	<p>“This attempt to break up did not sit well with Arrieta who, according to Sancho, blackmailed him with publishing the private photos they had shared on social media in order to cause serious damage to the image of his father and grandfather, who died in 2012.” (E.E. #4, 2023)</p> <p>“In some messages found on the suspect's phone, it can be seen how Edwin Arrieta allegedly threatened to kill Sancho and his family if he decided to end their long-standing relationship of more than a year.” (E.E. #8, 2023)</p>
	<i>Arrieta as a deserving victim</i>	Information about Arrieta’s life in a positive way; framed as friend, a doctor, a neighbor, a sibling... Humanizing discourses	<p>“The town will be in mourning for three days, with the celebration of several masses to bid farewell to its neighbor. Serrano, on behalf of Arrieta's close circle, expressed her shock: “For all those who knew Edwin, this has come as a great surprise. We did not imagine such a tragic, painful and uncertain ending.” (20M #22, 2023)</p> <p>“In addition to mourning the death of his friend, those closest to him have come out to defend his good name. “Edwin is not here to defend himself. We are all raising our voices for</p>

			justice to be done. We ask that this is not a case to be forgotten, but that Colombia and the whole world continue to stand in solidarity.” (E.P. #12, 2023)
Constructing a character	<i>Sancho as a victim</i>	Discourses focused on pity, the justification of the crime; appealing to the emotional side of the public	<p>“And although many believe that there is no way to justify killing and dismembering the Colombian plastic surgeon, Sancho has explained that he “was defending” his life and “that of the people I love”. He ends with a revealing: “He was threatening both me and my family”, in which he also says “I love you”. (L #29, 2023)</p> <p>“We are accustomed to a Sancho who is a show-off. A handsome guy. He’s muscular, long-haired, blond. He has lost his most precious asset. It’s something that has affected his psychological status because it’s hard to see himself that way by imposition,” explained one of the reporters.” (P #26, 2023)</p>
	<i>Sancho’s psychological profile</i>	Explanations about the way he acted and possible reasoning, usually portrayed as someone with mental problems or moral ambiguous	<p>“Thus it is known that on Thursday, August 3, with Arrieta already dead, Sancho went to the full moon party with two girls he had met at the hotel, from which he had already planned to leave.” (E.P. #33, 2023)</p> <p>“Sonia El Hakim points out that in the case of Daniel Sancho “there is no sadness, nowhere, no regret”. And she explains: “Regret is a secondary emotion that derives from sadness and</p>

		that, in addition, implies a self-directed anger towards the person himself because he knows he has transgressed a rule or has done something wrong.” (E.E. #5, 2023)
<i>Sancho & nepotism</i>	Link between Sancho and his (famous) family	<p>“The investigation into the murder of Edwin Arrieta has revealed numerous details. However, in the midst of this complex case on the other side of the world, a particularly unique element has drawn attention: the preoccupation of Daniel Sancho, the confessed murderer, with a hat that belonged to his grandfather, the renowned Sancho Gracia.” (L.V. #18, 2023)</p> <p>“Also in his favor is the fact that Daniel actively collaborated with the agents in the investigation of this event that has shocked Spanish society for its gruesomeness and for the fame of the father and grandfather, Sancho Gracia, the popular star of 'Curro Jiménez', of the alleged victimizer.” (P #25, 2023)</p>
<i>Profiling Sancho</i>	Insights about his life, his personality, the way he is, and that might help understand why he behaved the way he did	“(…) some former schoolmates have recently described him as “narcissistic and arrogant” and said that, after the news broke, “we were surprised and shocked that he was involved in a dismemberment, but we weren't surprised that he was involved in a mess,” as they confessed to Cuatro's programme” (E.E. #6, 2023)

		<p>“Daniel did not want to follow in the footsteps of his parents or his grandfather, the legendary actor Sancho Gracia, who is always remembered for his role as Curro Jiménez in the 70s. Although at first Daniel wanted to become a professional tennis player, it was in the kitchen where he found his perfect place.” (20M #21, 2023)</p>
	<p><i>Sancho as a fool + villain</i></p>	<p>Depiction as someone either clumsy or detached; no positive feelings associated</p> <p>“All these events, together with what has been learned that Sancho is not a chef in any restaurant either -although he did graduate from the prestigious haute cuisine school Le Cordon Bleu restaurant - nor is he a member of La Bohème or of the hamburger restaurant Boogie, as it was first claimed, paint a totally different profile of Rodolfo Sancho's son, which could perhaps shed some light to unravel the reason for the murder and the cold-bloodedness in his reactions to the confession and the reactions at the time of confessing and talking about Edwin Arrieta.” (L.V. #19, 2023)</p> <p>“Such a strange way of proceeding, considering that, according to the investigation reports, Daniel had just killed Edwin Arrieta, and later dismembered to dispose of his body. This solo party (or perhaps in the company of someone else) adds a more macabre touch to this event.” (E.E. #7, 2023)</p>

Frame 2: A case made spectacular

Category	Subcategory	Definition	Open codes/examples
Spectacularization of violence	<i>Speculations</i>	Non confirmed info about Sancho’s and Arrieta’s personal life, the nature of their relationship, the motive of the crime... Entertaining factor	<p>“Very cautious, she has assured that “we do not know if he could want to be a common-law partner to facilitate his arrival in Spain,” but she did stress the importance of knowing the ‘context’ of the messages because they could prove that what Daniel stated in the beginning - “I am guilty, but I was his hostage. He had me as a hostage. It was a glass cage, but it was a cage. He made me destroy my relationship with my girlfriend, he made me do things I would never do.” (E.E. #9, 2023)</p> <p>“What one of the heads of the investigation has told us is that the crime was a crime of passion, that the two did not understand each other and that they believe that Sancho was thinking about and preparing this crime”, (20M #23, 2023)</p>
	<i>Explicit & gruesome details</i>	Information related to the crime itself, the way it was committed... that does not serve a informational purpose but an entertaining one	<p>“An hour later, and seeing that the Colombian did not react, he decided to dismember his body into 14 pieces with the help of knives and a saw (as he explained to the police it took him three hours to do it). He distributed them in garbage bags and in a duffel bag (...) Subsequently, once he had disposed of his friend's remains, Daniel returned to the hotel to clean the room (although investigators reportedly found traces of blood, grease and hair in the</p>

			drain) (P#27, 2023)
	<i>Sexualization</i>	Highlighting the sexual component of their relation and, to some extent, of the crime as well. Relation with homophobia	<p>“Sancho, in the police statement reported by the Thai newspaper Bangkok Post, has indicated that after the exchange of photographs, they eventually met and had sexual relations. So the relationship went on until the Colombian doctor gave him 10,000 euros to start a business. and open a restaurant in Spain. He also gave him a credit card” (E.E. #4, 2023)</p> <p>“We were talking about everything a little bit, what I already told you about,” the actor's son added to the authorities, who were interested to know what the conversation was about. “About having sex?” the inspector asks. “Yes, I told him I couldn't do it anymore. I stood up, he backed up and I started to talk more gesticulating. And I pulled back and punched him (in the jaw) (...)” (L #30, 2023)</p>
Crime as a genre	<i>Exploration of hypotheses/motives</i>	Related to speculations, all discourses regarding why the crime happened; fiction-esque aspect	<p>“Therefore, the evidence collected so far disproves the hypothesis of an accidental death. However, Daniel Sancho's motive could change the perspective of the investigation. In some messages found on the suspect's phone, one can see how Edwin Arrieta allegedly threatened to kill Sancho and his family if he decided to end their relationship of more than a year.” (E.E. #8, 2023)</p> <p>“It should be recalled that, at that time, as the</p>

			Spaniard explained in his statements, he had been in a relationship with his girlfriend Laura for five years. Thus, the investigators explain that this would be the reason why Daniel wanted to end his relationship with Edwin. A piece of the puzzle of a crime that still has many doubts to be solved.” (L.V. #13, 2023)
	<i>Characteristics of a crime</i>	Any construction/reference to how this crime in particular could (not) fit the criminal genre; similarities and differences, stylistic resources	“(…) has assured EFE agency that the results of the autopsy indicate that Edwin Arrieta died after having his throat slit by the young Spaniard Daniel Sancho” (L.V. #14, 2023) “We're not looking at an Agatha Christie <i>whodunit</i> , but at a <i>whydunit</i> , why did he do it? That's the disturbing mystery here. (...)” (E.C. #20, 2023)
Setting		Information about the place where the crime took place	“No food, dirty water, lack of hygiene and medical services, overcrowding... Life in Thai prisons is harsher than in the rest of the world. According to the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), human rights in Thailand's prisons are nothing but a mirage.” (E.E. #3, 2023)
Fictionalized narratives		Linguistic constructions usually used in fiction that are present in these pieces and help enhance its entertainment purpose	“There is a new plot twist in the macabre Thailand murder story. No one seemed to have seen or heard anything the night Daniel Sancho (29) allegedly killed Edwin Arrieta and later dismembered him in a Koh Phangan resort bungalow. Until now... A

			<p>new testimony comes to shed light on what would have happened hours after the crime was committed.” (E.E. #7, 2023)</p> <p>“Subsequently, another statement was sent: “We are very sorry to hear of Edwin's death and we are very sorry for his family's loss”. From the first moment, Daniel Sancho Bronchalo confessed: “I am guilty, but I was Edwin's hostage”. To be continued...” (E.E. #6, 2023)</p>
--	--	--	--