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IKHLASS CHETOUANI

PhD Thesis

# THE PORTRAYAL AND STEREOTYPING OF EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION IN CINEMA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPANISH CASE (1990-2022)

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# THE PORTRAYAL AND STEREOTYPING OF EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION IN CINEMA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPANISH CASE (1990-2022)

Author: IKHLASS CHETOUANI

Director & Tutor: MARTA PÉREZ PEREIRO

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## Dedication to

All the immigrants who lost their lives on the journey toward a promised paradise.

All the immigrants who endured hardships and persevered on the path to integration.

Every compassionate hand in Europe extended kindness and support to immigrants.

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To my dear parents
who illuminated my path to knowledge from a young age, especially my father, who has always been and continues to be my support throughout my academic journey...

To the love of my life, Maria
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To all my teachers and to everyone who taught me throughout my life,
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To the beautiful and quiet city of Santiago de Compostela, which embraced me with warmth and serenity and became my refuge during moments of reflection and creativity…

Praise be to God (Alhamdulillah)
And with His grace and guidance

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## Summary

This dissertation examines the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the broader European context and assesses whether these depictions reinforce or challenge existing stereotypes. Focusing on films produced between 1990 and 2022, the study seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of how immigration is represented in Spanish cinema over time. The research will provide a thorough overview of the shifts and continuities in how immigrants are depicted by analyzing the evolving portrayals of immigrants, including their diverse characteristics and statistical trends.

The media, particularly cinema, plays a pivotal role in shaping societal awareness in the modern era, surpassing the traditional roles of institutions such as the family, school, and places of worship. In recent decades, cinema has emerged as a powerful tool for influencing perceptions and an attractive means of guiding society and shaping perceptions of various concepts. The rise of cinema coincided with global migration waves. However, Europe did not know immigration as a major destination until the 1960s after the economic boom and the need for a foreign labor force. This social change was reflected in the cinema that depicted immigration and the experiences of immigrants from multiple perspectives, leading to the birth of a new genre of European cinema known as "immigration cinema." In the 1980s, Spain saw economic growth and joined the European Community in 1986, propelling it into the ranks of developed countries and making it an attractive destination for immigrants. This shift in Spanish society influenced filmmakers to address this new topic and produce numerous films in the early 1990s that focused on the phenomenon and portrayed the "other" immigrant. These portrayals contributed in shaping and reinforcing stereotypes of immigrants in Spanish individual imagination over time.

The research question of this thesis is how immigrant characters are portrayed in Spanish films and how these portrayals may influence societal perceptions and stereotypes of immigrants. The study aims to investigate the extent to which these films contribute to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes. The research is also driven by the desire to understand how major social events, such as economic crises or terrorist acts involving immigrants, shape the narratives and portrayals of immigrants. Additionally, the thesis explores the changing representations of immigrants in Spanish cinema and whether these portrayals reinforce stereotypes by audiences and involve immigrants relinquishing their cultural identities in favor of assimilation. By addressing these issues, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of Spanish immigration cinema on the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes, offering valuable insights into immigrant portrayals.

The study aims to analyze the representation of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the European context, focusing on the key characteristics of the characters and film narratives that define these portrayals. It seeks to identify and categorize the stereotypes associated with immigrant characters, tracing their evolution and evaluating their potential influence on audience perceptions through the lens of Cultivation Theory. Examining the portrayal of immigrant characters in Spanish cinema involves conducting a detailed analysis of how immigrant characters are depicted across a broad range of Spanish films to identify pattern themes, narrative structures, and visual elements associated with these characters. By categorizing the stereotypes associated with immigrant characters, this analysis will trace the persistence or transformation of these portrayals over time. This study investigates the correlation between cinematic representations and societal stereotypes by exploring the portrayal of immigrants and its connection to the formation, reinforcement, or challenge of

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stereotypes about immigrants in Spanish society. And how films reflect or impact public perceptions, contributing to the broader discussion on the role of media in shaping societal views on immigration. Furthermore, this study also aims to contribute to the academic discourse on immigration cinema by providing comprehensive insights into how Spanish films from 1990 to 2022 reflect, reinforce, or challenge societal attitudes toward immigrants. The research will address gaps in the existing literature by expanding the analysis to a broader range of films and offering a more detailed examination of the intersection between cinema, immigration, and stereotypes prevailing in society. The findings will be relevant to scholars in communication and film studies, migration studies, sociology, and related fields, offering a valuable resource for understanding the complex relationship between media representations and social attitudes toward immigrants.

The theoretical framework of the study is profoundly rooted in the interdisciplinary nature of social science, communication, and media studies. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the connection between films, stereotypes, and societal perceptions of immigrants. The study adopted two interrelated theories: George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation and Stereotypes Theory. These theories guided the analysis of the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the broader European context. This combination provided a comprehensive framework for analyzing the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema. Cultivation Theory focused on the long-term effects of media exposure and assessed the potential cumulative impacts of immigrant portrayals in Spanish films on audience perceptions. Representation Theory provided an understanding of the content of these perceptions and how meaning was formed, communicated, and internalized through media representation. By deconstructing the content of these portrayals, the study examined how immigrants were represented in terms of ethnicity, culture, and social status, among other variables.

Migration Patterns and Demographic Shifts in Europe: The Case of Spain, a chapter aims to overview recent migration history at the global and European levels, with a special focus on Spain as the case of this study. It focused on the major stages that contributed to migration and produced demographic changes. Throughout history, people migrated for various reasons, including environmental, political, religious, and economic. Contemporary history witnessed multiple waves of migration for different reasons, starting from mass migration to the New World, followed by migration in the world wars and booming economic countries that let Europe become a destination of immigration. We divided European immigration into three stages, exploring the evolution of policies and societal changes. Firstly, Guest Worker Schemes and Decolonization from the 1950s to 1974, then Migration Control and the Oil Crisis from 1974 to the late 1980s, and lastly, recent trends in migration towards and within Europe from the 1990s to the present day. The case of Spain was particular, as it was historically known as a nation of emigrants, with substantial numbers of Spaniards departing for improved economic prospects overseas, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, in the latter part of the 20th century, Spain experienced a significant transformation, becoming a major destination for immigrants. This shift was fueled by its economic expansion, membership in the EU, and growing labor demand, attracting immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe. These two stages underscore the changing nature of Spain's migration patterns and their profound impact on the country's social and economic structure.

The other side of our research is immigration cinema. Chapter three is dedicated to this and is titled Im-migration Cinema and the Representation of the "Other," Stereotypes and

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Narratives. It started with the birth of migration cinema when the rise of cinema at the beginning of the twentieth century coincided with an unprecedented wave of global migration. About fifteen million European immigrants immigrated to the United States of America to improve living conditions and take advantage of the many job opportunities that America experienced in what is known as the Progressive Era. Unlike the United States of America, Europe did not know about the issue of immigration remarkably during the emergence and development of cinema. Until the interwar, when Western Europe, such as France and Germany, became a new destination for immigrants, people fleeing war, and religious persecutors across Europe and Russia. However, the great wave of immigrants that Europe knew from inside and outside was in the post-war period. The following quarter-century is known as Reconstruction, the most remarkable period of European economic growth and social progress. Western European countries witnessed an economic boom and dependence on immigrants from former colonies and former foreign soldiers who participated in the war and chose to stay in Europe. Hence, European immigration films appeared to reflect the phenomenon in the host societies.

Diaspora and post-colonialism films were another face of immigration cinema that emerged over time due to European cinema's domination in addressing "imperial" and "colonial" themes. European filmmakers represented the national cinema while immigrant filmmakers made films depicting their perspective, forming "diaspora cinema." Together, European filmmakers have evolved contemporary immigration cinema, reflecting societal changes and the increased influx of immigrants. The unique case of migration in Spain also reflected cinema and shifted from Emigration to Immigration. We addressed the Image of Spanish migrants when they were the "others" as immigrants in other countries and looked for the traces of their representations in Spanish cinema and the cinema of the host countries. Then, we moved to check the Spanish cinematic response to the wave of immigration in the late 1980s, which led us to Spanish immigration cinema that emerged in the early 1990s.

The study employs content analysis methodology. We analyze the sample of 39 films released between 1990 and 2022 that address immigration or include immigrant characters in the narratives. These films feature a total of 149 immigrant characters, divided into two sections. Quantitative content analysis operates at two distinct yet interconnected levels: films and characters. These findings are presented and displayed through charts and graphs with comments. In the second section, our analysis uses qualitative content analysis to delve deeper into immigration films. This approach allows us to find underlying themes and discern recurring patterns within cinematic narratives.

The quantitative findings are illustrated through the statistics and frequency of variables, and the results disclose a predominant trend of positive portrayals of immigrants in Spanish immigration cinema. This positivity implies a generally favorable disposition toward depicting immigrants within cinematic narratives. However, it also raises a particular observation within this trend that despite the overall positive portrayals, specific aspects of the chosen immigrant representative categories and the narrative constructions tend to perpetuate negative stereotypes. The dominant representation of this particular category of immigrants indicates a deliberate focus on depicting these portrayals, which offer a narrative focus on the undocumented, low socioeconomic status, jobless and working in low-level jobs, and uneducated immigrants. Hence, this dominance of the roles in this portrayal might imply prevalent societal stereotypes or biases about immigrant communities, enforcing stereotypes of this category of immigrants and generalizing it as mirroring immigrants in Spain. The qualitative analysis revealed that Spanish cinema has historically portrayed immigrants

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positively, evolved over time, and depicted diverse immigrant experiences, including those of women and LGTBI characters. Also, different immigrant characters represent various geographic origins. Films tended to offer stereotyped portrayals by frequently depicting immigrants struggling laborers in poor conditions and being objected to by hate crimes and xenophobia. Hence, despite the improvements, the social and economic statuses of immigrant characters generally remained low, with many portrayed as undocumented, uneducated, and marginalized.

These findings suggest that while Spanish cinema has made strides in providing more complex and varied representations of immigrants, it still often reinforces societal hierarchies by consistently depicting immigrants in subordinate roles. Stuart Hall's Representation Theory highlights how these portrayals maintain hegemonic structures, while Gerbner's Cultivation Theory suggests that repeated exposure to such images in films can shape public perceptions, potentially leading to a distorted view of immigrants as naturally marginalized or inferior. Even in more recent films, the persistence of these portrayals underscores the ongoing challenge of balancing representation with the risk of perpetuating negative stereotypes.

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## Resumen

Esta tesis doctoral tiene como objetivo examinar la representación de los inmigrantes en el cine español en el contexto europeo más amplio y evaluar si estas representaciones refuerzan o desafían los estereotipos existentes. Centrándose en las películas producidas entre 1990 y 2022, el estudio busca ofrecer una comprensión integral de cómo se representa la inmigración en el cine español a lo largo del tiempo. La investigación proporcionará una descripción general completa de los cambios y continuidades en cómo se representa a los inmigrantes mediante el análisis de las representaciones cambiantes de los inmigrantes, incluidas sus diversas características y tendencias estadísticas.

Los medios de comunicación, en particular el cine, desempeñan un papel fundamental en la configuración de la conciencia social en la era moderna, superando los roles tradicionales de instituciones como la familia, la escuela y los lugares de culto. En las últimas décadas, el cine ha surgido como una poderosa herramienta para influir en las percepciones y un medio atractivo para guiar a la sociedad y dar forma a las percepciones de varios conceptos. El auge del cine coincidió con las olas migratorias globales. Sin embargo, Europa no conoció la inmigración como un destino importante hasta la década de 1960, después del auge económico y la necesidad de una fuerza laboral extranjera. Este cambio social se reflejó en el cine que retrataba la inmigración y las experiencias de los inmigrantes desde múltiples perspectivas, lo que llevó al nacimiento de un nuevo género de cine europeo conocido como "cine de inmigración". En la década de 1980, España experimentó un crecimiento económico y se unió a la Comunidad Europea en 1986, lo que la impulsó a las filas de los países desarrollados y la convirtió en un destino atractivo para los inmigrantes. Este cambio en la sociedad española influyó en los cineastas para abordar este nuevo tema y producir numerosas películas a principios de la década de 1990 que se centraban en el fenómeno y retrataban al "otro" inmigrante. Estas representaciones contribuyeron a dar forma y reforzar los estereotipos de los inmigrantes en la imaginación individual española a lo largo del tiempo.

La pregunta de investigación de esta tesis es cómo se retratan los personajes inmigrantes en las películas españolas y cómo estas representaciones pueden influir en las percepciones sociales y los estereotipos de los inmigrantes. El estudio tiene como objetivo investigar en qué medida estas películas contribuyen a la perpetuación de estereotipos negativos. La investigación también está impulsada por el deseo de comprender cómo los grandes acontecimientos sociales, como las crisis económicas o los actos terroristas que involucran a inmigrantes, dan forma a las narrativas y representaciones de los inmigrantes. Además, la tesis explora las representaciones cambiantes de los inmigrantes en el cine español y si estas representaciones refuerzan los estereotipos de las audiencias e implican que los inmigrantes renuncien a sus identidades culturales en favor de la asimilación. Al abordar estas cuestiones, esta investigación tiene como objetivo proporcionar un análisis exhaustivo del impacto del cine de inmigración español en la creación y perpetuación de estereotipos, ofreciendo información valiosa sobre las representaciones de los inmigrantes.

El estudio tiene como objetivo analizar la representación de los inmigrantes en el cine español dentro del contexto europeo, centrándose en las características clave de los personajes y las narrativas cinematográficas que definen estas representaciones. Busca identificar y categorizar los estereotipos asociados con los personajes inmigrantes, rastreando su evolución y evaluando su posible influencia en las percepciones de la audiencia a través de la lente de la teoría del cultivo. El estudio de la representación de los personajes inmigrantes en el cine español implica realizar un análisis detallado de cómo se representan los personajes inmigrantes en una amplia

gama de películas españolas para identificar patrones temáticos, estructuras narrativas y elementos visuales asociados con estos personajes. Al categorizar los estereotipos asociados con los personajes inmigrantes, este análisis rastreará la persistencia o transformación de estas representaciones a lo largo del tiempo. Este estudio investiga la correlación entre las representaciones cinematográficas y los estereotipos sociales al explorar la representación de los inmigrantes y su conexión con la formación, el refuerzo o el desafío de los estereotipos sobre los inmigrantes en la sociedad española. Y cómo las películas reflejan o impactan en las percepciones públicas, contribuyendo al debate más amplio sobre el papel de los medios de comunicación en la configuración de las opiniones sociales sobre la inmigración. Además, este estudio también tiene como objetivo contribuir al discurso académico sobre el cine de inmigración al proporcionar información completa sobre cómo las películas españolas de 1990 a 2022 reflejan, refuerzan o desafían las actitudes sociales hacia los inmigrantes. La investigación abordará las lagunas existentes en la literatura ampliando el análisis a una gama más amplia de películas y ofreciendo un examen más detallado de la intersección entre el cine, la inmigración y los estereotipos que prevalecen en la sociedad. Los hallazgos serán relevantes para los académicos de los estudios de comunicación y cine, los estudios de migración, la sociología y los campos relacionados, y ofrecerán un recurso valioso para comprender la compleja relación entre las representaciones mediáticas y las actitudes sociales hacia los inmigrantes.

El marco teórico del estudio está profundamente arraigado en la naturaleza interdisciplinaria de las ciencias sociales, la comunicación y los estudios de medios. Este enfoque proporciona una comprensión integral de la conexión entre las películas, los estereotipos y las percepciones sociales de los inmigrantes. El estudio adoptó dos teorías interrelacionadas: la teoría del cultivo de George Gerbner y la teoría de la representación y los estereotipos de Stuart Hall. Estas teorías guiaron el análisis de la representación de los inmigrantes en el cine español dentro del contexto europeo más amplio. Esta combinación proporcionó un marco integral para analizar la representación de los inmigrantes en el cine español. La teoría del cultivo se centró en los efectos a largo plazo de la exposición a los medios y evaluó los posibles impactos acumulativos de las representaciones de inmigrantes en las películas españolas sobre las percepciones de la audiencia. La teoría de la representación proporcionó una comprensión del contenido de estas percepciones y cómo se formaba, comunicaba e internalizaba el significado a través de la representación mediática. Al deconstruir el contenido de estas representaciones, el estudio examinó cómo se representaba a los inmigrantes en términos de etnia, cultura y estatus social, entre otras variables. Patrones migratorios y cambios demográficos en Europa: el caso de España, un capítulo tiene como objetivo revisar la historia migratoria reciente a nivel global y europeo, con un enfoque especial en España como el caso de este estudio. Se centró en las principales etapas que contribuyeron a la migración y produjeron cambios demográficos. A lo largo de la historia, las personas migraron por diversas razones, incluidas las ambientales, políticas, religiosas y económicas. La historia contemporánea fue testigo de múltiples olas migratorias por diferentes razones, comenzando por la migración masiva al Nuevo Mundo, seguida por la migración en las guerras mundiales y los países económicos en auge que permitieron que Europa se convirtiera en un destino de inmigración. Dividimos la inmigración europea en tres etapas, explorando la evolución de las políticas y los cambios sociales. En primer lugar, los esquemas de trabajadores invitados y la descolonización desde la década de 1950 hasta 1974, luego el control de la migración y la crisis del petróleo desde 1974 hasta fines de la década de 1980, y, por último, las tendencias recientes en la migración hacia y dentro de Europa desde la década de 1990 hasta la actualidad. El caso de España es particular, ya que históricamente se la conocía como una nación de emigrantes, con un número considerable de

españoles que partían en busca de mejores perspectivas económicas en el extranjero, particularmente durante los siglos XIX y XX. Sin embargo, en la última parte del siglo XX, España experimentó una transformación significativa, convirtiéndose en un importante destino para los inmigrantes. Este cambio fue impulsado por su expansión económica, su membresía en la UE y la creciente demanda de mano de obra, atrayendo inmigrantes de América Latina, África y Europa del Este. Estas dos etapas subrayan la naturaleza cambiante de los patrones migratorios de España y su profundo impacto en la estructura social y económica del país.

La otra cara de nuestra investigación es el cine migratorio. El capítulo tres está dedicado a él y se titula Cine de inmigración y la representación del "otro", estereotipos y narrativas. Comenzó con el nacimiento del cine migratorio cuando el auge del cine a principios del siglo XX coincidió con una ola de migración global sin precedentes. Alrededor de quince millones de inmigrantes europeos emigraron a los Estados Unidos de América para mejorar las condiciones de vida y aprovechar las muchas oportunidades laborales que experimentó América en lo que se conoce como la Era Progresista. A diferencia de los Estados Unidos de América, Europa no conocía el tema de la inmigración notablemente durante el surgimiento y desarrollo del cine. Hasta el período de entreguerras, cuando Europa Occidental, como Francia y Alemania, se convirtió en un nuevo destino para inmigrantes, personas que huían de la guerra y perseguidores religiosos en toda Europa y Rusia. Sin embargo, la gran ola de inmigrantes que conoció Europa desde dentro y desde fuera fue en el período de posguerra. El siguiente cuarto de siglo se conoce como Reconstrucción, el período más notable de crecimiento económico y progreso social europeo. Los países de Europa Occidental fueron testigos de un auge económico y de la dependencia de los inmigrantes de las antiguas colonias y de los antiguos soldados extranjeros que participaron en la guerra y optaron por quedarse en Europa. De ahí que las películas de inmigración europea parecieran reflejar el fenómeno en las sociedades de acogida.

Las películas sobre la diáspora y el poscolonialismo fueron otra cara del cine de inmigración que surgió con el tiempo debido al predominio del cine europeo en el tratamiento de temas "imperiales" y "coloniales". Los cineastas europeos representaban el cine nacional, mientras que los cineastas inmigrantes hacían películas que describían su perspectiva, formando el "cine de la diáspora". Juntos, los cineastas europeos han desarrollado el cine de inmigración contemporáneo, reflejando los cambios sociales y el aumento de la afluencia de inmigrantes. El caso único de la migración en España también reflejó el cine y pasó de la emigración a la inmigración. Abordamos la imagen de los inmigrantes españoles cuando eran los "otros" como inmigrantes en otros países y buscamos los rastros de sus representaciones en el cine español y el cine de los países de acogida. Luego, pasamos a verificar la respuesta cinematográfica española a la ola de inmigración de finales de la década de 1980, lo que nos llevó al cine de inmigración español que surgió a principios de la década de 1990.

El estudio emplea una metodología de análisis de contenido. Analizamos una muestra de 39 películas estrenadas entre 1990 y 2022 que abordan la inmigración o incluyen personajes inmigrantes en sus narrativas. Estas películas presentan un total de 149 personajes inmigrantes, divididos en dos secciones. El análisis de contenido cuantitativo opera en dos niveles distintos pero interconectados: películas y personajes. Estos hallazgos se presentan y muestran a través de cuadros y gráficos con comentarios. En la segunda sección, nuestro análisis utiliza el análisis de contenido cualitativo para profundizar en las películas de inmigración. Este enfoque nos permite encontrar temas subyacentes y discernir patrones recurrentes dentro de las narrativas cinematográficas.

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Los hallazgos cuantitativos se ilustran a través de las estadísticas y la frecuencia de las variables, y los resultados revelan una tendencia predominante de representaciones positivas de los inmigrantes en el cine de inmigración español. Esta positividad implica una disposición generalmente favorable hacia la representación de los inmigrantes dentro de las narrativas cinematográficas. Sin embargo, también plantea una observación particular dentro de esta tendencia: a pesar de las representaciones positivas generales, aspectos específicos de las categorías representativas de inmigrantes elegidas y las construcciones narrativas tienden a perpetuar estereotipos negativos. La representación dominante de esta categoría particular de inmigrantes indica un enfoque deliberado en la representación de estos retratos, que ofrecen un enfoque narrativo sobre los inmigrantes indocumentados, de bajo nivel socioeconómico, desempleados y que trabajan en empleos de bajo nivel, y sin educación. Por lo tanto, este predominio de los roles en esta representación podría implicar estereotipos o prejuicios sociales prevalecientes sobre las comunidades inmigrantes, reforzando los estereotipos de esta categoría de inmigrantes y generalizándola como un reflejo de los inmigrantes en España. El análisis cualitativo reveló que el cine español históricamente ha retratado a los inmigrantes de manera positiva, ha evolucionado con el tiempo y ha representado diversas experiencias de inmigración, incluidas las de mujeres y personajes LGTBI. Además, diferentes personajes inmigrantes representan diversos orígenes geográficos. Las películas tendían a ofrecer retratos estereotipados al mostrar con frecuencia a los inmigrantes como trabajadores en dificultades en malas condiciones y siendo objeto de crímenes de odio y xenofobia. Por lo tanto, a pesar de las mejoras, el estatus social y económico de los personajes inmigrantes en general siguió siendo bajo, y muchos fueron retratados como indocumentados, sin educación y marginados. Estos hallazgos sugieren que, si bien el cine español ha avanzado en la creación de representaciones más complejas y variadas de los inmigrantes, a menudo sigue reforzando las jerarquías sociales al representar sistemáticamente a los inmigrantes en roles subordinados. La teoría de la representación de Stuart Hall destaca cómo estas representaciones mantienen las estructuras hegemónicas, mientras que la teoría del cultivo de Gerbner sugiere que la exposición repetida a tales imágenes en las películas puede moldear las percepciones públicas, lo que puede llevar a una visión distorsionada de los inmigrantes como marginados por naturaleza o inferiores. Incluso en películas más recientes, la persistencia de estas representaciones subraya el desafío constante de equilibrar la representación con el riesgo de perpetuar estereotipos negativos.

La evolución del cine español de inmigración se puede dividir en tres etapas que representan tres décadas, comenzando por los años 90, cuando las películas de inmigración comenzaron a reflejar la realidad de la inmigración en España, que se había convertido en un destino para los inmigrantes en ese momento, y las manifestaciones de nuevas comunidades comenzaron a tomar forma, ya que los inmigrantes se convirtieron en un nuevo componente de la sociedad. Esto impulsó a los cineastas a abordar el tema explorando primero al inmigrante, ese "otro". Este período se caracterizó por la representación de inmigrantes masculinos en la mayoría de 8 de cada 10 películas y solo dos películas de mujeres. A pesar de la diversidad de representaciones del origen inmigrante, el enfoque se centra más en los inmigrantes africanos y marroquíes. Esto puede considerarse un reflejo del "otro extraño" que configura el concepto de inmigrante en el imaginario del individuo español. Este período también se caracterizó por la representación de las experiencias de los inmigrantes ilegales desde su llegada a España y los desafíos que enfrentan para encontrar el fin y adaptarse hasta el final de la historia con la integración o el fracaso del viaje y la decisión de regresar. La forma en que llegaron los personajes inmigrantes africanos y marroquíes se representó como una migración clandestina que cruzaba el Estrecho de Gibraltar, recurriendo al trabajo en la agricultura y viviendo en comunidades marginales.

Mientras tanto, los personajes latinos y de Europa del Este llegan legalmente con una visa y se vuelven indocumentados después de que la visa expira. Los inmigrantes latinos se integran rápidamente debido a que comparten el idioma y la cultura. Estas diferencias se reflejan en las características geográficas y culturales de los inmigrantes.

El período de la década de 2000 se caracterizó por la representación de los inmigrantes desde diferentes perspectivas, ya que algunas películas abordaron la inmigración y fueron narradas por personajes españoles, como Poniente y Salvajes. El estilo narrativo de la película también varió de historias del viaje y la experiencia del inmigrante a cubrir diferentes temas que conciernen al inmigrante. La representación de las mujeres inmigrantes floreció mucho durante este período y se les dio un gran espacio en las narrativas, llegando a representar la mitad de las películas. Las representaciones también se diversificaron para incluir muchos aspectos como el trabajo, las prostitutas, las relaciones, la integración, la explotación y el sufrimiento de resolver el estatus legal. Además, el origen de los personajes inmigrantes se expandió a un nuevo retrato del inmigrante asiático.

En el último período de la década de 2010 hasta 2022, el cine de inmigración español continuó floreciendo y diversificándose en la representación de los inmigrantes al abordar diferentes temas, reflejando eventos significativos en la sociedad española, además de problemas urgentes en las experiencias de los inmigrantes, como la explotación, las condiciones laborales y las redes de trata de personas. Las películas también abordaron la búsqueda de aceptación e integración de los inmigrantes. Además, el cine de inmigración se desarrolla en la representación del género a medida que las mujeres y los hombres inmigrantes se alternan asumiendo roles además de los personajes homosexuales que aparecen en algunas películas en papeles principales para revelar sus experiencias.

La evolución de la representación de personajes inmigrantes desde principios de la década de 1990, cuando el inmigrante no tenía voz y, a veces, era invisible. Con el tiempo, los roles se volvieron significativos y se les dio voz en el cine hasta los últimos años del período, cuando la representación del inmigrante se volvió integral en cuanto a la diversidad de personajes, géneros y temas. En general, se puede considerar que las películas de inmigrantes españoles tienen una dimensión positiva al retratar sus experiencias y sufrimientos en el camino de la integración en la nueva sociedad. Sin embargo, las representaciones a menudo se limitan a una categoría específica y se reducen a unas pocas características básicas, como la pobreza, la ignorancia o la participación en actividades ilegales. Esta reducción despoja a los personajes inmigrantes de su complejidad e individualidad, presentándolos como un grupo homogéneo en lugar de como uno diverso. Los cineastas inmigrantes españoles refuerzan indirectamente los estereotipos negativos en su representación de los inmigrantes. Paradójicamente, los inmigrantes fueron retratados positivamente en películas que trataban sobre grandes acontecimientos de la sociedad, como los ataques neonazis de la década de 1990, que mostraban a los inmigrantes como víctimas e imprudentes a la hora de enfrentarse a ellos de forma pacífica. En medio de los acontecimientos terroristas que sacudieron al mundo y a España en particular, cuyos perpetradores estaban vinculados a inmigrantes, algunas obras cinematográficas intentaron abrirse a las comunidades inmigrantes y retratar la diversidad cultural, con el objetivo de evitar vincular a los terroristas con la comunidad inmigrante. Durante la crisis financiera, los cineastas retrataron, a través de algunas obras, las circunstancias de los inmigrantes en esta etapa tan sensible y los retrataron como víctimas de la difícil situación económica, al contrario de lo que se promueve en tiempos de crisis de que los inmigrantes se aprovechan de las oportunidades de los españoles. A pesar de la positividad de las historias, la representación

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estereotipada de los inmigrantes sigue siendo negativa y contribuye a reforzar su presencia entre los audiencias.

En conclusión, el análisis de este estudio reveló que el cine español de 1990 a 2022 presentó a los inmigrantes de una manera generalmente positiva, con representaciones que evolucionaron con el tiempo para representar una gama más amplia de experiencias de inmigrantes. Estas representaciones incluían inmigrantes masculinos y femeninos y personajes LGTBI, lo que refleja la diversidad de poblaciones inmigrantes de diversos orígenes geográficos. Las películas españolas a menudo abogan por la integración y asimilación de los inmigrantes a la sociedad, sugiriendo un mensaje subyacente de aceptación e inclusión. Sin embargo, a pesar de esta tendencia positiva, el estudio también encontró una dependencia persistente de representaciones estereotipadas. A menudo se describía a los inmigrantes como trabajadores vulnerables y en apuros que trabajaban en malas condiciones, a menudo sometidos a crímenes de odio y xenofobia, o alternativamente como individuos que se aprovechaban de la población local para beneficio personal. Estas representaciones reforzaron una narrativa de marginación social y económica, con muchos personajes inmigrantes retratados como indocumentados, sin educación y marginados. Aunque hay un esfuerzo notable por presentar a los inmigrantes con simpatía, su estatus social dentro de estas narrativas sigue siendo en gran medida negativo, enfatizando temas de exclusión y precariedad incluso en medio de representaciones positivas. Estos retratos, sin embargo, no reflejan fielmente la realidad de los inmigrantes en la sociedad española, donde las estadísticas revelan sus importantes contribuciones a la economía, la fuerza laboral y el desarrollo cultural. El continuo impacto positivo de los inmigrantes en el tejido económico y social de España a menudo está ausente del cine español de inmigración debido a estereotipos reduccionistas que no logran captar la complejidad de sus experiencias y logros.

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## Resumo

Esta tese ten como obxectivo examinar a representación dos inmigrantes no cine español no contexto europeo máis amplo e avaliar se estas representacións reforzan ou desafían os estereotipos existentes. Centrándose nas películas producidas entre 1990 e 2022, o estudo busca ofrecer unha comprensión integral de como se representa a inmigración no cinema español ao longo do tempo. A investigación proporcionará unha visión completa dos cambios e continuidades na forma en que se representan os inmigrantes mediante a análise da evolución das imaxes dos inmigrantes, incluíndo as súas diversas características e tendencias estatísticas.

Os medios de comunicación, especialmente o cine, xogan un papel fundamental na formación da conciencia social na era moderna, superando os papeis tradicionais de institucións como a familia, a escola e os lugares de culto. Nas últimas décadas, o cinema emerxeu como unha poderosa ferramenta para incidir nas percepcións e un medio atractivo para orientar a sociedade e configurar as percepcións de diversos conceptos. O auxe do cine coincidiu coas ondas migratorias globais. Porén, Europa non coñeceu a inmigración como principal destino ata a década dos 60 tras o auxe económico e a necesidade de forza de traballo estranxeira. Este cambio social reflectiuse no cine que representaba a inmigración e as experiencias dos inmigrantes desde múltiples perspectivas, levando ao nacemento dun novo xénero de cine europeo coñecido como "cine de inmigración". Na década de 1980, España experimentou un crecemento económico e ingresou na Comunidade Europea en 1986, impulsándoa nas filas dos países desenvolvidos e converténdoa nun destino atractivo para os inmigrantes. Este cambio da sociedade española influíu nos cineastas para abordar este novo tema e producir numerosos filmes a principios dos noventa que se centraban no fenómeno e representaban o "outro" inmigrante. Estes retratos contribuíron a configurar e reforzar os estereotipos dos inmigrantes no imaxinario individual español ao longo do tempo.

A cuestión de investigación desta tese é como se representan os personaxes inmigrantes nas películas españolas e como estas representacións poden influír nas percepcións e estereotipos sociais dos inmigrantes. O estudo pretende investigar en que medida estes filmes contribúen á perpetuación de estereotipos negativos. A investigación tamén está impulsada polo desexo de comprender como os grandes acontecementos sociais, como as crises económicas ou os actos terroristas nos que participan inmigrantes, configuran as narracións e as representacións dos inmigrantes. Ademais, a tese explora as representacións cambiantes dos inmigrantes no cine español e se estes retratos reforzan os estereotipos do público e implican que os inmigrantes abandonen as súas identidades culturais en favor da asimilación. Ao abordar estas cuestións, esta investigación pretende ofrecer unha análise exhaustiva do impacto do cine español de inmigración na creación e perpetuación de estereotipos, ofrecendo información valiosa sobre as representacións dos inmigrantes.

O estudo pretende analizar a representación dos inmigrantes no cine español no contexto europeo, centrándose nas características fundamentais dos personaxes e das narrativas cinematográficas que definen estas representacións. Búscase identificar e categorizar os estereotipos asociados aos personaxes inmigrantes, rastrexando a súa evolución e avaliando a súa potencial influencia nas percepcións do público a través da lente da Teoría do Cultivo. Examinar a representación de personaxes inmigrantes no cine español implica realizar unha análise detallada de como se representan os personaxes inmigrantes nunha ampla gama de películas españolas para identificar os patróns de temas, estruturas narrativas e elementos visuais asociados a estes personaxes. Ao categorizar os estereotipos asociados aos personaxes inmigrantes, esta análise rastrexará a persistencia ou transformación destas representacións ao

longo do tempo. Este estudo investiga a correlación entre as representacións cinematográficas e os estereotipos sociais explorando o retrato dos inmigrantes e a súa conexión coa formación, o reforzo ou o desafío dos estereotipos sobre os inmigrantes na sociedade española. E como as películas reflicten ou inciden nas percepcións públicas, contribuíndo ao debate máis amplo sobre o papel dos medios de comunicación na formación das opinións sociais sobre a inmigración. Ademais, este estudo tamén pretende contribuír ao discurso académico sobre o cine de inmigración proporcionando unha visión ampla de como as películas españolas de 1990 a 2022 reflicten, reforzan ou desafían as actitudes da sociedade cara aos inmigrantes. A investigación abordará as lagoas da literatura existente ampliando a análise a unha gama máis ampla de películas e ofrecendo un exame máis detallado da intersección entre o cine, a inmigración e os estereotipos imperantes na sociedade. Os resultados serán relevantes para os estudosos dos estudos de comunicación e cine, estudos migratorios, socioloxía e campos relacionados, ofrecendo un recurso valioso para comprender a complexa relación entre as representacións dos medios e as actitudes sociais cara aos inmigrantes.

O marco teórico do estudo está profundamente enraizado na natureza interdisciplinar das ciencias sociais, a comunicación e os estudos dos medios. Este enfoque proporciona unha comprensión integral da conexión entre as películas, os estereotipos e as percepcións sociais dos inmigrantes. O estudo adoptou dúas teorías interrelacionadas: a teoría do cultivo de George Gerbner e a teoría da representación e dos estereotipos de Stuart Hall. Estas teorías guiaron a análise da representación dos inmigrantes no cine español dentro do contexto europeo máis amplo. Esta combinación proporcionou un marco completo para analizar a representación dos inmigrantes no cinema español. Cultivation Theory centrouse nos efectos a longo prazo da exposición aos medios e avaliou os potenciais impactos acumulativos das representacións de inmigrantes en películas españolas sobre a percepción do público. A teoría da representación proporcionou unha comprensión do contido destas percepcións e como se formou, comunicou e interiorizou o significado a través da representación dos medios. Ao deconstruír o contido destas representacións, o estudo examinou como estaban representados os inmigrantes en termos de etnia, cultura e status social, entre outras variables.

Patróns migratorios e cambios demográficos en Europa: o caso de España, un capítulo ten como obxectivo facer unha visión xeral da historia migratoria recente a nivel mundial e europeo, con especial atención a España como o caso deste estudo. Centrouse nas principais etapas que contribuíron á migración e produciron cambios demográficos. Ao longo da historia, a xente emigrou por diversas razóns, entre elas ambientales, políticas, relixiosas e económicas. A historia contemporánea foi testemuña de múltiples ondas migratorias por diferentes motivos, empezando pola migración masiva cara ao Novo Mundo, seguida das migracións nas guerras mundiais e os países en auxe económico que deixaron que Europa se convertese nun destino de inmigración. Dividimos a inmigración europea en tres etapas, explorando a evolución das políticas e os cambios sociais. En primeiro lugar, os Esquemas de Traballadores Hóspedes e a Descolonización desde os anos 50 ata 1974, despois o Control das Migracións e a Crise do Petróleo desde 1974 ata finais dos 80 e, por último, as tendencias recentes da migración cara e dentro de Europa desde os 90 ata a actualidade. O caso de España foi particular, xa que foi coñecida historicamente como unha nación de emigrantes, cun número substancial de españois partindo para mellorar as perspectivas económicas no exterior, especialmente durante os séculos XIX e XX. Porén, a finais do século XX, España experimentou unha importante transformación, converténdose nun importante destino para os inmigrantes. Este cambio foi impulsado pola súa expansión económica, a pertenza á UE e a crecente demanda de traballo, que atraeu inmigrantes de América Latina, África e Europa do Leste. Estas dúas etapas subliñan

a natureza cambiante dos patróns migratorios de España e o seu profundo impacto na estrutura social e económica do país.

A outra cara da nosa investigación é o cine migratorio. A isto dedícase o terceiro capítulo e leva por título Cine de inmigración e representación do «outro», estereotipos e narrativas. Comezou co nacemento do cine migratorio cando o auxe do cine a comezos do século XX coincidiu cunha onda de migración global sen precedentes. Uns quince millóns de inmigrantes europeos emigraron aos Estados Unidos de América para mellorar as condicións de vida e aproveitar as moitas oportunidades laborais que experimentou Estados Unidos na coñecida como Era Progresista. A diferenza dos Estados Unidos de América, Europa descoñecía o tema da inmigración de forma notable durante a aparición e desenvolvemento do cinema. Ata o entreguerras, cando Europa occidental, como Francia e Alemaña, converteuse nun novo destino de inmigrantes, persoas que fuxían da guerra e perseguidores relixiosos de toda Europa e Rusia. Porén, a gran vaga de inmigrantes que Europa coñeceu de dentro e de fóra foi na posguerra. O seguinte cuarto de século coñécese como Reconstrución, o período máis notable do crecemento económico e do progreso social europeo. Os países de Europa occidental foron testemuñas dun auxe económico e da dependencia dos inmigrantes das antigas colonias e dos antigos soldados estranxeiros que participaron na guerra e optaron por quedarse en Europa. Así, as películas europeas sobre inmigración parecían reflectir o fenómeno nas sociedades de acollida.

As películas da diáspora e do poscolonialismo foron outra cara do cine de inmigración que xurdiu co paso do tempo debido á dominación do cine europeo á hora de abordar temas "imperiais" e "coloniais". Os cineastas europeos representaban o cine nacional mentres que os cineastas inmigrantes realizaban películas que representaban a súa perspectiva, formando "cine da diáspora". Xuntos, os cineastas europeos desenvolveron o cine de inmigración contemporáneo, reflectindo os cambios sociais e o aumento da afluencia de inmigrantes. O caso único da migración en España tamén reflectiu o cinema e pasou da Emigración á Inmigración. Abordamos a Imaxe dos emigrantes españois cando eran os “outros” como inmigrantes noutros países e buscamos as pegadas das súas representacións no cine español e no cine dos países de acollida. Despois, pasámonos a comprobar a resposta cinematográfica española á vaga de inmigración de finais dos anos 80, que nos levou ao cine español de inmigración xurdido a principios dos 90.

O estudo emprega a metodoloxía de análise de contido. Analizamos a mostra de 39 películas estreadas entre 1990 e 2022 que abordan a inmigración ou inclúen personaxes inmigrantes nos relatos. Estes filmes presentan un total de 149 personaxes inmigrantes, divididos en dúas seccións. A análise de contidos cuantitativos opera en dous niveis distintos pero interconectados: películas e personaxes. Estes achados preséntanse e móstranse mediante cadros e gráficos con comentarios. Na segunda sección, a nosa análise utiliza análise de contido cualitativo para afondar nas películas de inmigración. Este enfoque permítenos atopar temas subxacentes e discernir patróns recorrentes dentro das narracións cinematográficas.

Os resultados cuantitativos ilustráronse a través das estatísticas e da frecuencia das variables, e os resultados revelan unha tendencia predominante de retratos positivos dos inmigrantes no cine español de inmigración. Esta positividade implica unha disposición xeralmente favorable para representar os inmigrantes dentro das narracións cinematográficas. Porén, tamén suscita unha observación particular dentro desta tendencia que, a pesar das representacións positivas xerais, aspectos específicos das categorías representativas dos inmigrantes escollidos e das construcións narrativas tenden a perpetuar estereotipos negativos. A representación dominante desta categoría particular de inmigrantes indica un enfoque

deliberado na representación destes retratos, que ofrecen un enfoque narrativo sobre os indocumentados, o baixo nivel socioeconómico, os desempregados e que traballan en empregos de baixo nivel e os inmigrantes sen educación. Polo tanto, este predominio dos papeis nesta representación pode implicar estereotipos sociais prevalentes ou prexuízos sobre as comunidades de inmigrantes, impoñendo estereotipos desta categoría de inmigrantes e xeneralizándoa como espello dos inmigrantes en España. A análise cualitativa revelou que o cinema español presentou historicamente aos inmigrantes de forma positiva, evolucionou ao longo do tempo e describiu diversas experiencias de inmigrantes, incluídas as de mulleres e personaxes LGTBI. Ademais, diferentes personaxes inmigrantes representan diversas orixes xeográficas. As películas adoitaban ofrecer retratos estereotipados ao representar con frecuencia a inmigrantes loitando contra os traballadores en malas condicións e sendo obxecto de obxeccións por crimes de odio e xenofobia. De aí que, a pesar das melloras, os estatus sociais e económicos dos personaxes inmigrantes mantivesen en xeral baixas, e moitos foron retratados como indocumentados, sen educación e marxinados.

Estes achados suxiren que, aínda que o cinema español avanzou a ofrecer representacións máis complexas e variadas dos inmigrantes, aínda reforza a miúdo as xerarquías sociais ao representar constantemente aos inmigrantes en roles subordinados. A Teoría da Representación de Stuart Hall destaca como estas representacións manteñen estruturas hexemónicas, mentres que a Teoría do Cultivo de Gerbner suxire que a exposición repetida a tales imaxes nas películas pode dar forma ás percepcións públicas, o que pode levar a unha visión distorsionada dos inmigrantes como naturalmente marxinados ou inferiores. Mesmo en películas máis recentes, a persistencia destas representacións subliña o desafío continuo de equilibrar a representación co risco de perpetuar estereotipos negativos.

A evolución do cine español de inmigración pódese dividir en tres etapas que representan as tres décadas, a partir dos anos 90, cando as películas sobre inmigración comezaron a reflectir a realidade da inmigración en España, convertida naquela época nun destino de inmigrantes, e as manifestacións de novas comunidades comezaron a tomar forma, xa que os inmigrantes se converteron nun novo compoñente da sociedade. Isto levou aos cineastas a abordar o tema explorando primeiro o inmigrante, ese "outro". Este período caracterizouse pola representación de homes inmigrantes na maioría de 8 de cada 10 películas e só dúas de mulleres. A pesar da diversidade de retratos de orixe inmigrante, o foco céntrase máis nos inmigrantes africanos e marroquís. Isto pódese considerar o reflexo do “outro estraño” que configura o concepto de inmigrante no imaxinario do individuo español. Este período tamén se caracterizou pola representación das experiencias dos inmigrantes ilegais desde a súa chegada a España e enfrontándose aos retos para alcanzar os fins e adaptarse ata o final da historia coa integración ou o fracaso da viaxe e a decisión de regresar. A forma en que chegaron os personaxes inmigrantes africanos e marroquís foi representada pola migración clandestina que cruzaba o Estreito de Xibraltar, recorrendo ao traballo na agricultura e vivindo en comunidades marxinais.

Mentres tanto, os personaxes latinos e de Europa do Leste chegan legalmente cun visado e pasan a ser indocumentados despois de que caduque o visado. Os inmigrantes latinos intégranse rapidamente debido ao intercambio de lingua e cultura. Estas diferenzas reflíctense nas características xeográficas e culturais dos inmigrantes.

O período dos anos 2000 caracterizouse pola representación dos inmigrantes desde diferentes perspectivas, xa que algunhas películas trataban sobre a inmigración e estaban narradas por personaxes españois, como Poniente e Salvajes. O estilo narrativo da película tamén variou desde historias da viaxe e da experiencia do inmigrante ata cubrir diferentes temas

que preocupan ao inmigrante. A representación de mulleres inmigrantes floreceu moito durante este período e deuse un gran espazo nas narracións, que ascendeu á metade das películas. As representacións tamén se diversificaron ata incluír moitos aspectos como o traballo, a prostitución, as relacións, a integración, a explotación e o sufrimento da resolución do estatuto xurídico. Ademais, a orixe dos personaxes inmigrantes ampliouse a un novo retrato do inmigrante asiático.

No último período da década de 2010 ata 2022, o cine español de inmigración continuou florecendo e diversificándose na representación dos inmigrantes abordando diferentes temáticas, reflectindo acontecementos significativos da sociedade española ademais de cuestións urxentes nas experiencias dos inmigrantes como a explotación, as condicións de traballo e as persoas. redes de tráfico. As películas tamén abordaron a procura da aceptación e integración dos inmigrantes. Ademais, o cine de inmigración desenvólvese na representación do xénero mentres mulleres e homes inmigrantes alternan tomando papeis ademais dos personaxes homosexuais que aparecen nalgunhas películas en papeis protagonistas para dar a coñecer as súas experiencias.

A evolución da representación dos personaxes inmigrantes desde principios dos anos 90, cando o inmigrante era sen voz e ás veces invisible. Co paso do tempo, os papeis cobraron relevancia, e foron expresados no cine ata os últimos anos do período en que o retrato do inmigrante se fixo integral en canto á diversidade de personaxes, xéneros e temáticas. En xeral, pódese considerar que as películas españolas de inmigrantes teñen unha dimensión positiva á hora de representar as súas experiencias e sufrimento na viaxe de integración na nova sociedade. Non obstante, as representacións adoitan limitarse a unha categoría específica e redúcense a unhas poucas características básicas, como a pobreza, o descoñecemento ou a participación en actividades ilegais. Esta redución despoxa aos personaxes inmigrantes da súa complexidade e individualidade, presentándoos como un grupo homoxéneo máis que como diverso. Os cineastas inmigrantes españois reforzan indirectamente os estereotipos negativos na súa representación dos inmigrantes. Paradoxalmente, os inmigrantes foron retratados positivamente en películas que trataban de grandes acontecementos da sociedade, como os ataques neonazis dos anos 90, que mostraban aos inmigrantes como vítimas e imprudentes ao enfrontalos pacíficamente. No medio dos feitos terroristas que sacudiron o mundo e España en particular, cuxos autores estaban vinculados aos inmigrantes, algunhas obras cinematográficas tentaron abrirse ás comunidades inmigrantes e representar a diversidade cultural, co obxectivo de evitar vincular aos terroristas coa comunidade inmigrante. Durante a crise financeira, os cineastas retrataron, a través dalgunhas obras, as circunstancias dos inmigrantes nesta tan sensible etapa e retratáronos como vítimas da difícil situación económica, ao contrario do que se promove en tempos de crise que os inmigrantes aproveitan as oportunidades dos españois. A pesar da positividade das historias, o retrato estereotipado dos inmigrantes segue sendo negativo e contribúe ao seu reforzo entre as audiencias.

En conclusión, a análise deste estudo revelou que o cinema español de 1990 a 2022 presentou aos inmigrantes de forma xeralmente positiva, con representacións que evolucionaron ao longo do tempo para representar un abano máis amplo de experiencias dos inmigrantes. Estes retratos incluíron tanto inmigrantes masculinos como mulleres e personaxes LGTBI, reflectindo a diversidade de poboacións inmigrantes de diversas orixes xeográficas. As películas españolas adoitan defender a integración e a asimilación dos inmigrantes na sociedade, suxerindo unha mensaxe subxacente de aceptación e inclusión. Non obstante, a pesar desta tendencia positiva, o estudo tamén descubriu unha dependencia persistente de retratos

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estereotipados. Os inmigrantes eran frecuentemente representados como traballadores vulnerables e en dificultades que traballaban en malas condicións, a miúdo sometidos a delitos de odio e xenofobia, ou, alternativamente, como individuos que se aproveitaban da poboación local para beneficio persoal. Estas representacións reforzaron unha narrativa de marxinación social e económica, con moitos personaxes inmigrantes retratados como indocumentados, sen educación e marxinados. Aínda que hai un notable esforzo por presentar os inmigrantes con simpatía, o seu estatus social dentro destas narrativas segue sendo en gran parte negativo, facendo fincapé en temas de exclusión e precariedade incluso no medio de retratos positivos. Estes retratos, porén, non reflicten con exactitude a realidade dos inmigrantes na sociedade española, onde as estatísticas revelan as súas importantes contribucións á economía, á forza de traballo e ao desenvolvemento cultural. O continuo impacto positivo dos inmigrantes no tecido económico e social de España está a miúdo ausente no cine español de inmigración debido a estereotipos reductores que non captan a complexidade das súas experiencias e logros.

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**APPENDIX**

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# CHAPTER ONE: STATE OF THE ART

> Using films to debate migration issues involves a dual analysis: Cinema, as "the faithful witness of its time," shows how a society constructs its relationship with Otherness through the portrayal of foreigners. It also contributes to an awareness of the history of migration in all its complexity with regard to its relationship with memory and forgetfulness.
>
> Yvan Gastaut, (2001)

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the Twentieth century, Europe saw an influx of immigrants from developing nations. As their foreign populations grew, the filmmakers started to document the phenomenon. Since immigrants are a new element in European societies, the populations of the hosting societies have formed representations and stereotypes about them through different sources, most notably the media, which is the primary source for disseminating information and creating stereotypes that circulate in society and make the individual deal with the immigrant with prejudices.

This thesis aims to analyze the representation of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the broader European context, focusing on whether these films contribute to the construction and reinforcement of stereotypes and biases against immigrants. Furthermore, how film portrayals may be reinforced among audiences through cultivation over time. The study is going to discuss the emergence of "Immigration cinema" in Europe in general and Spain in particular through a historical overview and about the most important changes that accompanied immigration cinema evolution. Then, we will explore Spanish immigration cinema by analyzing a selection of films from 1990 to 2022, covering 32 years of immigration cinema with over 40 films. We will analyze the immigrant's image evolution throughout the years by measuring film stereotypes and representations. To achieve this, the study employs a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis to leverage the strengths of each, as we will conduct analysis on two levels: narrative themes and characters.

Additionally, the study will apply a theoretical framework that combines the cultivation theory and stereotypes of social representation theory. Cultivation Theory will help explore how prolonged exposure to certain representations and narratives in cinema can shape viewers' perceptions of reality, while Social Representation Theory will provide insights into how these cinematic portrayals contribute to the collective understanding and stereotypes of immigrants within society. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the research seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of immigrant images in Spanish cinema and their impact on social attitudes toward migration.

This study is structured in five chapters, each designed to address the complex issues at hand comprehensively. The first chapter, introduction, provides a comprehensive context and background of the study. We present a thorough literature review to position our research concerning other studies and identify research gaps. A theoretical framework is employed to

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provide the theoretical assumptions for the larger context, and we combine two theories to form the basis of our research. The methodological approach to conducting our research is explained in detail, outlining the techniques of content analysis and the procedures used to gather and analyze data. Finally, through the significance of the study, we highlight the potential contributions and implications of our research work, ensuring a comprehensive and rigorous approach to the topic.

Chapter Two delves into European migration patterns and demographic shifts, focusing on Spain. It begins by exploring the concept and definitions of migration, providing a foundational understanding of the phenomenon. The chapter then examines global migration trends, followed by a detailed analysis of European migration. It also addresses the policies governing migration in Europe and their consequences, supported by statistical data. The chapter further investigates the impact of immigration policies on local societies and immigrants. A significant portion is dedicated to Spain, highlighting the social, economic, and political changes driven by migration. It discusses opposing migration trends and examines the country's economic, social, and political shifts.

Chapter Three explores the evolution of migration cinema and the representation of the "Other," focusing on stereotypes and narratives. It begins with the birth of migration cinema, tracing its historical context and the emergence of European immigration cinema. The chapter examines different facets of immigration cinema, including diaspora and post-colonialism films, as well as contemporary European immigration cinema. It then shifts to Spanish cinema, analyzing its transition from depicting Spanish emigration to addressing immigration. Specific attention is given to the image of Spanish migrants when they were the "Others" and then the Spanish cinematic response to the wave of immigration in the late 1980s when Spain became a host country.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of findings and results from the study, divided into quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis covers findings at both the film and character levels, providing statistical insights into the portrayal of immigrants and immigration films. The qualitative analysis delves deeper into the experiences of immigrants, divided into three subchapters: first, examining how immigrants confront intolerance and xenophobia. This section explores narratives of immigrants facing neo-Nazi xenophobia, daily racist encounters, and violence against immigrant women as reactions to socioeconomic events. The second subchapter investigates the intersections of otherness through local-immigrant relationships, including romantic relationships involving exploitation and societal impacts, as well as friendships characterized by shared struggles and mutual support. Finally, the last subchapter examines the journeys of immigrants, focusing on themes of assimilation, integration, and social rejection, shedding light on their fleeting dreams and complex realities.

Finally, the fifth and final chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations from this study on the representation of immigrants in Spanish cinema. The chapter synthesizes the key findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses and relates them to research questions and hypotheses. It also offers theoretical insights into how consistent cinematic portrayals influence societal perceptions of immigrants by highlighting important evidence and arguments that connect findings to Social Representation Stereotypes and Cultivation theories. The chapter also provides recommendations for practical applications of findings and future investigations. The annexes include supporting materials, figures, and quantitative coding to illustrate the analysis.

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## 1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a review of classical literature and recent research on the phenomenon of immigration as depicted in cinema. Numerous studies have explored immigration cinema from various theoretical perspectives. However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding examining stereotypes and applying Cultivation Theory in the context of immigration films. This review focuses on key authors whose works have significantly contributed to our understanding of these issues and whose insights will guide this study in examining how these films portray immigrants and the potential impact of these portrayals on societal perceptions, as well as recent research related to the topic.

In *Los «OTROS» Etnicidad y «Raza» en el cine español contemporáneo* (2005), Isabel Santaolalla explores the representation of identity in recent Spanish cinema, focusing on the dichotomy between "us" and "the others." Santaolalla examines which identities are presented as normative and which are marginalized, highlighting the problematic nature of this dichotomy. The study primarily addresses ethnicity and its interactions with gender, sexuality, generational, and social categories, noting that while gender and sexuality have been extensively studied, ethnic factors have not received the same attention. Santaolalla argues that Spanish cinema has begun to actively participate in constructing a renewed discourse on ethnicity, reflecting the rapid changes in Spanish society.

In *Immigration Cinema in New Europe*, Isolina Ballesteros examines films from the early 1990s that portray the lives and identities of first-generation immigrants and children of the European diaspora. Ballesteros argues that these films, whether authored by immigrants or white Europeans engaging with immigrants' predicaments, are characterized by a deliberate blurring of filmic conventions from multiple genres, resulting in their "unmappable" nature. The book theorizes immigration cinema in the context of globalization, addressing concepts such as gender, hybridity, transculturation, border crossing, transnationalism, and translation. Ballesteros introduces the term "Immigration Cinema," positing that since the late 1980s, a subgenre of social cinema has emerged in Europe, focusing on migratory movements directed from outside to within the European Union. She proposes providing a conceptual and comparative consideration of the visual and narrative filmic conventions found in immigration films that allow them to be grouped under the label "immigration cinema" within broader preexisting categories such as "social cinema," "world cinema," and "third cinema." (Ballesteros, 2015)

Santaolalla and Ballesteros' books will be key references in our research. We will use the term "Immigration Cinema" to explore the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the broader European context. Through an in-depth analysis of a diverse selection of films, our research will seek to identify the presence of stereotypes and their impact on society. These resources will be instrumental in helping us understand how cinematic depictions of immigrants shape societal perceptions and perpetuate stereotypes, offering a comprehensive framework for comprehending the cultural and social consequences of immigration cinema. In addition, the study will include several references as *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Elsaesser, 2005), *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses* (Elsaesser, 2009), *100 Years of Spanish Cinema* (Grisales, 2009), *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Naficy, 2001), *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration* (Flesler, 2008), *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (Shohat, 1994) among others.

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We will analyze recent studies and the significant features that have embraced the concept of "Immigration Cinema," covering various topics. Our initial focus will be on immigrant women, a subject that has garnered significant attention and has been explored in numerous studies. Zarco (2017) Concluded that stereotypes still constrain immigrant women in the cinema; she analyzed a selection of Spanish films focusing on gender representation and the migratory experience. The analysis is performed at the micro level (representations and individual experiences) and macro level (representations and sociocultural experiences). In most of the films Zarco analyzed, she found that it is an initial situation of rejection and contempt on the part of the native character towards the immigrant, which is founded particularly on the difference that separates them to a mutual and gradual approach between them.

In most cases, this “change” is caused by a situation of need that generally ends in a friendship that results from communication and mutual understanding. The second part examines the construction of stereotypes in contemporary Spanish film productions (1990-2012). They result in the appearance of several models of women represented as sex workers, domestic workers, or those who take care of the elderly. However, some films, although very few, changed the usual stereotypes of migrant women and distinguished by the dialogues of the protagonists acquire a great depth and cease to be only objects of desire and could break the stereotype of the sensual, exotic immigrant and with a strong erotic load but began to be considered as independent subjects who, in most cases, can decide for themselves. In fact, stories of suffering and needs are told that push the protagonists to leave their home countries in search of a better future. Here, the spectators witness the difficulties they encounter in their new destiny, which are often insurmountable. This has also been explored in a recent study by Dias Pereira. (2018) In her paper, she touched on social representations of immigrants from Latin America in Spanish cinema. She went into depth to analyze film data, compare it to reality, and made different statistics about migrants' origin countries, what they are working in Spain, their ages, and legal and illegal situations. The paper explains the cinematic representation of Latin Americans who immigrated to Spain for economic reasons between 1996 and 2008. In another similar prior study, Teixidó Farré (2011) Conducts a qualitative study on the representations of immigrant women in contemporary Spanish cinema from 1990 to 2009. The research establishes a theoretical framework based on the status of female immigration in Spain within the context of the growing feminization of immigration discourse. The study reviews statistical data on immigrant women and examines their representations in cinema and media, highlighting how these discourses impact public opinion. The findings reveal significant invisibility and marginalization of immigrant women, often portrayed in a discriminatory manner.

Barreto Malta and Gordillo (2021) analyze the representation of Latin American immigrant women in Spanish cinema through a content analysis of films produced between 1999 and 2012. Employing tools from Cultural Studies, Audiovisual Narrative, and Gender Studies, the study finds that while these characters are present, their portrayals often rely on hegemonic notions of nationality, ethnicity, and age, focusing on everyday life and marginality. However, this study is limited to a specific timeframe and a narrow range of films. Our research extends this analysis by focusing on the sustainability of stereotypes through Cultivation Theory, investigating how these persistent portrayals influence audience perceptions over time. This broader approach aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of how immigrant women are represented and how these representations shape societal attitudes. Whereas Ventura Kessel (2024) analyses Arab Muslim women in a Spanish fiction series, extending it to films to see if both media

present similar cultural discourses. By using qualitative methods, the research found that Arab Muslim women in films are often relegated to secondary roles tied to male characters, depicted with physical features associated with their community, and shown wearing a turban or hijab. While films seldom verbalize stereotypes, they still rely on preconceived notions about lifestyle, religion, and violence. The study concludes that Spanish cinema largely reverts to early representation formulas for Arab Muslim women, characterized by invisibility, lack of voice, and associations with violence and drugs.

Our research conforms with these findings and also reveals that Maghrebi and Sub-Saharan immigrant women are less represented than Latin American women. We argue that these stereotypes portrayals influence audience perceptions over time. However, we investigate various variables of immigrants, including race, age, and gender. We also expand the sample to 2022 for comprehensive analysis.

There are a few studies that address immigration cinema using cultivation theory. Guardiola et al. (2010) analyze the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish television news, highlighting a tendency to problematize immigration by associating it with social, economic, and cultural threats, deviance, delinquency, and illegality. The study uses qualitative analysis techniques and examines 145 news items broadcast across 105 news programs on four television channels (three national and one regional Antena 3; Tele 5, TVE1) and one regional channel, Canal 9)—the study employs Cultivation Theory, to investigate how persistent patterns of portraying immigrants in the news and connect them to certain issues reinforce stereotypes over time, resulting of shaping audience perceptions and societal attitudes. Our research aligns with these findings; however, films can be a more powerful medium in contributing to the cultivation of stereotypes as they use narratives and characters, unlike news, which relies on short information. A study by Kanayo and Anjofui (2020) explores the influence of mass media on Sub-Saharan Black African Students migrating to the US and found that media platforms significantly shape their expectations and experiences. Employing cultivation theory, interviews with Iowa State University students revealed that television and films were predominantly used to form initial images of the US's economic conditions, while social media, due to its interactivity, was favored for confirming these conditions and supporting their migration decisions. The findings highlight the importance of films, TV, and media in general in influencing migration decisions.

Cultivation theory has rarely been applied in film analysis, particularly in the context of exploring the portrayal of immigrants. Our study seeks to address this gap by combining Cultivation theory with Social Representation theory to examine how immigrants are depicted in Spanish cinema and how these portrayals contribute to reinforcing stereotypes over time. By analyzing a broad range of films from 1990 to 2022, we aim to uncover the long-term effects of these stereotypes on audience perceptions and societal attitudes. Another research conducted by Van Liew (2019) explores how immigration films in contemporary Spain communicate conventions of visibility and invisibility. This study examines how these films portray immigrant experiences and the ways in which they highlight or obscure the presence and issues of immigrants within Spanish society. By analyzing various examples from contemporary Spanish cinema, the research sheds light on the representational strategies used to address and reflect the dynamics of immigration. Julia C. Barnes' (2019) article examines the intersection of gender and race in portraying native-born Spaniards and immigrants in a selection of Spanish films from 1999 to 2013. The study reveals that white Spanish men are often central to the narratives, even if not the main protagonists. In contrast, immigrant men of color are typically

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depicted in negative roles, such as criminals or delinquents. White Spanish women are portrayed with complexity, oscillating between modern, liberated figures and criminalized individuals, reflecting broader societal anxieties. In contrast, immigrant women of color are depicted as willing to take on traditional roles abandoned by Spanish women, positioning them as saviors of the Spanish family. These recurring themes highlight contemporary concerns about immigration and the declining native population. The most recent study by Lerma Parra (2024) examines the relationship between cinema and migration, highlighting how fictionalized representations of migrants shape and transform immigration discourses. The study compares *Las Cartas de Alou* (Montxo Armendáriz, 1990), a pioneering film, with *Vasil* (Avelina Prat, 2022), a recent production, to reveal artistic and narrative elements in Spanish migration cinema and trace its evolution over the past 30 years. However, this analysis is limited by its focus on only two films, which may not fully capture the breadth of changes in the genre. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing a larger number of films to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution and diversity in migration cinema. Parra's study provides an overview of Spanish migration cinema from 1990 to 2022 and compares two key films to track changes in representation. However, this analysis, limited to only two films, may not fully capture the broader evolution within the genre. Our study aims to address this gap limitation by expanding the film selection to include a comprehensive range of films from 1990 to 2022. This approach will thoroughly examine how immigrant portrayals and associated stereotypes have developed and their impact on societal perceptions.

## 1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study establishes a conceptual basis for comprehending the connection between films, stereotypes, and societal perceptions of immigrants by drawing from the disciplines of social science, communication, and media studies. The framework encompasses several fundamental concepts. Firstly, it recognizes the influential role of cinema in shaping public opinion and cultural representations. It acknowledges that films can both mirror and shape societal attitudes toward immigrants. Moreover, the framework acknowledges the potential evolution of immigrant portrayals over time and the significance of historical and socio-cultural contexts in understanding these changes. It is anchored in two interrelated theories: Stuart Hall's Representation and Stereotypes Theory and Cultivation Theory by George Gerbner. These theories will guide the analysis of the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the broader European context, focusing on how these cinematic portrayals contribute to shaping and reinforcing social perceptions and stereotypes related to immigration.

### Representation and Stereotypes Theory

Stuart Hall's Representation and stereotypes Theory provides a critical framework for understanding how media and cultural texts construct and communicate meaning. Hall argues that representation reflects reality and is an active process that produces meaning through language, images, and signs. Stereotypes, according to Hall, are a vital aspect of representation, functioning as simplified, often exaggerated, and reductive images that fix and naturalize differences between groups of people. Hall (1994) and Grossberg (2006) Both considered that the media can promote or even establish stereotypes due to systematic bias in describing social systems. (Yuwei, 2024). Hall (1997) also states that Stereotypes are not neutral; they are embedded in power relations and reinforce existing social hierarchies and inequalities.

One of Hall's significant contributions to representation theory is his encoding and decoding model, introduced in 1973 and developed later in 1980. This model highlights the

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communication process in two distinct stages: the "encoding" of messages by producers and the "decoding" by audiences. Hall asserts that meaning does not reside solely in the text but is negotiated through the socio-cultural context of individuals, leading to different interpretations of the same media content. (Xie, Bin Yasin, Bin Shekh Alsagoff, & Hoon Ang, 2022). The encoding element means that the person sharing the information converts the transmitted information, meaning, intention, or viewpoint into a symbolic code or information with specific rules, making it easy to understand and translate through verbal or non-verbal forms. Hall, 1973; (Yuwei, 2024) This symbolic code is a crucial site for transmitting stereotypes, as it is within these encoded messages that cultural meanings and assumptions, such as stereotypes about immigrant ethnic groups, are embedded and conveyed. Through repeated exposure to such encoded representations in films, these stereotypes can become normalized, influencing audience perceptions and reinforcing existing societal biases.

Tathyalindi examines Hall's stereotype concept and argues that in practicing the stereotype, Hall investigates four aspects: the construction of 'otherness' and exclusion, stereotyping and power, and the role of fantasy and fetishism. The construction of 'otherness' and exclusion means that "people who are in any way significantly different from majority-' them' rather than 'us' are frequently exposed to this binary form of representation. They seem to be represented through sharply opposed, polarized, binary extremes: good/bad, civilized/primitive, ugly/excessively attractive, repelling-because-different/compelling-because-strange-and-exotic." (Hall, 1997). Those who are considered as 'other' are excluded from people around them. They are also exposed to a negative sense of binary form. (Tathyalindi, 2015, p. 13)

In this dissertation, Hall's Theory will be used to analyze how immigrants are represented in Spanish cinema, focusing on the stereotypes constructed and perpetuated through these portrayals that contribute to shaping the "other." The integration of Hall's Theory through the encoding/decoding model into the study ensures a deeper exploration of how immigrants are represented and perceived in Spanish cinema. Understanding how stereotypes are encoded and transmitted through symbolic codes in films provides valuable insights into the dynamics of intercultural communication. Spanish films are a significant cultural medium through which dominant narratives about immigrants are communicated, contested, or reinforced. Through examining these representations, we will explore how Spanish cinema contributes to the broader discourse on immigration in Europe, highlighting the role of stereotypes in shaping public perceptions of immigrant communities.

**Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation Theory, developed by George Gerbner in the late 1960s, posits that long term exposure to media content can significantly influence audiences' perceptions of reality. Media, particularly television, does not simply mirror reality but actively cultivates specific attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions about the world. Through repeated exposure to certain images and narratives, audiences may come to adopt a homogenized worldview shaped by the patterns observed in media content.

A useful way to conceptualize the media's role in forming national impressions is through cultivation theory. Gerbner et al. (1994) This theory emphasizes the exposure to recurring patterns of stories, images, themes, and messages through media. It assumes an active role of the media consumer, whose interaction with the media cultivates a worldview or set of attitudes. In other words, what people see frequently on television is what they come to believe. (Jackson Harris & Andrew karafa, 1998). The media may present a stereotypical image that leads the

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audience to formulate a mental image of some individuals, groups, or people, which would then be described as a stereotype. (Basyouni, 2000, p. 9)

Gerbner states that cultivation is some sort of desultory learning resulting from exposure to TV. What the viewer sees on the screen becomes the basis of a mental image that the individual forms about the practical social status of values, population characteristics, and the various cultural standards common by society's classes, categories, and individuals. (Morgan, 2002, p. 7) Basyouni defines mental image is how a person perceives another person or group and influences social interaction. It determines how people interact with others from different cultures, races, or religions. It is important to distinguish between mental and stereotypical images. The media doesn't create mental images, but it can present stereotypes that influence people's perceptions. (2000, p. 11) The cultural influences of TV are embedded in all kinds of the content it presents and not restricted to cultural programs, which refer to programs that deal with art, science, and literature. However, all these programs may influence the cultural formation of individuals and masses. Furthermore, TV drama films and series may leave a stronger cultural impact than serious programs, studies, and seminars. (Labeeb, 1985, p. 11) However, Gerbner renounces the use of genre-specific measures based on two assumptions. TV content is homogeneous, so whether the viewed content is comedy, crime, or news, it typically contains the same mix of images and messages that conform to the norms and values of the people. The use of TV is ritualistic and unselective; viewers fit their viewing into their time schedule rather than choosing according to content. (Morgan, 2002, p. 219)

In the context of Spanish immigration cinema, Cultivation Theory is essential for exploring how consistent portrayals of immigrants, whether positive, negative, or stereotypical, can shape public perceptions and mental images of immigrant groups among audiences. Spanish films often reflect societal concerns, tensions, and hopes, making them a critical area for examining how these portrayals have evolved and what cumulative impact, due to the long-term exposure they might have on the viewers of immigration films in Spain. This can lead to the adoption of repeated cinematic representations as reflections of reality, which can either challenge or reinforce existing stereotypes and biases toward immigrants in Spain.

**Integrating Representation & Stereotypes Theory and Cultivation Theory**

Integrating Representation and Stereotypes Theory and Cultivation Theory provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema. While Cultivation Theory focuses on the long-term effects of media exposure on audience perceptions, Representation Theory provides an understanding of the content of these perceptions and how meaning is constructed, communicated, and internalized through media representation. This thesis will utilize Cultivation Theory to assess the potential cumulative effects of immigrant portrayals in Spanish films on audience perceptions. With analysis a broad range of films from 1990 to 2022, the study will evaluate how these portrayals shape public attitudes toward immigrants in Spain. Stuart Hall's Representation and stereotypes Theory will be employed to critically deconstruct the content of these portrayals, examining how immigrants are represented in terms of ethnicity, culture, and social status, among other variables.

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## 1.4 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

### 1.4.1 Research Problem and Research Questions

The research problem addressed in this thesis centers on how depictions of immigrant characters in Spanish films and their potential impact on shaping societal perceptions and stereotypes of immigrants. Specifically, the study seeks to examine how these films contribute to forming and perpetuating negative stereotypes. The research problem is also motivated by the need to understand how major social events, such as economic crises or terrorist acts involving immigrants, influence the narratives and portrayals of immigrants. Additionally, the thesis investigates the temporal evolution of immigrant representations in Spanish cinema, in which keeping the same pattern can lead to the cultivation of stereotypes by audiences and whether these overview portrayals involve immigrants abandoning their cultural identities in favor of assimilation. By addressing these issues, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of Spanish immigration cinema in constructing and enforcing stereotypes. The findings will offer valuable insights into the whole immigrant portrayal.

**Research Question 1**: How have immigrants been portrayed in Spanish cinema over time, particularly in the context of significant sociopolitical events such as economic recessions, acts of terrorism, and xenophobic attacks?

**Research Question 2:** How did Spanish immigration cinema address issues of intolerance, xenophobia, and neo-Nazi attacks against immigrants?

**Research Question 3:** In what ways does Spanish cinema depict the dynamics of local native-immigrant relationships, including romantic and friendships, and how are these relationships influenced by societal factors such as exploitation, shared struggles, and mutual support?

**Research Question 4:** How does Spanish immigration cinema manage the complications of cultural diversity and integration, particularly in balancing representation with the risk of promoting negative stereotypes, and does it depict the abandonment of immigrants' original cultural identities as a condition for integration?

**Research Question 5:** What are the temporal and demographic trends in the portrayal of immigrant characters in Spanish cinema, and how do these quantitative trends correlate with the broader narratives of assimilation, integration, social rejection, and the challenge or reinforcement of stereotypes?

### 1.4.2 Population and Sample

This section describes the population and the sampling criteria used to select films for research.

Population: The population for this study includes all Spanish fiction films focused on immigration produced between 1990 and 2022. The study specifically focuses on films that address immigration as the main topic or contain any immigrant character in the narrative as a protagonist or supporting role.

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Source of Film Selection: The films will be selected from the comprehensive list of fiction migration films provided by the Migration Institute of the University of Granada[1]. This list is a reliable source for identifying relevant films within the population.

Sample: The sample is selected by adopting the complete list[2], ensuring a comprehensive representation of time periods, genres, and thematic elements. The following criteria will guide the inclusion and exclusion of films in the sample:

Inclusion Criteria:

Fiction Films: Only fiction films will be included.

Production Period: Films produced in Spain between 1990 and 2022.

Focus on Immigration: Films that explicitly address immigration or feature immigrant characters as the primary role in the narrative.

Geographical Scope: Films set within Spain primarily focus on the immigrant experience within the country.

Exclusion Criteria:

Documentary Films: Documentary films will be excluded due to their differing narrative styles and cinematic techniques, which may not align with the focus on fiction films and do not have much influence.

TV Films: Films made for television will be excluded despite being more popular. However, they may have different production values, distribution channels, and target audiences, potentially affecting the analysis of cinematic representations. However, most cinematic films eventually make their way to TV after participating in festivals and being released in cinemas.

Geographical Scope: Films set outside of Spain, in immigrants' countries of origin, or focusing primarily on the crossing journey will be excluded as they may provide perspectives that differ from the focus on the portrayal of immigrants in Spain. Specific films excluded such as:

*14 kilómetros* (Gerardo Olivares, 2007), *Querida Bamako* (Omer Oke, Txarly Llorente, 2007), *Adú* (Salvador Calvo, 2020), *Mediterráneo* (Marcel Barrena, 2021)

Inaccessibility: Films that are not accessible on DVDs or streaming platforms or at any way that the researcher can reach for academic analysis will be excluded, including:

*Menos que cero* (Ernesto Tellería, 1996), *Susanna* (Antonio Chavarrías, 1996), *El Faro* (Manuel Balaguer, 1998), *Canícula* (Álvaro García-Capelo, 2002), *A este lado del mundo* (David Trueba, 2020*), El Salto* (Benito Zambrano, 2023)

Foreign Productions: Films produced by non-Spanish filmmakers or main foreign productions will be excluded to maintain focus on Spanish cultural and thematic perspectives. Which include:

*Biutiful* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2010)

[1] https://blogs.ugr.es/migra-cin-es/en/feature-film/

[2] See the full list in the appendix

### 1.4.3 Research methodology

Our research methodology is based on mixed content analysis methods and will delve into Spanish films dealing with immigration. We will focus on films where immigration is the main or marginal story and those where immigrant characters play leading or supporting roles. We will be on the lookout for any stereotypes. The period we have chosen for this study, spanning from 1990 to 2022, holds significant importance. It marks the production of the first film addressing immigration and the emergence of immigrant characters leading the plot up until 2022, the date we collected the data. Approximately sixty films dealing with migration were released during this period, which we consider the universe of our study. We will select a sample of films defined by the criteria we previously specified.

To achieve the purpose of this study, our methodology will involve a comprehensive content analysis of the entire corpus of films selected for this thesis. We will examine how these films construct the image of immigrants through plot development, dialogue, and cinematic techniques. A mixed-methods approach will be employed to address the research questions thoroughly. The quantitative component will focus on frequency and quantity, analyzing two levels—film and character—to delve deeply into various variables and ensure thorough findings. However, recognizing that quantitative content analysis alone is insufficient to capture the expressive and emotional qualities of visual images or to explore the expressions and relationships within the narratives fully, the study will also use qualitative content analysis to deconstruct the story elements, examine character relationships, plot structures, and the language and meanings conveyed through dialogue. This combined approach will ensure that all relevant issues and aspects of immigrant representation in films are comprehensively investigated and linked to the research focus.

Content analysis is a highly flexible research method that has been widely used in multiple studies with varying research goals and objectives. The research method is applied in qualitative, quantitative, and sometimes mixed modes of research frameworks. It employs various analytical techniques to generate findings and put them into context (Marsh, E. & White, 2006). According to Berelson, Content Analysis is “A research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of the communication.” (1952, p. 18). Berger defines Content Analysis as “a research technique that is based on measuring the amount of something (violence, negative portrayals of women, or whatever) in a representative sampling of some mass-mediated popular art form” (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 17) (Berger, 1998, p. 23). As stated by Wayne, Content analysis sheds light on filmmaking practices that resonate with audiences but potentially lead to stereotypical or clichéd representations. Such knowledge can help question, subvert, or prevent these practices by gauging the spectator’s response to the final film artifact in relation to the preconceptions he/she may have acquired through viewing a body of previous films; this interactive process sheds light on whether these preconceptions are confirmed, challenged or reconfigured (1997, p. 11).

Krippendorff (2019) Argues that the stereotypical aim of mass-media content analysis is to describe how a controversial issue is "depicted" in a chosen genre. Efforts to describe how something is "covered" by, "portrayed" in, or "represented" in the media invoke a picture theory of content. This approach to content analysis decontextualizes the analyzed text. It conceals the researchers' interest in the analysis. It hides their inferences behind the naive belief that they are able to describe meanings objectively while rendering the results immune to invalidating

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evidence. It also considers common findings of political biases, racial prejudices, and the silencing of minorities on television as such issues.

Many researchers have used quantitative and qualitative research as separate methodologies for many years (Sieber, 1973). In the last couple of decades, researchers have begun combining the two methodologies in hopes of better understanding different phenomena. Many researchers have shifted to mixing methods for many reasons, including the inherent weaknesses of one method by itself. Mitchell (1999) (Haines, 2011, p. 20)

Content analysis has been extensively applied across various social science, communication, and media studies. It has been used to explore topics such as gender and race representation, violence in films, portrayal analysis, media reporting, and political communication. Analyzing film character portrayals has long attracted researchers employing content analysis methods. For instance, Neuendorf et al.'s (2009) Study, "Shaken and Stirred: A Content Analysis of Women's Portrayals in James Bond Films," utilized quantitative content analysis to examine the portrayal of women in the James Bond film series. Similarly, Daalmans et al. (2017) conducted a content analysis in their study "Gender Representation on Gender-Targeted Television Channels: A Comparison of Female- and Male-Targeted TV Channels in the Netherlands," highlighting the differences in gender portrayal across television channels. Other notable studies include Pramesti's (2022) exploration of social issues in the film "Jakarta VS Everybody," Lira's (2023) analysis of parenting values in informal education as depicted in "The Beach Painting," Apoorva's (2023) examination of societal taboos challenged by queer independent films, and Ogden & Chohan's (2024) content analysis of the frequency of "fat talk" in Walt Disney animated films spanning from 1937 to 2021.

We selected this methodology because it allows for a comprehensive analysis of the films by integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component involves counting and measuring specific elements within the films, providing an objective, data-driven description free from subjective judgment. This approach is particularly well-suited to our research as it allows us to systematically track the frequency of various elements, facilitating a deeper analysis of the underlying meanings conveyed in the films. A detailed set of labels will be developed to categorize all aspects and variables related to immigrant characters, encompassing both their characteristics and broader cinematic representations. The qualitative approach will involve a thematic analysis of the narratives, which will be divided into four key themes. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses will be linked to the research questions and compared to provide a holistic understanding of the portrayal of immigrants in the films.

### 1.4.4 Unit of Analysis

**Quantitative Data Analysis Coding Scheme**

We will categorize the data into two stages: defining the units of meaning and establishing the coding categories.

Units and Categories of Analysis:

1. Unit of Meaning:

The analysis will consider two primary units of meaning:

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- Film Level: This unit focuses on the overall narrative structure, thematic elements, and sociopolitical context within which the immigrant characters are portrayed. The film itself will be examined for its general information, narrative elements, and the presence of stereotypes or thematic keywords related to immigration.

- Character Level: This unit focuses on the specific characteristics of immigrant characters as they appear in the films. These characteristics include gender, age, profession, ethnicity, religion, social status, cultural background, and language spoken.

2. Coding Categories:

The coding process will involve two types of categories:

- Objective Characteristics: These include quantifiable and observable traits, such as gender (e.g., male, female), age group (e.g., 20-30), and geographical origin (e.g., Sub-Saharan African).

- Conceptual Characteristics: These include more interpretive elements, such as socioeconomic status (e.g., low, middle, high), roles in the narrative (e.g., protagonist, antagonist), and behavioral traits (e.g., trustworthy, hostile, conservative, criminal).

Development and Piloting of Coding Scheme:

- The first step in the analysis will be developing and piloting an initial coding scheme. This will be done on a randomly selected sample of data to ensure the categories are well-defined and applicable across the films. The coding scheme will be organized into a codebook[3], which will serve as a guide for systematic and replicable data coding. Given the manageable size of the dataset, coding will be conducted manually with the support of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti to ensure both precision and context sensitivity.

Data Variables:

Film Level Analysis:

- General Information: We will collect basic information such as the film's name, year of release, director, and genre.

- Narrative Elements: The analysis will cover aspects such as the number of immigrant characters, settings, plot focus, and conflicts. Variables like sociopolitical events, resolution, and thematic keywords will help us understand the narrative focus and underlying messages.

- Stereotypes and Representation: We will specifically examine the presence and impact of stereotypes, cultural diversity, and the overall representation of immigrants in each film.

Character Level Analysis:

- Character Characteristics: This includes coding for attributes like name, gender, age, geographical origin, and role within the narrative.

- Stereotypes of Immigrant Portrayal: We will analyze spoken language, socio-economic status, marital status, legal status, and various traits and social interactions of the characters.

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[3] See codebook in Appendix

Additionally, we will examine behaviors, acculturation, and intellectual characteristics and how these elements contribute to the portrayal of immigrants.

**Qualitative Thematic Data Analysis**

In this section, we will conduct a qualitative thematic analysis of the selected film sample, focusing on three key themes that emerge as recurring patterns in the portrayal of immigrant characters. These themes summarize the complex experiences and challenges faced by immigrants, as depicted in Spanish cinema:

Immigrants Confronting Intolerance and Xenophobia:

This theme explores how films depict the struggles of immigrant characters as they face societal intolerance and xenophobic attitudes. It examines the external and internal conflicts arising from discrimination, prejudice, and marginalization. Through this lens, we will analyze how these narratives reflect broader social and political tensions and the impact of such portrayals on audience perceptions of immigrant communities.

Intersections of Otherness: Local-Immigrant Relationships:

This theme focuses on the dynamics of romantic and friendship relationships between immigrants and locals, highlighting the intersections of cultural, social, and ethnic differences. We will analyze how these relationships are portrayed, whether as points of conflict, mutual understanding, or negotiation of identity. This theme also considers how these relationships influence the representation of immigrants as “other” within the broader social fabric.

Immigrants' Journeys and Fleeting Dreams: Assimilation, Integration, and Social Rejection:

This theme delves into the immigrant characters' journeys, capturing their attempts to assimilate, integrate, or resist within the host society. We will explore narratives of hope and aspiration and the harsh realities of social rejection. The analysis will focus on how these films depict the complexities of immigrant experiences, including the tension between maintaining cultural identity and the pressures to conform to the host culture.

By systematically coding the quantitative variables and qualitative themes, our analysis aims to uncover patterns and themes related to the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema. It offers insights into how these portrayals have evolved and their implications for audience perceptions. This dual approach ensures that the films' quantitative and qualitative dimensions are thoroughly explored, providing a holistic understanding of the representation of immigrant characters in the selected films.

## 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aims to analyze the representation of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the European context, focusing on the key characteristics of the characters and narratives of the film that define these portrayals. By investigating the evolution of immigrant film portrayals from 1990 to 2022, the study will explore how these portrayals have evolved over time, particularly with significant socioeconomic and political events. The study seeks to identify and categorize the stereotypes associated with immigrant characters, tracing their evolution and evaluating their potential influence on audience perceptions through the lens of Cultivation Theory.

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Research objectives:

To examine the portrayal of immigrant characters in Spanish cinema: This objective involves conducting a detailed analysis of how immigrant characters are depicted across a broad range of Spanish films produced between 1990 and 2022. The goal is to identify pattern themes, narrative structures, and visual elements associated with these characters. Special attention will be given to the immigrant gender, examining how it intersects with ethnicity, origin, and migration status to shape their representation. By categorizing the stereotypes associated with immigrant characters, this analysis will trace the persistence or transformation of these portrayals over time.

To investigate the correlation between cinematic representations and societal stereotypes: This objective aims to explore the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema and its potential connection to the formation, reinforcement, or challenge of societal stereotypes about immigrants in Spanish society. The objective focuses on understanding how films can reflect or reproduce these stereotypes by the long-term effect. Ultimately contributing to the broader discussion on cinema in shaping cultural and social narratives related to immigration.

To contextualize immigrant portrayals within European migration trends and significant historical events: This objective involves situating the cinematic representations of immigrants within the broader context of European migration patterns and significant socio-political events, such as 9/11, Madrid 11M, the 2008 financial crisis, and the influx of refugees. The analysis will explore how these events influenced the narratives and portrayals of immigrants in Spanish films, reflecting or responding to changing societal attitudes and migration policies. By connecting these portrayals to real-world migration trends and historical moments, the research will provide a nuanced understanding of the factors that shape and influence the depiction of immigrants in cinema.

To contribute to the academic discourse on migration cinema: This objective aims to make a contribution to the academic field of migration cinema by providing comprehensive insights into how Spanish films from 1990 to 2022 reflect, reinforce, or challenge societal attitudes toward immigrants. The research will address gaps in the existing literature by expanding the analysis to a broader range of films and offering a more detailed examination of the intersection between cinema, immigration, and stereotypes prevailing in society. The findings will be relevant to scholars in communication and film studies, migration studies, sociology, and related fields, offering a valuable resource for understanding the complex relationship between media representations and social attitudes toward immigrants

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# CHAPTER TWO: MIGRATION AND EUROPEAN DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES, SPAIN AS A MODEL

> Migration is a positive global phenomenon. It powers economic growth, reduces inequalities, connects diverse societies, and helps us ride the demographic waves of population growth and decline. It is also a source of political tensions and human tragedies. But, the majority of migrants live and work legally. Unfortunately, others live in the shadows, unprotected by the law and unable to contribute fully to society. And a desperate minority put their lives at risk to enter countries where they face suspicion and abuse.
>
> António Gutierrez, Secretary-General of the United Nations (2018)

## 2.1 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Our research investigates migration cinema, but we must address the phenomenon of migration by explaining its different concepts, causes, types, and a brief historical context before we move on to its reflection in cinema in the next chapter.

This chapter aims to overview the recent history of migration at the global and European levels through the major stages that contributed to migration and produced demographic change. Human migrations occur when one or more groups of people move from one area of the world to another for common reasons. Migration is of two types, either voluntary or forced. Manning (2020) distinguishes three main migration types: labor, refugee, and urbanization. It takes place within the same country from one region to another, from the countryside to the cities, within the continent from one country to another, or from one continent to another.

Immigration has accelerated since the 18th century, including the involuntary slave trade; it increased even more in the 19th century. The migration phenomenon has been known to increase rapidly in the era of globalization, in parallel with its consequences on countries, resulting in different labels characterized by complexity and overlapping with several other types of population movements. The current United Nations estimate is about 281 million international migrants, equating to 3.6 percent of the global population. However, increasing numbers of people are being displaced, within and out of their country of origin, because of conflict, violence, political or economic instability, climate change, and other disasters. (World Migration Report, 2024) Therefore, to understand all these elements, we must delve into the concept by first addressing the definition of migration in general and then in different contexts and certain types.

Migration is the movement of large numbers of people, birds, or animals from one place to another. (Collins English Dictionary , 2012)

According to the Demographic Dictionary of the United Nations, "Migration is an event in which people move from one geographical area to another. When people leave their place of residence to live permanently in another area, this is called migration." (IOM, 2024)

According To Divisha, migration is the movement of people between regions or countries. It is the process of changing one's place of residence and permanently living in a region or country. It may be permanent or temporary, with the intention of returning to the place of origin in the future. (Divisha, 2017)

Immigration is the movement of non-native people into a country to settle there. When they arrive at their destination, they are immigrants. (Collins English Dictionary , 2012). Parry (2021) defines immigration as the process through which individuals become permanent residents or citizens of another country. Historically, immigration has been of great social, economic, and cultural benefit to states. The immigration experience is long and varied and has, in many cases, resulted in the development of multicultural societies; many modern states are characterized by various cultures and ethnicities that have derived from previous periods of immigration.

Emigration From the perspective of the country of departure, when people leave their country of origin. The verbs immigrate and emigrate are similarly related in meaning; immigrate refers to entering a country, while emigrate refers to leaving. (Collins English Dictionary , 2012)

Migrant / Immigrant is a person who immigrates to another country, usually for permanent residence. (Collins English Dictionary , 2012). The UN Migration Agency (IOM, 2008) Defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of the person's legal status, whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; what the causes for the movement are; or what the length of the stay is.

There are several concepts of migration. It generally symbolizes the movement of animals or humans from one place to another for various reasons, such as the search for sources of livelihood and security. Immigration means the act of migration in relation to the reception place, such as the receiving country and destination. At the same time, it implies emigration with the country or region that the immigrants left.

Although humans have been moving from place to place since the creation of time, the 19th and 20th centuries saw an explosion in human migration. (Whittemore, 2014)

Historians commonly cite three concepts that have significantly influenced modern migration. labor migration, urbanization, and forced migration.

Labor migration**:** The International Organization for Migration defines Labour Migration as the movement of persons from their home State to another State for the purpose of employment. Today, an estimated 86 million persons are working in a country other than their country of birth (IOM, 2008). The European Union defines labor migration as a movement of persons from one state to another or within their own country of residence for employment. (European Commission, 2011)

A "migrant worker" is defined in the International Labor Organization (ILO) instruments as a person who migrates from one country to another (or who has migrated from one country to another) intending to be employed other than on his own account and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment (Usher, 2004)

Labor migration is the movement of people from their areas of origin in order to work or search for better working conditions, and it can be in the same country from one state to another or another country, which is more common. The most prominent example of labor migration is the

massive influx of European migrants, predominantly Irish, Italians, and Germans, to the United States during the nineteenth century for job opportunities that existed in abundance at the time. In another example, Western Europe experienced a strong economic boom after World War II, which made it resort to labor from different countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, Turkey, and North Africa. It is currently characterized by multiple programs to bring skilled workers. The Arab Gulf countries approached the same strategy after the oil boom in the late 1970s, Canada also is known for bringing skilled workers and resettling them.

Urbanization: Cities worldwide have experienced population booms as citizens migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities. (Gross & Ouyang, 2020)

Western Europe witnessed a comprehensive scientific renaissance during the eighteenth century. Researchers and experiments diversified to include various branches of science, leading to important inventions and discoveries that were the direct cause of the Industrial Revolution during the nineteenth century, followed by the second Industrial Revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century. Industry contributed to urbanization as it began to replace agriculture, and millions of peasants left farms and moved to cities in search of work.

Forced Migration: when people are forcibly displaced or deported from their country of origin involuntarily. Among the most prominent causes are wars, famines, and natural disasters. There are many causes, but safety and survival remain the main motives for forced migration. The most notable examples of forced migration occurred when Jews fled Nazi Germany, and more recent examples such as Syria during the civil war, Afghanistan after the Taliban ruled the country, and Ukrainians due to the Russian invasion. Once these people migrate forcibly to another country, they seek asylum; if granted, they are called refugees.

Immigrant Integration: is a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, cohesive communities (FCCP, 2021). The International Organization for Migration (UN) defines Immigrant Integration as a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live, whereby migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the receiving community. It entails a set of joint responsibilities for migrants and communities and incorporates other related notions, such as social inclusion and social cohesion. (2024)

Xenophobia: is attitudes, prejudices, and behavior that reject, exclude, and often vilify persons based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society, or national identity. (IOM, Key Migration Terms, 2024)

## 2.2 CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL MIGRATION: PATTERNS AND MASS MOVEMENTS

Throughout history, people have migrated for various reasons, such as environmental factors like floods, ice sweeps, or drought. In modern times, migration is often driven by reasons that push people to search for a new, safer place and provide job opportunities. Together with climate change, a recent strong discussion of the phenomenon is considered a threat multiplier that can exacerbate economic insecurity or political instability. Contemporary history has witnessed multiple waves of migration in different directions and for various reasons. One of the most notable examples is the migration to the United States of America, which was driven by the settlement policy and access to land and job opportunities, so immigrants came from the United Kingdom, Spain, and France. In the nineteenth century, the emergence of mass migration, as more than 30 million immigrants left Europe for America in the period between 1846-1914.

Among them, about 4.5 million Irish escaped from a massive famine that struck Ireland, and about 5 million Germans and 4 million Italians were searching for better economic opportunities and fertile lands that they obtained in some states, as was the case of immigration policy at the time. By 1920, a huge number of Eastern European Jews fleeing religious persecution arrived in numbers estimated at more than two million Jews. (Bundy, 2016)

Europe has also known political and military migrations towards its colonies in the depths of Africa to search for new productive resources within the framework of the colonial countries and to conquer new horizons to achieve a society of abundance and to win the race for economic supremacy. However, the world will know history's most prominent migration and forced displacement stations. During the Second World War and by 1945, there were more than 30 million refugees and displaced people in Europe. (Judt, 2005). Following that, several events led to the most significant mass migrations globally since World War II; they were driven by a complex mix of political, economic, and social factors, resulting in millions of migrations. We present them in a list below[4] (2020):

Partition of India (1947): The partition of British India into India and Pakistan triggered one of the largest mass migrations in history, with over 15 million people crossing borders and approximately 1 to 2 million dying in the process. Palestinian Exodus, Nakba (1948): Approximately 750,000 Palestinians were displaced during the 1948 establishment of Israel. Chinese Civil War (1945-1949): The victory of the Communist Party led to the migration of approximately 2 million Nationalists to Taiwan. Korean War (1950-1953): The war led to the displacement of millions of Koreans, with many fleeing to South Korea from the North. Indochina Wars (1955-1975): Vietnam, The Vietnam War, and related conflicts in Laos and Cambodia led to the displacement of millions of people, including the exodus of Vietnamese boat people. Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989): The war triggered the displacement of over 6 million Afghan refugees, primarily to Pakistan and Iran. Fall of the Soviet Union (1991): The dissolution of the Soviet Union led to significant population movements, with many Russians returning to Russia and ethnic minorities moving across new borders. Yugoslav Wars (1991-1999): The wars in the former Yugoslavia resulted in the displacement of over 4 million people, including ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo. Rwandan Genocide (1994): The genocide led to the mass displacement of millions of Rwandans, with refugees fleeing to neighboring countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Tanzania.

Ongoing conflicts and events lead to displacement and mass migration:

The Western Sahara conflict between the Polisario Front and Morocco (1976-present): Over 173,000 Sahrawi refugees are estimated to live in five camps in Tindouf province in Algeria that house Sahrawi refugees who fled from the war and are under the control of the Polisario army. Central American Migrant Crisis (2010s-present): Violence, poverty, and political instability have driven significant migration from countries like Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti, and Guatemala to the United States, often through dangerous routes. Syrian Civil War (2011-present): One of the most significant refugee crises in recent history, with over 6 million Syrians fleeing the country and millions more displaced internally. Venezuelan Crisis (2015-present): Economic collapse and political instability have led to the displacement of over 7 million Venezuelans, making it one of the largest migration crises in the world. Rohingya Crisis

[4] This list created by the author and influenced from the book "The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World" by Hein de Haas, Stephen Castles, Mark J. Miller, 2020. Guilford Publications, as well as data from Wikipedia.

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in Myanmar/Bangladesh (2017-present): The persecution of the Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar led to the mass exodus of over one million people to Bangladesh. The Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022-present): The annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine displaced millions, with the 2022 Russian invasion exacerbating the crisis, leading to about 5 million more fleeing to Europe. An estimated 8 million others had been displaced within the country. Sub-Saharan Africa Migration (1990s-present): Over the past few decades, ongoing economic, environmental, and political challenges have led to significant migration from Sub-Saharan Africa through North Africa to Europe. Sudan Conflict (2023-present): The brutal conflict has forced millions of people to flee their homes, pushing the number of displaced people to around 12 million by August 2024. The vast majority, over 10 million people, remain within Sudan, representing the largest displacement crisis in the world.

The history of global migration since World War II is marked by significant mass movements driven by political upheaval, conflict, economic instability, and social changes. From the immediate post-war displacements across Europe to the recent crises in Syria, Sudan, and Ukraine, millions of people have been forced to leave their homes in search of safety and better opportunities. These migrations have shaped the demographic and cultural landscapes of host countries and regions and posed complex challenges for international relations, humanitarian aid, and global governance. Additionally, the substantial influx of immigrants has led to the rise of right-wing and nationalist movements and sparked a debate in host societies about identity and monoculturalism.

## 2.3 EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

This subchapter outlines the general development of migration to Europe and the patterns of migrant settlement. It offers an understandable historical overview of the European migration changes from the 1950s along three main periods. We will apply the approach by Van Mol and De Valk's research. (2016)

Europe has always been considered the hub of global migration, from which explorers set out towards the continent of America and other regions and then migrated and reconstructed it. It was also a source of mass migration through colonialism and the establishment of settlement provinces in the least developed countries. However, after World War II, Europe experienced a migration boom that had never been seen before. As a result of the remnants of the war that required reconstruction and compensation for the heavy loss of human factors, Western European countries encouraged immigration, and there was an urgent need for more foreign labor to achieve the expected growth. Then, it brought labor from many countries, particularly Turkey, Greece, Italy, the former Yugoslavia, and colonies in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Later, western European countries became significant destinations for immigrants.

### 2.3.1 Guest Worker Schemes and Decolonization from the 1950s to 1974

In the post-war years, North-Western Europe boomed economically. As an example, industrial production went up by 30% in the years 1953 to 1958. The native workers in this region became highly educated, and an increased possibility for social mobility made them go to white-collar work. The local workers could not fill the vacancies because of limited labor reservoirs (Dietz & Kaczmarczyk, 2008). Also, the local native population was no longer willing to engage in unhealthy agricultural jobs that were low paying, such as cleaning, construction, and mining. This resulted in the North-Western European government's recruitment from the South and countries outside Europe. The major nations of destinations were Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Holland, and Sweden. Bilateral agreements

were signed in the 1960s with Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia. Governments were in control of the movement of the flow of immigrants, and they, therefore, tended to be granted few rights and little access to welfare support.

### 2.3.2 Migration Control and the Oil Crisis from 1974 to the late 1980s

The oil crisis had a significant effect on Europe's economic landscape. It gave momentum to economic restructuring, gradually reducing the need for labor. In this period, the belief regarding unbridled economic growth went down. There was a rise in the number of foreign residents because of changes in the migration systems in Europe from circular to chain migration and the migrant population-related natural growth. In non-European countries, migrants who had come under the labor recruitment schemes settled permanently on a high note because returning to their country of origin for a long time would risk them losing their residence permits. Some migrants started bringing their families to Europe. Even though governments have tried to limit family immigration, it has been relatively unsuccessful. This is so because family reunification of the migrant workers was viewed as a fundamental right according to the European Social Charter. The foreign workers recruited were supposed to return home after finishing a period of labor. However, that did not happen, and at the end of this period, most migrants remained in North-Western Europe; they originated from Algeria, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. (Van Mol & De Valk, 2016) This was the establishment of the first generation of immigrants in Europe.

### 2.3.3 From the 1990s to the present: Recent Trends in Migration towards and Within Europe

Migration patterns from and within Europe have undergone significant changes and extensive diversification since the 1990s. The downfall of the Iron Curtain and the borders of Eastern European countries and the Cold War ended with the wars in former Yugoslavia, which brought about a new flow of asylum seekers in the Western side of Europe. (Hansen, 2003) On the other hand, this stage was marked by the beginning of the contradictions associated with legal immigrants and their crowding out with the natives. This situation happened after the closure of coal mines in France and Belgium, which at that time accommodated the most significant number of legal immigrants besides Germany.

In June 1995, the entry into force of the "Schengen Agreement," which allowed the free movement of people belonging to the European space, made Europe again on the path to becoming a rising economic power; this resulted in a strict security policy approach through the implementation of the decisions of "the New Immigration Law," which is based on the adoption of strict procedures regarding the issue of family gathering, and the conclusion of agreements with countries of the South on the deportation of illegal immigrants. Since that time, the European Union countries have become a major destination for all kinds of immigration, legal such as attracting talent and labor, illegal with the influx of immigrants through the gates of the European Union, most notably through the Mediterranean countries, as well as forced immigration as which driven by asylum. As a result of outstanding events such as the 9/11 attacks and what followed, thus the United States and the alliance countries intervened in Iraq and Afghanistan, which led to the birth of a new wave of asylum seekers and migrants fleeing the horrors of wars. At the beginning of the 2010s, the so-called Arab Spring emerged, which are revolutions against authoritarian systems in several Arab countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria; most of these countries are still witnessing a state of instability. This

geopolitical unrest prompted a surge in the number of arrivals in Southern Europe of asylum seekers trying to reach Northern European destinations. The most prominent example is Syria, where the revolution turned into a civil war that forced nearly 5 million citizens to flee, and Europe received the largest share of refugees. 2015 was the peack time, as over 1 million migrants and refugees entered Europe, with many arriving in Greece, Italy, and Spain. Countries like Germany and Sweden saw substantial increases in asylum applications. Additionally, Europe also experienced a significant influx of illegal immigrants, driven by a combination of conflict, economic hardship, and political instability, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Migrants fleeing poverty and conflict risked dangerous journeys through Libya and Morocco to reach European shores.

At the beginning of 2020, with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the borders were closed, which reflected in immigrants and asylum seekers influx. The pandemic has substantially reduced the number of irregular arrivals to the EU. In April 2020, the number of detections of irregular border crossing (IBCs) in Europe's main migratory routes fell by 85 percent from the previous month to around 900, the lowest total since 2009. The record low numbers were mainly due to the restrictive measures implemented by the EU Member States and third countries of transit and departure of migration (Frontex, 2020).

Turkey and Morocco have strategically used their geographic positions as gateways to Europe to exert political leverage and secure benefits from the European Union (EU). Turkey which hosts millions of Syrian refugees, has periodically threatened to open its borders, allowing refugees and migrants to cross into Greece and other EU countries. This tactic has been used to pressure the EU for financial aid, political concessions, and support for Turkey's broader geopolitical ambitions, including its actions in Syria. The 2016 EU-Turkey deal, in which the EU promised billions in aid in exchange for Turkey's cooperation in stemming the flow of migrants, is a prime example of how Turkey has utilized its control over migration routes for negotiation. (Kyilah, 2021)

Similarly, Morocco has leveraged its position as a transit country for African migrants attempting to reach Spain, mainly through the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, the only land borders between Africa and Europe. Morocco has pushed for economic aid, trade agreements, and political support from the EU by controlling or relaxing border enforcement. In 2021, as a response to Spain's decision to allow the Polisario Front leader, Brahim Ghali, to be treated in Spain, Morocco untightened control of the border, resulting in an influx of 8,000 migrants into Spain's north African enclave of Ceuta as a way of to pressure Spain. (Kassam, 2021)

In 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, prompting millions of Ukrainians to seek asylum in European countries. However, the treatment of these refugees differed from previous instances, as they came from a European country. Some countries provided them with special treatment, while there were allegations that others expelled Syrian refugees under the pretext of being able to accommodate a more significant number of Ukrainians due to the perceived stability in their country.

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## 2.4 MIGRATION POLICIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES IN EUROPE

### 2.4.1 Statistics and Data

According to Eurostat demographic statistics, the European Union population increased from 447.6 million on 1 January 2023 to 449.2 million on 1 January 2024. The negative natural change (more deaths than births) was outnumbered by the positive net migration (plus statistical adjustment). Considering the larger perspective, the population of the EU grew from 354.5 million in 1960 to 449.2 million on 1 January 2024, an increase of 94.7 million people. The rate of population growth has slowed down gradually in recent decades: for example, the EU population increased, on average, by about 0.8 million persons per year during the period 2005–2023, compared with an average increase of around 3.0 million persons per year during the 1960s. The natural change in the EU population has been negative since 2012, with more deaths than births recorded. In 2023, the number of deaths (4.84 million) continued to outnumber those of live births (3.67 million). The natural change (-1.2 million persons) was lower than the net migration plus statistical adjustment (+2.8 million), resulting in an increase in population of almost 1.7 million. The total increase recorded in 2023 was exclusively due to (positive) net migration. (Eurostat, 2024)

Most European countries are witnessing an increase in aging rates, especially in the South and the East, which are witnessing a decline in fertility rates as well as an increase in immigration rates, which are mostly concentrated in the youth group. In general, Europe has become the most aging continent, which puts it in front of difficult challenges, including the actual decrease in population numbers and the shrinkage of the labor force.

Net migration in the EU increased considerably from the mid-1980s onwards and has been the main determinant of population growth since the 1990s. The number of live births decreased progressively between 1960 and 1995, while the number of deaths slowly increased. The gap between live births and deaths in the EU narrowed considerably from 1961 onwards, and the natural change in the population became negative in 2012 when the number of deaths surpassed the number of births. The number of deaths is expected to increase further because of the aging population; the proportion of elderly people in EU countries has risen from 8 percent in 1950 to 22.6 percent in 2020 and is expected to reach 28 percent in 2050 (Eurostat, 2019), and assuming that fertility rates remain at a relatively low level, the negative natural change (more deaths than births) could thus well continue. Should this be the case, the EU's overall population decline or growth in the future is likely to depend mainly on the contribution made by net migration. (Eurostat, 2024)

The fact is that European Union countries depend on immigration to balance demography and economy; the massive influx of immigrants affects the culture and identity of societies. Hence, the complex relationship between immigration and national identity has become a central issue in political and social discourse across the continent. On the one hand, immigrants contribute to the labor force, help counteract aging populations, and fill crucial gaps in various sectors, such as healthcare and agriculture. On the other hand, the rapid and sometimes unregulated influx of immigrants has sparked debates about cultural integration, social cohesion, and the preservation of national identity. This tension is further exacerbated by rising populism and nationalism in many European countries, where political movements often exploit fears of cultural erosion and economic competition to gain support. As a result, the EU faces the challenge of balancing the economic and demographic benefits of immigration with

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the need to address legitimate concerns about social and cultural integration while also upholding its humanitarian obligations and values of diversity and inclusion.

### 2.4.2 Immigration Policies and their consequences on local communities and Immigrants.

Over the past thirty years, as the European Union countries have become the most prominent immigration destinations globally, the Union has faced the challenges of immigration, legitimacy in the form of family reunification, asylum seekers, students, skilled workers, and immigrants looking for work and irregular such as clandestine immigration, illegal residence, unaccompanied minors, and refugees. Numerous regulations and policies were enacted, and other agreements concluded with countries of origin and transit to limit the inflow of migrants and legalize and control the phenomenon. In this epigraph, we will review the most crucial policies and agreements in a timetable that includes the national laws and procedures first, then under the Common European policies, and subsequently at the first stages of establishing the EU without borders under the Schengen Agreement. Ultimately, we will address the challenges and effects of these policies and their repercussions on both sides: the local communities in the hosting countries and the immigrants.

During the Post-war, recovery and reconstruction led to economic growth in Western Europe. Local workers could not fill vacancies, which made the governments of these countries resort to importing labor from abroad, most notably West Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium. Some countries headed to their old colonies, such as the Maghreb, Africa, Indonesia, and Surinam. At the same time, others imported labor from their neighboring countries, such as Turkey and South Europe, such as Spain and Italy. Most of these Western countries had a similar attitude toward immigration policies under a program known as the so-called guest worker scheme. The national immigration policies of that program were classified into two types: cyclical and temporary. Some countries have adopted a periodic system of immigration controls in which permits are issued for a limited period and cannot be extended. Other countries have adopted a combination of two approaches. (Van Mol & De Valk, 2016, p. 32) By 1974, during the oil crisis and economic stagnation, most Western European countries ceased recruiting migrant workers after introducing restrictive entry rules. However, this did not prevent the emergence of a permanent immigrant community. Additionally, the Family Reunification Law was enacted to give immigrants the right to bring their families and grant them residence. (2016, p. 34) However, although the recessions provided the rationale for tighter immigration control, the available evidence of unemployment rates amongst unskilled workers (approx. 10%) suggests other political considerations were of greater importance than the state of the labor market. Political interest in the social impact of large and growing non-European immigrant communities in local communities may be critical in explaining these policy changes. (Hansen, 2003, p. 26)

With the development of the institutions of the European Union and the incorporation of various areas, most notably the Schengen Agreement to abolish borders between member states, immigration has become one of the most prominent issues that dominate public debate and brought back the discussion of the Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy, which received significant attention and was characterized by two related and continuous tensions, namely the conflict between the competence of the European Union in this field and the national sovereignty of states, and between immigration control and the protection of human rights. Immigration and Asylum law deals with four main topics: visas and border controls, legal immigration, irregular immigration, and asylum. While the European Union is considered to

have achieved more development in the areas of visas and border control than any other area of immigration and asylum law due to the work and early preparation of the legal framework in the form of the Schengen Agreement. The phenomenon of immigration and asylum, which has witnessed high growth in recent periods, remains the most prominent challenge in this law for the countries of the Union.

According to the Lisbon Treaty (2007), which entered into force in 2009, Immigration and Asylum Law and policy contained in the legal migration section in Article 79, first paragraph, that the Union shall develop a common migration policy aimed at ensuring the effective management of migratory flows at all stages and fair treatment of third-country nationals legally residing in member states, prevent and strengthen measures to combat illegal immigration and human trafficking. The 2nd paragraph indicates that the European Parliament and the Council of Europe shall, by standard legislative procedure, take measures in the following areas:

(a) The conditions of entry and residence and standards on the issue by the Member States of long-term visas and residence permits, including those for the purpose of family reunification.

(b) the definition of the rights of third-country nationals residing legally in a Member State, including the conditions governing freedom of movement and residence in the other Member States.

In the fourth paragraph, the law authorizes the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, in accordance with the normal legislative procedure, to establish measures to provide incentives and support for the action of Member States to promote the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in their territory, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of Member States. The fifth paragraph indicates that this article does not affect the right of member states to determine the size of admission of third-country nationals coming to their territories in order to search for work, whether they are employees or self-employed.

Based on the preceding, the legal immigration policy of the Union towards immigrants from third countries, which is stipulated by law, grants several rights and benefits to those legal immigrants. The law also emphasizes their fair treatment while motivating member states to promote integration. Also, in the fifth paragraph, the law grants the member states to determine the number and quantity of immigrants coming for work. Hence, it is evident that the policies related to legal immigration are smooth while leaving room for member states to restrict proportions, unlike irregular immigration, which causes public concern and is the point of contention in the immigration law.

Clause C of the second paragraph indicates that measures must be taken in illegal immigration and unauthorized residence, including removal and repatriation of persons residing without authorization. The third paragraph also states that the Union may conclude agreements with third countries for the readmission to their countries of origin or provenance of third-country nationals who do not or no longer fulfill the conditions for entry, presence, or residence in the territory of one of the Member States. Bilateral agreements often aim to limit migration flows through policies to deport illegal immigrants in exchange for development policies for sending countries, trade agreements, or granting residence permits to elites. Other agreements with transit countries such as Turkey and Morocco aim to provide them with logistical equipment and budgets to control migration.

Via the treaty (2007), the law also broached the asylum policy. In the first paragraph of Article 78, the Union establishes a common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection, and temporary

protection to provide the appropriate status for any third-country national in need of international protection and ensure compliance with the principle of non-refoulment. In the second paragraph, the European Parliament and the European Council shall adopt measures for a common European asylum system consisting of:

(a) a uniform asylum status for nationals of other countries, valid throughout the Union

(b) a uniform status of subsidiary protection for nationals of third countries who, without obtaining European asylum, need international protection.

(c) a common system of temporary protection for displaced persons in the event of a massive influx

(d) Common procedures for granting and withdrawing standard asylum or subsidiary protection status

(e) criteria and mechanisms for determining which Member State is responsible for considering an application for asylum or subsidiary protection

(f) standards concerning the conditions for the reception of applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection

(g) Partnership and cooperation with third countries to manage inflows of persons seeking asylum or subsidiary or temporary protection.

In view of the above, we have been familiarized with the European Union's legal framework on regular and irregular migration and asylum policies. However, things are different on the ground. There are dissimilar opinions on this law in the EU countries, and they become more acute in times of crisis, such as the refugee crisis that erupted in 2015. The Eastern European Group "*Visegrad*" position, represented by the leaders of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, is characterized by the rejection of the new European Commission project. Regarding asylum and immigration, they call for amending the procedures. One of the most prominent points of contention is obtaining a fixed share of refugees, redistributing them, or receiving them again within the European Union, and suggesting the necessity of sorting refugees in camps outside Europe. (Stepper, 2016, p. 74) There is also pressure on the countries that are in the face of irregular migration and refugees, such as the Mediterranean countries, Spain, Italy, and Greece. Despite the agreements with origin and transit countries that contribute to a significant decrease in the migration rate, the stability of these countries plays an important role. When the opposite happens, the results are reflected in the cooperation process, as happened in the aftermath of the Tunisian revolution in 2011 and the fall of the Libyan regime in late 2012. And once again, in the summer of 2014, due to violent conflicts in countries located mainly in West and Central Africa (García Andrare & Martin, 2015). Another way of pressure increases when migration becomes a political pressure card from the transit countries, which causes an influx crisis, as happened with Morocco in its crisis with Spain after receiving the leader of the Polisario front, and Belarus in response to the sanctions imposed by Europe due to the disputed elections and the arrest of opponents and politicians, as well as Turkey in its negotiations with the European Union related to fund to host Syrian refugees. In recent years, the countries of the Union have faced an asylum crisis, with some countries failing to adhere to the terms of receiving asylum seekers. There continues to be significant pressure on specific countries, particularly those where refugees first arrive, such as Greece. Processing asylum applications often takes an extended period before they are distributed to other member states.

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In response to the ongoing crises and differing approaches within the European Union regarding immigration and asylum law, the EU has turned to legal reform. In 2024, the European Union introduced the Pact on Migration and Asylum, aiming to establish a unified system for managing migration across member states. This pact seeks to create a more coordinated and equitable approach to migration, balancing the need for effective border management with protecting fundamental rights.

On the other hand, regular migration has various other challenges. However, the debate about immigration policy in political discourses and the media is embodied in the reaction of the receiving societies against immigrants in general, including regular immigrants. Simon examined estimations of the fiscal impact of immigrants; his study of US, Canadian, Swedish, and German data indicates that immigrants make a net fiscal contribution and mainly to transfer payments and taxes. The fiscal net profit also arises mainly because of the young age of immigrants, which in turn reduces the cost of their pensions (1994). Another argument suggests that the mobility of European workers within the European Union is declining, affecting the regions where the lack of employment is alarming. Immigrants fill this void, and by moving to those regions, they play an essential role as a stabilizing factor after the asymmetric shocks (Biagio, 2010). Studies imply that irregular immigrants contribute to the economy by working in the underground economy and in sectors that require high effort, such as agriculture and industry, which European citizens rarely resort to (Ryneri, 2003). Contrastingly, according to Boeri (2010), the current hostile to open immigration policy argues that the financial burden and that migrants drain public resources as recipients of remittances and generous social assistance provided by most EU countries to prevent social exclusion and that governments tolerate irregular immigration and asylum seekers who come from safe areas. This trend seeks to tighten immigration policies, and as a result, many national governments have begun to reduce and tighten social welfare programs for immigrants. It also finds that the repercussions of migration are harmful as they affect the culture, norms, and values in the host societies and are considered a threat to shared values. It is a source of insecurity, crime, and terrorism.

Nationalism has always been a segment across Europe's political expanse, but there has been a recent boom in voter support for right-wing populist parties. This current builds its principles based on nativist ideologies and European identity and mainly practices a discourse of anti-immigrants and refugees that considers them a source of threat to the identity of European society, especially the influx of Muslims, Arabs, and Africans. The awakening of this current is evident in the electoral campaigns, as most of them adopt programs on immigration and promise to stop the inflow of immigrants. Its results came as those parties reached parliaments and formed governments, like the situation in six EU countries: Italy, Finland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, and the Czech Republic, which have hard-right parties in government. Many other countries are either parts of governments or leading polls[5] In addition to Far-right advances in the EU election 2024.

The reflection of these policies and right-wing political discourse on local communities oscillates between supporters and opponents. In a report of public opinion surveys on immigrants' acceptance in the societies of the European Union organized by the Pew Research Center (2019), the results displayed that the citizens of the Union countries believe that immigrants make their country stronger despite the presence of a sharp difference led by the countries of Hungary and Greece, who see the opposite by 3/4. But they are also concerned

[5] More statistics in Politico.eu, Mapped: Europe's rapidly rising right

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about the increased threat of terrorism and are divided about the effects of immigration on crime, and only about 10% want to allow more immigrants. Many say that immigrants want to stand out from the wider community and do not want to adopt the host country's customs and way of life. According to the Eurobarometer survey entitled "EU Challenges and Priorities", 41% of Europeans think that irregular migration is the second current main challenge facing the EU after the war in Ukraine (2024).

The reflection of these policies and the impact of the Right-wing discourse on immigrants differ from one society to another. According to the variables, the most prominent are the origin of immigrants and the stage's situation, as the country's economic status. According to the law, a legal immigrant with a long-term residence can benefit from multiple advantages and is equal in most rights with a European citizen, such as the right to movement, work, health care, etc. However, the response and the view of the local community members toward immigrants are often related to the economic field, welfare, crises, and the abundance or lack of work. During the financial crisis, hate speech and racist incidents escalated due to the growth of extremist right-wing movements, which link most crises with immigration, and those immigrants take over jobs. In this context, the annual report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2019) showed that there is a continuous and alarming growth in Europe of extreme nationalism, anti-Semitism, hatred of Muslims and immigrants, and the distorted use of social media. Racism turned into an open form and took on a structural and institutional character in many areas, such as the labor market, education, health care, and housing, as well as using the discourse of combating terrorism and protecting national security to justify the use of violence and taking measures and measures against some groups of immigrants that lack human rights standards and violate laws International.

Based on developments related to migration and demography, it becomes clear that Europe's future, and indeed its current reality, has become linked mainly to dealing with the issue of migration and immigrants. This concern has come to the forefront of the political and cultural scene, not to mention its apparent impact on the internal and foreign policies of the European Union at all levels.

## 2.5 SPAIN AND MIGRATION: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL CHANGES

This subchapter explores the multifaceted impact of migration on Spain, highlighting the social, economic, and political changes that have shaped the nation over recent decades. Spain's migration patterns have been characterized by significant fluctuations, reflecting broader global trends and domestic factors when it shifted from Emigration to Immigration. The following sections will delve into these dynamics, examining how migration has influenced Spain's demographic landscape, labor market, and political discourse.

### 2.5.1 Migration and opposite trends

The migration phases in Spain are categorized into two distinct sections: emigration and immigration. Historically, Spain was primarily a country of emigration, with significant numbers of Spaniards leaving in search of better economic opportunities abroad, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, in the late 20th century, Spain underwent a dramatic shift, transitioning into a country of immigration. This change was driven by its economic growth, EU membership, and increasing demand for labor, attracting immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe. These two phases highlight the evolving nature of Spain's migration patterns and their profound impact on the nation's social and economic fabric.

**Emigration in Spain**

The history of Spanish emigration can be divided into two distinct periods, each reflecting the broader socio-economic and political context of the time. These phases illustrate how migration patterns have been shaped by Spain's internal challenges and its interaction with global developments. The first period, spanning from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century, was characterized by large-scale emigration to the Americas and Spanish colonies in Africa. The second period, following World War II, saw significant emigration to Western Europe, driven by economic necessity and the political climate under Franco's dictatorship.

First period (1850-1950): Between 1850 and 1950, approximately 3.5 million Spaniards emigrated to the Americas, primarily from Galicia, Asturias, and the Canary Islands, in search of better job opportunities. Argentina received the largest share of these immigrants, with over 1.5 million Spaniards settling there, while others migrated to Uruguay, Brazil, Cuba, and the United States. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was also significant emigration to Spain's African colonies, particularly from Andalusia, Murcia, and the Balearic Islands. Around 250,000 Spaniards moved to northern Morocco, while about 94,000 settled in Algeria and Equatorial Guinea (Ortega Pérez, 2003).

Second period (1950-1970): In the post-war era, Spain was still reeling from the effects of the Civil War and had entered a period of dictatorship under Franco's rule. Unlike other European countries that experienced significant economic growth during this time, Spain lagged behind. As a result, between 1950 and 1970, approximately 2 million Spaniards emigrated to the Americas and Australia, but largely as part of guest worker programs in Europe. The majority of these migrants went to Germany, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.

**Immigration in Spain**

After the end of the dictatorship era in the last third of the 20th century, Spain experienced an economic breakthrough in the early 1980s, and it evolved from its traditional role as a sending country and, increasingly, a transit country for migrants headed to the North. It resulted in half a million emigrants returning to Spain. Besides, a group of foreign immigrants began settling in Spain, especially after Spain joined the European Economic Community, which later became the European Union. Spain became a receiving country for foreign laborers, mostly from Northern Africa and Latin America, and wealthy immigrants from other EU countries, such as retirees. Thus, the numbers continued to escalate in the late 1990s, bringing the number of immigrants in Spain in 2001 to 2.5% of the total population, with an increase of 23.81% for the first time. {See Table 1}.

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Table 1: Immigrant evolution in Spain 1995-2001

| Year | Immigrants | Increase % |
|---|---|---|
| **1995** | 499,773 | 8.2 |
| **1996** | 538,984 | 7.4 |
| **1997** | 609,813 | 13.40 |
| **1998** | 719,647 | 18.01 |
| **1999** | 801,329 | 11.35 |
| **2000** | 895,720 | 11.78 |
| **2001** | 1,109,060 | 23.81 |

Source: Chart by the author based on data from the Minesterio del Interior, (INE, Cifras de Población, Estadística de Migraciones, 2024) (DGEI, 2001)

From 2001 to 2008, the number of foreigners residing in Spain rose dramatically to 5.788 million. The immigrants flowed to Spain from different geographical areas {see Table 2}.

Table 2: The number of foreigners residing in Spain by Nationality in 2008

| Nationality | Numbers of immigrants |
|---|---|
| **EU countries** | 2,102,654 |
| **Latin America** | 1,758,295 |
| **Sub-Saharan Africa** | 909,757 |
| **Eastern Europe** | 731,806 |
| **Asia and Oceania** | 259,133 |
| **North America** | 26,595 |
| **Total** | 5,788,797 |

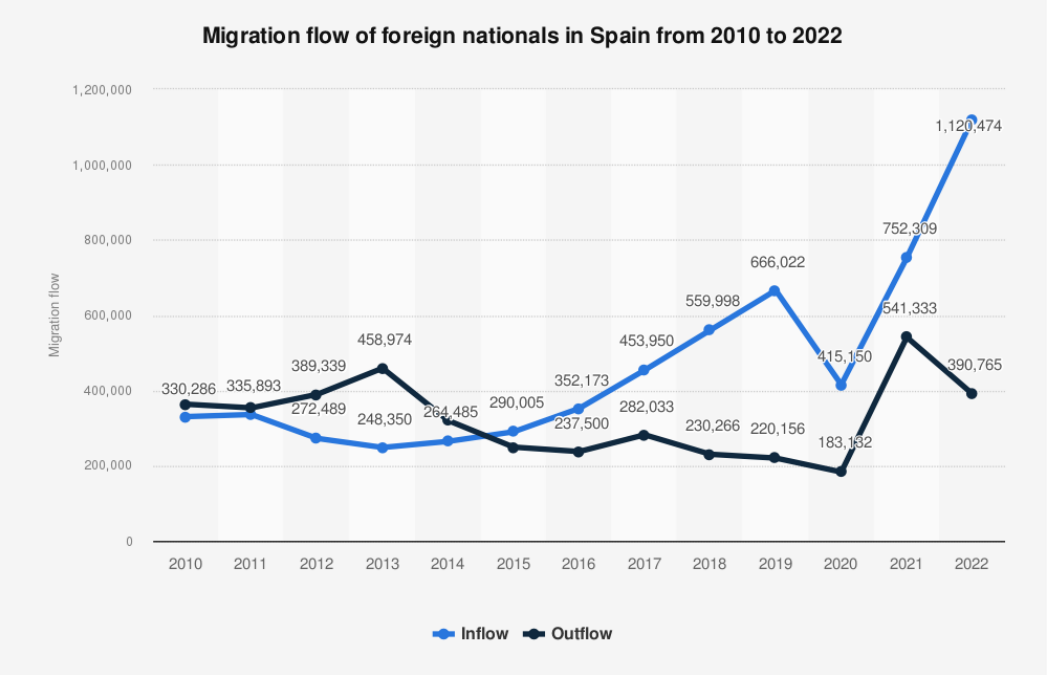
Source: Chart by the author, Based on data from the National Statistics Institute (INE, Población inscrita en el padrón, 2008)

The financial crisis of 2008 profoundly impacted immigration patterns in Spain, reversing the country's previous trends. As the economic downturn took hold, more migrants began leaving Spain than arriving, marking a significant shift. The immigration rate dropped considerably, while emigration, including that of Spanish nationals, surged, reaching a peak in 2013. That year, the decline was particularly sharp, with a net loss of 0.46%, equating to 251,531 more people leaving the country than entering. However, by 2015, migration to Spain began to recover as the country emerged from the crisis. Spain once again became a net recipient of migrants, with immigration flows showing a clear upward trend. Although the emigration balance remained negative, it decreased in relative terms as immigration increased by 12.5%, while emigration declined by 12.1%. This shift contributed to renewed population growth (INE, 2016). The inflow of immigrants continued to rise, peaking again in 2019 when 665,575 people immigrated to Spain, compared to 219,970 who left. However, this growth suddenly shrunk in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to border closures and severe restrictions on

movement. In 2022, again, Spain experienced a significant influx of approximately 1,120,000 immigrants, while 390,765 people left the country. (Statista, 2023) Colombia was the leading country of origin, with over 172,000 Colombians moving to Spain, followed by Morocco, which accounted for around 114,000 new arrivals (2024), including about 31,200 irregular immigrants. (2024) This increase underscores Spain's continued role as a major migrant destination, driven by both regular and irregular migration.

The chart below shows the change in the net migration rate of Spain during the financial crisis and after recovery, especially in the year 2015, which witnessed a rate balance between emigration and immigration, the year that was known as the refugee crisis fleeing from the Middle East, and then the period of continuous influx until 2019. Then, there were decreases in the COVID-19 pandemic to recover strongly to reach the peak in 2022. This change in tendency resulted in a positive net migration rate from 2015 onwards

Figure 1: The migration flow of foreign nationals in Spain 2010-2022




Source: Chart by Statista, Based on data from the National Statistics Institute (2023)

According to statistics, Spain faces a demographic challenge as society is aging and low fertility, life expectancy increases, and the birth rate decreases, and it is expected that it will continue to decline. This leads to a decrease in the workforce and affects the economy, mainly resulting in weak growth. For this reason, the migration flow is an essential alternative to this workforce since the migrants arriving in Spain are an active population and can fill this shortage in order to maintain a balance. Since this population is smaller than the Spanish average, it contributes to the improvement of the economic situation. The immigrant population is mostly from EU countries, Latin America, and North Africa. Compared to the national population, the foreign population is younger, with a higher share of male workers (Izquierdo et Al, 2015).

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According to the National Institute of Statistics, in 2023, the resident population in Spain reached 48.1 million, with 41.8 million Spanish citizens and 6.3 million foreigners (INE, 2024).

### 2.5.2 Immigration effects on economic, social, and political shifts

Spain has become one of the most prominent immigration destinations in Europe, thus raising many challenges at all levels (economic, social, and political). Consequently, immigration has grown to be linked to highly complex issues such as terrorism, security, high unemployment rates, cultural change, populism, and societal cohesion.

To understand this fundamental shift in how Spanish society approaches immigration issues, we must try reading the evolution of the political, social, and economic context. Where there has been a noticeable change at the level of the political culture that has been reshaped, it has moved from the culture of accepting immigration as one of the pillars for expressing openness, equality, cultural pluralism, and rejecting racism and extremism, not to mention paying great attention to the positive economic dimensions of immigration. These policies coincided with the European Union's vision, which is based on encouraging and supporting immigration policies. To understand the changes that occurred in these areas, it is necessary to go back to address the social and political context with the beginning of the immigrants' influx in the mid-1980s. A general acceptance of immigration was prevalent among political actors across government levels with little difference. According to Joaquín Arango (2012), contemporary political culture in Spain at the time was reshaped in the transitional years between the end of Franco's dictatorship and the full recovery of democracy in the 1980s. The values associated with democracy were idealized, while those associated with dictatorship became discouraged.

Guillem Martínez (2012) reveals "Transition Culture," referring to the dominant cultural framework in Spain in the transition period, which emerged following the decline of the radical movements of the 1970s. This period marked a significant transformation in Spanish society as the nation transitioned from dictatorship to democracy. The concept of CT encapsulates not just the political changes but also the broader shifts in ways of seeing, doing, and thinking that have shaped contemporary Spain. This cultural evolution has influenced Spain's open and inclusive society, contributing to its ability to adapt to diverse global influences, including the impacts of immigration and the integration of various cultural identities. As Spain moved away from its authoritarian past, this new cultural paradigm fostered a more open, cross-cultural society where diverse perspectives and cultural influences could thrive. As a result, democratic values, equality, and inclusiveness became a model for social approval. It can be considered that immigration, by its nature, provides a distinct field for the expression and practice of equality, solidarity, and global integration. The Spaniards were part of the global migrations known to the modern world. The second half of the 19th century began when it departed to the New World, the United States, and Latin American countries, settled in the colonies, and emigrated to Western European countries after WWII. This has left a general impression about the contexts of immigration and its motives. Spanish society is an immigrant society. This resulted in a widespread consensus that migrants deserve the same rights as host community members. This societal perception about immigration in Spain is reflected on the political side. In the period mentioned above of political culture and openness, Partido Socialista Obrero Español *(PSOE)*[6] was the first to call for public support for immigration that characterized Spanish immigration and integration policies, especially during the party's leadership of the government 1982-1996,

[6] Spanish Socialist Workers' Party

which coincided with the entry of Spain of the European Union and its adoption of a unified immigration policy (Brouchoud, 2007, p. 253). Partido Popular[7] (PP) government also organized the integration of unauthorized immigrants with about 468,000 applications in three operations carried out in 2000-01 (Finotelli & Arango, 2011, p. 503). Even illegal immigrants received many advantages, most notably a health care card that entitles them to receive treatment in hospitals without informing the police (Arango, 2012).

In the late 1990s, there were 748,954 immigrants in Spain (INE, 1999), which left a positive impression that immigration was under control. Still, with the beginning of the new millennium and the increase in the proportion of immigrants significantly, on the other hand, the growth of a new generation of Spaniards who did not live through the period of democratic and cultural transition resulted from the beginning of weak public support for immigration. Other indicators contributed to expanding the discussion of immigration and getting out of the dominant culture, most notably the 2004 Madrid train bombings (M11), three days before Spain's general elections, which killed 193 people and injured around 2,050—executed by terrorists, including Moroccan immigrants. This further changed the image of openness around pluralism and compensated it negatively for immigrants, especially Muslims and Arabs (Martínez Coma & Duval-Hernández, 2009, p. 30). This was evident in some manifestations of xenophobia and racism. The police recorded 30 attacks against people and property that can be described as "Islamophobia" between 2004 and 2005 (EUMC, 2006). Another event was the financial crisis in 2008 and the subsequent economic recession that made immigrant workers the most affected by the loss of work and being under pressure from society. Immigration declined after the recession period, then rose again, in addition to the emergence of a large wave of asylum seekers, reaching its peak in 2015. After that, immigration became a public issue, similar to other European Union countries.

Politically and as a reaction, Partido Popular announced in its 2008 general election campaign, also later in the run-up to the November 2011 elections in the Catalan Parliament, a plan for a merger contract similar to the one called for by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy that requires the immigrant to learn Spanish and Autonomous communities language, respect Spanish culture and the local traditions, return home if they have been unemployed for a long time. Although the law did not pass, it indicated the political discourse shifted from the same parties supporting immigration. After leading the government in 2012, the same party also announced to stop granting healthcare cards to illegal immigrants; some Autonomous governments opposed the decision and did not comply with it (Arango, 2012). A while before, starting in 2005 the Spanish authorities have carried out what are known as hot expulsions in Ceuta and Melilla enclaves, without any regulation until 2015. Hot expulsions consist of the immediate handover to the Moroccan authorities of immigrants who have not crossed the three fences of the Spanish border system. They are carried out without any procedural formalities, preventing both the presentation of appeals and the request for asylum or international protection in Spain (Melero, 2015). The two enclaves have always been vulnerable points for immigration control in Spain. Many incidents of mass raids into the border result in tragedies of victims stuck on the iron fences, getting attacked by guards of the two parties. The most recent happened on 24 June 2022, when around 2,000 sub-Saharan African migrants gathered the night before in north-eastern Morocco set off at dawn to cross the border and reach the Spanish city of Melilla. Many were reportedly armed with batons, rocks, and knives. Moroccan riot police responded with brutal force, killing 37 migrants and wounding hundreds, according

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[7] People's Party

to several local non-governmental organizations. (Abderrahmane, 2022). In the opposite trend, a year earlier Morocco tightened the borders with Ceuta, letting about 8,000 immigrants, most of them are minors to cross to the enclave as a response to Spain hosting the Polisario front leader. These political fluctuations have a negative impact on immigrant candidates.

In the early days of democracy, right-wing parties struggled to break into the political arena, gain a foothold in Parliament, and adapt to the new democratic reality in a society departing from Franco's values (Fanjul & Gálvez-Iniesta, 2020). However, in the context that Spain has known over the last three decades and as an expression of the sharp division within the Spanish society and political elite, especially concerning how to approach the challenges of immigration and demography. In the same way in Europe, where radical right-wing parties that oppose immigration and call for a European identity are strengthening, the VOX party, founded in 2013 and considered an extreme right-wing party, has recently arrived in the Spanish political arena and in a short time, the party won 52 seats in the Congress of Deputies after obtaining 3.6 million votes in the 2019 elections and became the third force of the new Congress. VOX also gained 82 seats in Autonomous parliaments, most notably in Andalucia and Castilla-León, which it rules with Partido Popular (PP), and four seats in the European Parliament. However, the 2023 general election showed worse results: a loss of 19 seats in Parliament, yet it remains the third-largest political party in Spain with roughly 3 million votes (El Mundo, 2023).

VOX party adopts a discourse of fundamentalism and nationalism, criticizing multiculturalism and demographic transition and standing against illegal immigration, which it claims contributes significantly to crime in Spain. However, the discourse is addressed to migration in general. The party's election campaign is based on expelling immigrants and preserving Spanish identity. During the election period, the streets of Spain are filled with banners bearing anti-immigrant slogans such as:

Evitar la entrada de ilegales / Prevent the entry of illegals, Delicuntes en su barrio, tenemos su billete de vuelta / Criminals in your neighborhood, we have your ticket back, 300.000 ilegales, Ya es hora de de llamarlo invasión / 300,000 illegals, It's time to call it an invasion, Sanchez ha puesto a cientos de estos monstruos en la calle / Sanchez has put hundreds of these monsters on the streets, Que Europa quieres? nosotros si lo tenemos claro / What Europe do you want? We are clear about it (photo of two women, one wears black and hides all body and face and the other one !!!!), expulsion de ilegales ya! / Expulsion of illegals now! un mena 4780 euro al mes y tu abuela 426 euro de pension al mes / a minor earns 4,780 euros a month and your grandmother 426 euros a month in pension, No mas immigracion ilegal en espana, frenemos esta locura juntos / No more illegal immigration in Spain, let's stop this madness together.

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Figure 2: A banner of the elections campaign of the VOX party




Source: VOX party official account on Instagram: vox_es

The political party promotes xenophobic and anti-immigrant views and opposes individual rights and feminism. It takes advantage of the increasing political discontent and the desire for greater public security in response to what some Spanish people perceive as an "immigration threat." The party also emphasizes concerns about "welfare" and "traditional rights." (Sanjuan & Goetzenberger, 2020, p. 915). Carmen González Enríquez argues that hardening stances on immigration would be a probable effect of VOX: people's opinions may not have changed much, but rather, the party granted social respect through the institutional presence of individuals who publicly share such views. Moreover, the supporters felt uncomfortable expressing themselves before the party's existence (2021, p. 3). The rise of the extreme right has contributed to a growing divergence of attitudes towards immigration based on ideological positions. Its polarizing effect makes dealing with the immigration problem more divisive and an obstacle to developing public policies dedicated to its management.

It is not viable to talk about immigration in Spain and the changes that have occurred in society without addressing the economic aspect, which is an essential factor in building the relationship between society and immigration. It also contributes to the construction of immigration policies. Most of the immigrants come to Spain searching for work or accompanying relatives of migrant workers, and the majority of these migrants are young, between 20 and 44 (Arango, 2012, p. 9). They represent the low-skilled labor force in the service sector and low-paid jobs that Spaniards avoid. (Hooper, 2019, p. 11) They are more geographically moved, consume fewer public services (particularly health, pension, and welfare benefits), and contribute significantly to GDP growth. Several studies have supported the belief that immigrants in Spain have made a positive contribution to economic growth and have received fewer remittances from local residents. (Fanjul & Gálvez-Iniesta, 2020)

Between 2008 and 2013, the economic crisis caused significant decreases in immigration to Spain, and the number of first residence permits for non-EU citizens was halved. (Hooper, 2019, p. 22) Many immigrants left due to the lack of job opportunities, and some of them were encouraged by voluntary return programs organized by the government to return to their country of origin. In contrast, some others left for other countries to search for better opportunities. (Arango, 2012, p. 7) This proved that immigrants seek to improve their economy.

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According to the *Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration* report of foreign affiliates to Social Security as of March 2024, Spain's Social Security system registered 2,785,473 foreign contributors, marking the highest level of foreign-origin contributors recorded to date. This figure represents an increase of 23,388 contributors compared to the previous month. Since February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the labor market, the system has seen an impressive addition of 596,052 workers from other countries. (2024). This influx of foreign workers is crucial in sustaining Spain's economy and social welfare systems. Immigrants contribute significantly to various sectors, filling essential roles in the agriculture, construction, and healthcare industries. Moreover, their participation in the labor market helps to bolster Spain's pension funds, addressing demographic challenges posed by an aging population. By expanding the base of contributors, these immigrant workers are vital in ensuring the long-term viability of the Social Security system, demonstrating their indispensable role in the broader socio-

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# CHAPTER THREE: IM-MIGRATION CINEMA AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE “OTHER”

> The way a community views itself is always mediated, and cinema plays an important role in showing the boundaries between the insiders and outsiders of a society. Immigration cinema, whose label refers mainly to its subject matter and the filmmakers' (as well as its audiences') ideological orientation, documents or fictionalizes the social phenomenon of immigration and the unfortunate but unavoidable ramifications of racism and xenophobia and gives voice to the social group of immigrants and their allies on the margins, the "undesirables" of society that constitute the broader category of Otherness. Immigration cinema personalizes the abstract focusing on individual strategies of survival. In spite of the differences among European countries' cinematographic industries, it is possible to identify common patterns of representation, particularly in terms of cinematographic formats and genres, the filmmakers' ethical commitments, and audience responses to them.
>
> Isolina Ballesteros, Immigration Cinema in New Europe. 2015

## 3.1 THE BIRTH OF MIGRATION CINEMA

The emergence of cinema and the phenomenon of global migration are closely intertwined. Markedly, it has become commonplace in film studies to connect the rise and expansion of the cinematic medium to the phenomenon of international migration and mobility in production, narration, distribution, and consumption. (Van Heuckelom, 2019) The rise of cinema at the beginning of the twentieth century coincided with an unprecedented wave of global migration, where about 15 million immigrants from Europe immigrated to the United States of America to Improve living conditions and the many job opportunities that America experienced in what is known as the "Progressive Era." The United States of America also experienced an internal migration known as the great migration of hundreds of thousands of African Americans from their “traditional” homes in the South to northern cities for the same purpose, economic and social opportunities. (Gregory, 2006, p. 13) On the other hand, Europe was considered a symbol of emigration, and it was the continent that exported the most emigrants until the beginning of the First World War when the United States tightened immigration regulations. Internal migration appeared in Europe, especially from countries affected by the war, resulting in "cleansing" ethnic or otherwise (Stibbe, 2009), which led to forced migration. Furthermore, the authorities moved soldiers and civilians to the front. After the war, the influx of immigration continued to the less affected countries.

The beginning of cinema was in 1895, with the invention of a device by the French Lumière brothers for capturing and displaying cinematic images. In the same year, Arman and Jenkins from the United States registered the invention of a display device, which they used in their first exhibition. They then joined the company of inventor Thomas Edison, who later developed the display device and combined it with his invention of the Kinetoscope. Moreover, he held his first show in April 1896, which was the beginning of the era of leadership, characterized by

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presenting news films and recording some plays. Nevertheless, George Miller's attempts were the most realistic to shoot a movie until 1902, when he made *A Trip to the Moon*, considered the first film in history ( Mast & Kawin, 1996, p. 126).

In America, films that were sympathetic toward immigrants were as popular as ever. Immigrants made up a large percentage of the film's early audience and, later, the subject of many films. Attracting immigrants from the early days, films offered a visual and kinetic form of entertainment that transcended language barriers. Because the films were silent, viewers crossed linguistic borders. In addition, narrators or bilingual children could translate title cards for grateful immigrant audiences. This means that movies have become the perfect entertainment for all new immigrants. Many early American films were modeled after tourist attractions, and vaudeville acts were popular with working-class and immigrant audiences. At the same time, it may seem evident that the immigrant experience shaped the culture of the earliest days of American cinema. (Abel, 1999, p. 46)

As a result, filmmakers began to include signs and characters about immigrants until the appearance of the first film, *The Italian* (Barker, 1915) where the subject of immigration is the main plot and immigrant characters lead the story, which tells an Italian gondolier who comes to the United States to make a fortune. Still, instead, he ends up working as a shoeshiner in the harsh realities of life in the slums of New York city and experiencing tragedy while living with his wife and child. *The Immigrant* (Chaplin, 1917) is another film that deals with the issue of immigration; in a seamless blend of humor, romance, suspense, and social commentary, the plot follows an immigrant who arrives on a ship that crosses the Atlantic Ocean, he presents his multiple adventures when he finds himself in various predicaments that constitute the immigrant's attitudes at the beginning of his journey toward the New World, followed by other films like *The Land of Hope* (Griffith, 1921) and *The Age of Innocence* (Ruggles, 1924). There were films in which immigrants and the topic of immigration played an important role, just as they played an essential role in American life and culture. Whether cinema reflects life or life reflects cinema, these films run the gamut between suffering, drama, and emotions.

Since early cinema and the beginning of the film industry, Immigrants have been involved at all levels. One of the important elements in establishing the emergence of migration cinema is the connection between the pioneers of cinema and immigration. For instance, in the early days of silent films, Yiddish filmmakers created ethnic cinema in which they expressed themselves in the language and culture of their dispersed communities. At the same time, a later generation of Jewish immigrants exiled from Germany in the 1930s was assimilated into Hollywood and European cinema. (Munk, 2020, p. 6) Karl Laemmle was an immigrant from Germany who worked in Edison's Nickelodeon movie theatre; together with Mark Dintenfass, an immigrant from Poland, and other immigrant theater owners, they decided to stop partnering with Edison to display his films and set up a production company in line with their ambitions, as they knew the preferences and aspirations of their audience. Thus, they established one of the most famous production companies, Universal Pictures, whose name expresses their diversity and internationality. Another Hungarian immigrant named Adolph Zukor partnered with other Nickelodeon owners and created another studio, Paramount Pictures, to become one of the biggest movie studios. In 1923, four brothers of immigrant parents from Poland founded Warner Bros. Four years later, they changed the history of cinema by producing The Jazz Singer, the first feature-length movie with synchronized dialogue. It marked the ascendancy of "talkies" and the end of the silent-film era. (Pfeiffer, 2021) Furthermore, the film addressed the topic of immigration and integration. Thus, immigrants and their children contributed to the film

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industry in America based directly on their experiences of exile, migration, the asylum process, and displacement. (Munk, 2020, p. 6)

Immigration has been a popular cinematic topic since its beginnings. Carlos Cortés argues that Hollywood films provide a great deal of valuable information on the issue of immigration. (Cortés, 1993, p. 57) Silent films, for example, can give clues to popular attitudes toward immigrants, their aspirations, and the obstacles they encounter as they seek to enter new societies. (Mintz, 2022) Additionally, silent films provide vivid glimpses of ethnic neighborhoods and enclaves. Several films released during the First World War dealt with the issue of national loyalty. They ask whether immigrants will remain faithful to their place of birth or learn about their new homeland. During the 1920s, many popular films focused on themes of assimilation and acculturation. Films such as *The Jazz Singer* (Crosland, 1927) praised characters who overcame the pressure to preserve ethnic or religious traditions. Films such as *Abie's Irish Rose* (Fleming, 1928) celebrated interracial marriage as a means of assimilation. Moreover, while the portrayal of new arrivals would become a stock motif in Hollywood cinema, the mid-1920s saw the narrative focus expand towards the depiction of ethnic communities (Irish, Jewish, Italian, etc… ) and various trajectories of assimilation, with a particular prediction for crime films set against the backdrop of the American "melting pot" (Heuckelom, 2019, p. 41).

At the beginning of the 1970s, immigration cinema witnessed the development and the emergence of the so-called diaspora films produced and directed by the second and subsequent generations of the children and grandchildren of immigrants. These films typically address themes of identity, marginalization, conflict, and intergenerational discussions about values, behavior, loyalty, and shared memories. Filmmakers from Britain of Asian and African descent, German Turks, and French of North African descent have played an important role in revitalizing contemporary European cinema and enriching immigration cinema in particular. (Munk, 2020, p. 6)

During the early years of the Great Depression, when the traditional ladder of success seemed to have collapsed, many films displayed crime as a means of upward mobility. The popular urban gangster movie usually focuses on the struggle of a young ethnic Chinese, Irish, or Italian to overcome a disadvantaged environment and achieve wealth and power. Later in the Depression, many popular films celebrated the efforts of immigrants to enter mainstream society and achieve material success through a combination of optimism and hard work. World War II combat films portrayed the military as an ethnic melting pot in which men from diverse ethnic backgrounds fused to form an effective combat unit and discussed the identity of second-generation immigrants. The early post-war era saw a proliferation of "social issues" films that focused on the problems of poverty, prejudice, and discrimination that immigrants faced as they entered a new society. The late 1960s and 1970s saw various popular films that explored immigrants' Italian and Jewish roots, sometimes nostalgic, as in *Hester Street* (Silver, 1975), and sometimes critically, as in *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972). (Mintz, 2022)

Films' interest in immigration has continued in recent years, with many films examining the plight of illegal immigrants and refugees, economic competition between ethnic groups, cultural and linguistic adjustment problems, and the generational gap between immigrants and their children.

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## 3.2 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN MIGRATION CINEMA

### 3.2.1 The Emergence of European Migration Cinema

Europeans were the first film industry pioneers, with innovative engineers and artists making a remarkable impact at the end of the 19th century. Movements throughout European cinema were characterized by stylistic movements, notable directors, and historical films that have influenced modern cinema. France, Italy, and Germany are diverse schools that dated the beginnings of European cinema with its diversity, beginning in France with the Lumiére brothers and also progressing in filming an animated film. In 1895, the first film studio in the world was established by Léon Gaumont. A year after, this studio produced the first film for a female pioneer filmmaker, Alice Guy-Blaché, who was one of the first filmmakers to make a narrative fiction film, as well as the first woman to direct a film (McMahan, 2013).

European cinema has evolved over the years, establishing foreign productions and distribution companies in European countries and the United States. These companies have taken control of the distribution of international films, but all that changed by the early twenties of the Twentieth Century and until the beginning of World War II. During this period, the film industry faced a crisis as the number of its production features decreased because it lost many of its resources that were depleted to support the war.

Unlike the United States of America, Europe did not know about the issue of immigration remarkably during the period of the emergence and development of cinema. In the interwar, Western Europe, such as France and Germany, became a new destination for immigrants, people fleeing war, and religious persecutors across Europe and Russia. Then, interwar Europe and its constituent cinemas tended to deal with the migration experience primarily through the lens of outward movement. Since these narratives revolve around protagonists who seek their fortune across the Atlantic Ocean. (Heuckelom, 2019, p. 41). However, the great wave of immigrants that Europe knew from inside and outside was in the post-war period. The following quarter-century is known as the Reconstruction period, the most remarkable period of European economic growth and social progress. Western European countries witnessed an economic boom, dependence on immigrants from former colonies, and the former foreign soldiers who participated in the war and settled after that. Immigration became a new issue in societies and opened a debate reflected in various aspects of public life, and cinema had a share of it. As a result, European immigration films appeared as a reflection of the phenomenon in the host societies.

**European Immigration Cinema in The Interwar Period**

The first indications of immigration cinema in Europe were between the two wars when France, Britain, and Germany had various experiences dealing with immigration. For their part, interwar French and British filmmaking revealed a different dimension of outward mobility portrayed on the silver screen in the guise of what tends to be called “Colonial cinema” (Colin, 2002, p. 33). It is noted concerning the French case that cinematic depiction of the overseas territories of the French Empire was usually found in North Africa, particularly Algeria, which is the principal center of colonial rule, missionary fervor, and exile. The civilizational impetus that radiates from this strain of pre-WWII films is aptly illustrated by one of the most successful examples being Léon Poirier's *L'appel du silence/The Call of Silence* (1936) an autobiography based on the life of a former officer in the French army became a missionary. He was sent to North Africa in the Algeria colony, where he later decided to settle there and live with the local villagers. This film is considered an example of a colonial film and shows the situations that

the protagonist faces as an emigrant. Moreover, other films have also been produced about inter-European immigration and imagining the alien other in France, such as Ma Cousine de Varsovie*/My Cousin from Warsaw* (Carmine Gallone, 1931) and *L'étrangère/The Stranger* (Gaston Ravel, 1931).

In the 1920s, France needed a skilled workforce. The most prominent immigrants were from Poland, Italy, and Spain, who knew fewer options for emigration, especially after the restriction of the immigration program to the United States of America, as well as prompted by governments to find an outlet for unemployed workers and contribute to the national economy, besides those, there were a small number of immigrant laborers coming from the colonies in North Africa (Commissariato, 1926, p. 707). In 1931, about three million immigrants in France were equivalent to 7% of the population then. One of the most critical films that dealt with immigration in that period and within social perspective is *Toni* (Jean Renoir, 1935), whose film is considered the first step to neorealism. *Toni* stands out as one of the few films produced during the interwar period that not only acknowledged the presence of significant numbers of immigrants within the country but also portrayed them in much the same way as their French counterparts, with neither excessive sentimentality nor demonization. Renoir's film is also a reminder that the cycle of high levels of immigration, later followed by anti-immigrant rhetoric and ultimately by the permanent integration of most immigrants, does not constitute a new or isolated phenomenon in recent French history (Ousselin, 2002, p. 693). Significantly, however, although the 1920s saw a growing influx from French colonies into the Hexagon -especially of Algerian Muslims- rarely, if ever, did these interwar colonial films bring into view reverse narratives (of "subjugated" subjects moving to the heart of the empire). (Heuckelom, 2019, p. 41)

German cinema, which was then known as a productive force, shed another light on the treatment of external movement and international migration in the pre-decolonization era. The German film industry had not yet matured when the First World War began, while the war contributed to the growth and artistic changes in the laws and operation of the cinema industry in Germany. As the people became increasingly dissatisfied with the military situation and the growing food shortage, the army and the state decided to adopt cinema for propaganda and financed feature films to stabilize morale in wartime. With the first victories of the German military, films were the most extensive support in changing the mood of the Germans to become more patriotic. (Mühl-Benninghaus, 2014), rather than focusing on the position of "unwanted" foreigners living in the Third Reich, a topic that became dominant in Nazi feature film production only after the outbreak of WWII (Heuckelom, 2019, p. 42)

As a result, German cinema in the 1930s witnessed a notable rise in patriotic films and Nazi Party propaganda dealing with the return of the German race (Volksdeutscher, migrant workers, soldiers, and military volunteers, etc...) to the Heimat[8]. Among the most important of these productions, Gustav Ucicky's *Flüchtlinge/Refugees* (1933), Paul Wegener's *Ein Mann to Deutschland/A German Wants to Go Home* (1934), Luis Trenker's *Der Verlorene Sohn/The Prodigal Son* (1934) and *Karl Ritter's Patrioten/Patriots* (1937).

[8] Heimat is a German word translated to 'home' or 'homeland'. The term has connotations specific to German culture and society, specifically German Romanticism, German nationalism, German statehood, and regionalism, so it has no exact English equivalent. Heimat. (2022, October 9). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimat

**European Immigration Cinema in The Postwar Period**

The decades following World War II brought economic prosperity, technological innovation, and new artistic currents, which combined to produce what is often regarded as Europe's cinematic golden age. Film industries benefited from certain aspects of the political and economic climate but also faced new challenges, which they met with great ingenuity. (Ezra, 2004, p. 117)

In Italy, the cinematic awakening was slowed by World War I. Still, in the immediate postwar period, Italian filmmakers created their own cinematic language to capture the hardships of daily life in a fractured country. This enabled Italian cinema to have a revolutionary effect and became an important cinematic trend in Europe called *Italian Realism,* known as the golden age of cinema. Nevertheless, Italian neorealist films emphasized social themes (war, poverty, unemployment, and immigration). Among the most significant Italian realistic films that dealt with immigration is *Il Cammino della Speranza/ The Path of Hope* (Pietro Germi, 1950). It tells the story of a group of Sicilian miners and their families and their hardships as they decide to cross the border to France illegally, and the remarkable film of the late 1950s, *I Magliari/The Swindlers* (Francesco Rossi, 1959), which conveys the story of an Italian immigrant in Hanover, Germany, who wanted to work as a miner but could not return to Italy after losing his job and getting into trouble with immigrants from Poland. The two films deal with the narrative of Italian emigrants who emigrated during the war to Western European countries such as France and Germany and tell social stories and events that revive what the immigrants went through in that period.

Another movement of European cinema, *The Theatrical Tradition*, is well-represented in the work of Swedish director Ingmar Bergman, who is considered the doyen of European art cinema. With their theatrical aesthetic, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's later films helped bring international recognition to New German Cinema in the 1970s, along with Harun Farocki, who is particularly known for his explicitly political essay films, through which he examined these subjects while also openly confronting the inherently persuasive, manipulative properties of the cinematic medium. Farocki began making films in the late 1960s amid a highly politicized cultural milieu. Citing the influence of such Marxist cultural practitioners as theater director Bertolt Brecht, philosopher Theodor Adorno, and film director Jean-Luc Godard, Farocki consistently addressed two principal subjects: the practices of labor and the production of images (Elsaesser, 2004). His most notable features are: *Between Two Wars* (1977), *Before Your Eyes: Vietnam* (1982), *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (1988). However, whether theatrical or realist, the postwar tradition was one of tremendous innovation and creativity, in which individual auteurs rewrote the rules and made a lasting impact on film culture (Ezra, 2004, p. 118).

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of economic growth in Western Europe after the war. The reconstruction efforts that followed required so much labor that governments depended on programs to bring in work labor from neighboring countries in Southern Europe and from former colonies to fill low-wage and vulnerable jobs to make up for the lack of local labor. Hence, immigrants became essential to the booming economy. However, by 1973, the recession hit those countries following the oil crisis. Racial tensions escalated when people unjustifiably blamed immigrant labor for high unemployment, despite the immigrants made up large numbers of the unemployed. (Chaudhuri, 2005, pp. 5-6)

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Reflecting this, artistic works and films emerged to deal with the phenomenon, and exceptionally, the first films were directed by immigrant directors such as *La Noire de…/Black Girl* (Ousmane Sembène, 1966), *and Soleil Ô/Oh, Sun* (Med Hondo, 1967). It was followed by films from the immigration exporters' countries, such as Spain, with several agreements to send laborers to West Germany, Switzerland, France, and Britain. According to official figures from the Spanish Institute of Emigration (iee, 1956-1991), between 1959 and 1973, one million people emigrated within the European continent (1,066,440); 71% of those left Spain in those fifteen years (iee, 1973). Among the most critical films that dealt with the subject of Spanish immigrant workers in Western European countries were *Españolas en París/Spanish in Paris* (Roberto Bodegas, 1971) and *Vente a Alemania Pepe/Pepe Come to Germany* (Pedro Lazaga,1971). The plots of the two films concern how Spanish immigrant workers from the fifties and sixties moved to Western European countries, France and Germany, seeking a new life and wealth.

On the other hand, the Germans' view of immigrants coming into work scheme programs will appear through two works directed by German directors. The first is Fassbinder's film, *Angst Essen Seele auf/Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), which addresses the immigrants from North Africa and tells the story of a German widow named Amy who lives alone. She meets a Moroccan immigrant worker called Ali, who's younger than her. They fall in love and quickly develop a relationship and decide to marry spontaneously. They are then forced to confront their fears about their future, especially after the reaction of Amy's family and her neighbors, who denounced this relationship that combines a white woman from a wealthy society and a black immigrant gardener at the age of her son from the immigrant working class. The film examines the persistence of neo-Nazi attitudes in contemporary 1970s society. It draws on post-war West Germany's social and historical particularities to bring these themes to light, particularly the Gastarbeiter phenomenon[9], treating the immigrant workers as a different class of citizens that started from ruins after the Second World War. (Chaudhuri, 2005, p. 5)

The film courageously deals with the racism of post-war German society and shapes the other as an outsider to society in the gazes of the Germans. The couple fighting society's prejudice and resentment of their unconventional love must also fight some of their own prejudices as well. The protagonist, an immigrant, is the one who leads the plot, and this can be considered the first film in Europe by a European director to represent an immigrant from North Africa in the leading role of a film about immigration. Furthermore, the actor who plays the role is an immigrant himself. Another German film, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg/Palermo or Wolfsburg* (Werner Schroeter, 1980), portrayed an impoverished young Italian man from Sicily traveling to Wolfsburg, West Germany, looking for work. He takes a job in the Volkswagen cars factory and painfully adjusts to a new and incomprehensible way of life. The film is about the estrangement of immigrant workers in Germany, those others in what is seen as an alien by a hostile society.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, with new immigrants from outside Europe coming in, mainly from North Africa, sub-Saharan and Turkey, films dealing with the topic gradually increased.

[9] Guest workers (Gastarbeiters) are labor migrants to Germany, they come alone, usually without language or occupational skills, to a nation that does not consider itself a land for immigration. They come under contract with a German employer responsible for their general care.
Roggenkamp, Gerhard Heinrich Wilhelm, "Germans and Gastarbeiter: A Study of Prejudice" (1982). Anthropology - Dissertations. 71.

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This varied depending on the immigration context of each country and then developed until the early 1990s to include most of the European cinema. Given that large-scale immigration in the twentieth century only began in Spain, Italy, and Greece around the mid-1980s, this last phase of film production is still in its infancy in these countries. Southern Europe lags behind, for example, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France, where relatively well-established migrant and diasporic communities have become increasingly media-articulate over the last few decades. (Berghahn & Sternberg, 2010, p. 152)

Isolina Ballesteros argues that in the 1990s, a sub-genre of social cinema developed in Europe called "Immigration Cinema," consisting of films that explicitly focus on the current phenomena of immigration and xenophobia and offer alternatives to the partial coverage made available by the media. This film collection is designed to create a collective understanding of the immigrants' way of life and to expose and denounce the heterogeneous stereotyping of the migrant component. Cinema can play an important role in portraying the differences between insiders and outsiders in society. (Ballesteros, 2009). Crucially and centrally engages with the "other," it appropriates other cinematic, dramatic, and narrative traditions and, in the process of creolizing appropriation, embeds them within European cinema and culture. It also draws attention to the "other within." (Berghahn & Sternberg, 2010, p. 41)

### 3.2.2 Diaspora and Post-Colonialism Films, Another Face of Immigration Cinema

Since the beginning of the motion picture industry, Western colonialism has been one of the popular themes of European and American Cinema. Films with "imperial" and "colonial" themes celebrated and glorified imperial adventures and colonial triumphs and crises by telling romantic, exotic, and patriotic stories of expansion, conquest, and mission or bringing the benefits of "civilization" to the "inferior races." Later, in the post-colonial period, during the economic boom, western countries hired immigrants for reconstruction and then became a destination for immigration. As a result, immigration films emerged to cover the phenomenon and the attitudes of immigrants in the host societies from both perspectives. European filmmakers represent the national cinema and hosting societies, and the immigrant filmmakers whose works are formed by migration create what is called "diaspora cinema".

Diaspora cinema denotes the films directed by immigrant filmmakers or their descendants belonging to the dispersion of a population group or community of people from their country of birth or origin. Overseas diasporas are created by international migration, forced or voluntary (Martin & Yaquinto, 2007, p. 22). Most films address the paradoxes of exile and the negotiation of difference and belonging in indifferent and frequently xenophobic communities and nation-states. They foreground the struggle for recognition. Hamid Naficy is the most influential theorist in diaspora cinema; his work on Iranian exilic and diasporic filmmakers has led him to develop a framework for accented cinema. According to Naficy, accented filmmaking includes different types of filmmakers, such as diasporic, exilic, and postcolonial ethnic ones. Still, they often focus on the paradoxes of exile, the negotiation of difference and belonging, and the struggle for recognition, community, and citizenship instead of framing them as marginal or subaltern. (Naficy, 2001, pp. 10-17). Nevertheless, migrant filmmakers are not the only directors focusing on the topics of migration, multi-ethnic conviviality, Otherness, and Europeanness. Moreover, as Ponzanesi and Berger indicate that each national cinema deals with "migrant themes", characters, and issues in different genres, periods, and ways, with local and national filmmakers dedicating their film production to this topic (Ponzanesi & Berger , 2016).

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Consequently, as “Migrant cinema” and “Postcolonial cinema” are often interlocked, migration is frequently an offspring of colonial dislocations. However, the term “postcolonial cinema” addresses the question of mobility and uprooting and broader issues of visual hegemony and aesthetic counter-discourses. According to Ponzanesi and Waller, postcolonial cinema is “Constituted by and within a conceptual space, making connections and drawing inferences, specifically those occluded by national and colonial frames, is encouraged. We discover this conceptual space by breaking with universalism and learning to navigate a fluid, situational, relational mode of knowledge production that requires mutual recognition and engagement as well as new methodological and aesthetic strategies” (Ponzanesi & Waller, 2012, pp. 1-2). Postcolonial cinema is characterized by the effects of globalization, migrating cultures, and post-coloniality, while diasporic cinema, which contains, according to Naficy, "diasporic," "exilic," and "postcolonial ethnic and identity" filmmakers, who collectively comprise "accented cinema." It has been instrumental in introducing new discourses and styles and (re)defining genres and national cinemas. Thus, they are in conversation with dominant and alternative cinemas. (Naficy, 2001)

French cinema has always been a European pioneer, and the same is true of diaspora and post-colonial cinema. The first works by immigrant filmmakers on diaspora and post-colonial issues were from France. One of the first released features by a sub-Saharan filmmaker, *Le Noire de …*/B*lack Girl* (1966), directed by Ousmane Sembène, who was born in Senegal and lived under the French colonial, he was drafted into the French colonial army to serve during World War II, then settled in Marseilles. Later, he becomes a novelist, filmmaker, and activist representing France's African diaspora. *Black Girl* indicts postcolonial attitudes in France toward African immigrants and tells a story based on the actual events of the suicide of a black maid, Diouana, who traveled from Senegal to work for a wealthy white French couple in Antibes. Trained as a nanny, she expected to carry on caring for their children but is instead treated as a domestic servant, secluded, and subjected to racist bullying. Sembène continued to delve into immigration issues from a post-colonial perspective, and his films contributed to establishing diaspora cinema in France. *Xala* (1974), based on Sembène's novel of the same name, takes up the broader issue of elitism and hypocrisy in post-independence African countries by tracking the traces of postcolonialism but with a decidedly satirical tone. *Camp de Thiaroye*/*In Camp de Thiaroye* (1988), Sembène revisited the historical events by depicting the true story of Senegalese resistance soldiers who fought alongside the French in World War II but were deprived of their severance pay by the French commanders. When they protested, the French massacred the entire camp.

Another acclaimed and innovative pioneer director in the African diaspora, Mohamed Hondo, whose films challenged racism in Europe and historic colonialism in Africa. In 1966, in response to the dearth of prominent, complex roles for Black actors, he founded a theatrical company called Shango focused on the works of playwrights from Africa and the African diaspora, including Aimé Césaire, René Depestre, and Amiri Baraka, among many others absent from the European stage. In 1967, Hondo directed his feature debut *Soleil Ô/Oh, Sun*, telling the story of an educated Mauritanian person thrilled when he was chosen to work in Paris. However, he gets disappointed when he sees racial inequity as blacks are relegated to manual labor while less skilled whites are given preferential treatment. Other critical works include *Ô Soleil*'s follow-up *Les Bicots-Nègres Vos Voisins/ The Black Wogs, Your Neighbors* (1974), another bold experiment in decolonizing bodies, minds, and cinema itself. *Sarraounia* (1986), the true story of a valiant West African queen who opposed French colonial troops at the end of the nineteenth century, and *Lumière Noire/Blacklight* (1996), this crime thriller confronting

myriad transgressions by the French government toward immigrants. An Early Maghreb diaspora film in France was *Mektoub (1970)*, directed by Ali Ghalem; tells the story of an Algerian laborer and a young father, who leaves his country and lands in France, thinking of finding a job there through Salah, a friend who has lived in the Paris suburbs for several years. His disappointment is met when he arrives in Nanterre, where Salah lives in a slum.

Throughout the following decades, diasporic cinema in France evolved and became recognized and rich in diversity. Through the Lens of the Polish diaspora, filmmakers directed notable films like the works of Krzysztof Kieślowski: *La Double Vie de Veronique/The Double Life of Veronique (1991) and Trois Couleurs/Three Colors-trilogy* (1993-1994). *The Pianist* (Roman Polanski, 2002)

The large North African diaspora made their own style of films, later becoming a new genre, "cinema of the marginal," known as Beur cinema[10]. "The term cinema beur was first coined in a special cinematography issue in July 1985 to describe a set of independently released films by and about the Beurs, defining the second-generation filmmakers of Maghrebi descent" (Tarr, 2005, p. 3). This category of diasporic cinema refers to the work of filmmakers of Maghrebi descent to draw attention to social exclusion and integration and explore the preoccupations and concerns of immigrant communities that have settled there. Beur films are mostly fictitious docudramas with a touch of "Hip hop" style and music, usually managed and financially circularized by Beur society.

The most prominent filmmakers and their films of Beur cinema are *Le thé au harem d'Archimède/Tea in the Harem* (1985), *Miss Mona* (1987), directed by pioneer Algerian-French filmmaker Mehdi Charef, *Hexagonie/Hexagone* (Malik Chibane,1994), *Bye-Bye* (Karim Dridi, 1995), *L'honneur de ma Famille/the honor of my family* (Rachid Bouchareb, 1997), *Poetical Refugee/La faute à Voltaire* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000), *Inch'Allah Dimanche/Sunday God Willing* (Yamina Benguigui, 2001), along with others.

On the other side of Europe, diasporic and exilic filmmakers have explored the immigrant experience more frequently and in greater depth. Accented cinema formations have developed in Britain by Africans and Asians, mostly the diaspora from the colonies of the British Empire. *Pressure* (1976), directed by the African-Caribbean Horace Ové, was one of the early films of immigrant filmmakers that dealt with discrimination and integration in white British society. The 1980s heralded the first British-Asian-themed feature film to claim a mainstream market by the Indian-origin director Gurinder Chadha through her documentary *I am British But...* (1988), and *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), which explores the desires, fears, secrets, and dreams of all-ages, multi-faith group of British Asian women, while *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002) subverted the British stereotype of the passive Asian woman. *The Swimmers* (Sally El Hosaini, 2022), directed by an Egyptian diasporic filmmaker, is the story about two Syrian sisters who flee their war-torn home in Damascus and swim for hours in choppy Mediterranean seas to reach Greece as asylum seekers before going on to compete at the Rio Olympic Games.

In Germany, The Turkish diaspora is considered the largest minority group. "The guest worker who was excluded from German society has become a second-generation multicultural immigrant with a German passport. Turkish-German filmmakers such as Fatih Akin, Thomas Aslan, and Yüksel Yavuz deal with the topic of Turkish-German identity" (Gokturk, 2002, p.

[10] The word beur is French slang for "Arab" and signifies the ambivalence associated with bicultural identity despite French nationality. It also means the distinction and tension between French of Maghreb ancestry and their North African immigrant parents.

253). German-Turkish cinema has become a distinct cultural field. It is well presented by some pioneers such as Tunç Okan (*Otobüs/The Bus,* 1974), and Tevfik Başer (*40 Quadratmeter Deutschland/40 Square Meters of Germany*, 1985). While it is best known by Fatih Akin, from the new generation, who deals with the issue of Turkish-German identity in his cinema, to represent his characters' being in-between Turkish and German culture, Akin uses the image of crossing between extremes. He crosscuts between two countries, Germany and Turkey. Almost all of Akin's feature films deal with the topic of identity. Through his most-known films, *Gegen Die Wand/Head-On* (2004), and *Auf der Anderen Seite/The Edge of Heaven* (2007), Akin's main characters discussed second-generation Turks, like Akin himself. They were born in Germany or at least grew up there. For them, it is tough to define their identity. They have German citizenship but Turkish families. Their parents are Muslims, but they get to know the Christian culture through their Western friends at school, German media, or daily life. For Akin, his Turkish-German characters live in between those cultures; their identity is neither Turkish nor German, but both.

Almost like Akin, Thomas Arslan's Berlin trilogy *Geschwister und Kardesler/Brothers and Sisters* (1997), *Dealer* (1999), and *Der Schöne Tag/A Fine Day* (2001) show Turkish-German youths in Berlin in the 90s and describe their everyday lifestyle. While Yüksel Yavuz, of Turkish Kurdish descent, deals in his works on the Turkish-Kurdish diaspora and the issue of identity among Turkish immigrants in Germany, his most significant films *Aprilkinder/April Children* (1998), *Kleine Freiheit/A Little Bit of Freedom* (2003) *Close-up Kurdistan* (2007). Yasemin Şamdereli is presenting the female of German-Turkish cinema in *Almanya - Willkommen in Deutschland/ Almanya: Welcome to Germany* (2011), she explored the integration of Turkish culture in Germany. These films are among many others.

Over the years, several distinct groups of filmmakers have become notably recognized in European diasporic or exilic cinema. However, despite the massive presence of immigrants since the 1980s in the Western and Southern European countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and the establishment of the second generation of immigrants and the existence of the diaspora community, unlike France and Germany there is no actual representation in migration diaspora cinema. Immigrant communities in Spain and Italy still have very limited or no access to and control over the channels of representation, with the result that, despite isolated cases, the projection of images about the migrant experience is still almost exclusively the preserve of non-migrant filmmakers (Berghahn & Sternberg, 2010, p. 153).

Nevertheless, it is tough to find diasporic films, it is essential to indicate that some films representative of the descent immigrant filmmakers as still considered accented cinema, As Naficy discusses the "accented cinema" for which the experience of migration or diaspora made by the director and/or the team is an important precondition because this may lead to a "double consciousness" of the participants (Naficy, 2001, p. 22). From Belgium, *Noir/Black* (Adil El Arbi, Bilall Fallah, 2015), Denmark, *Ibrahim* (Manyar Parwani, 2007), Sweeden, Jozef Fares *Jalla! Jalla!* (2000), and *Zozo* (2005) Italy, *a'pensiero, storie ambulanti/Va'pensiero, Walking Stories* (Dagmawi Yimer, 2013), Spain, Omer Oke *Querida Bamako* (2007), and *La causa de Kripan* (2009).

Shohat and Stam argue that in diasporic and post-Third-Worldist films, "the boundaries between the personal and communal, like the generic boundaries between documentary and fiction, the biographic and the ethnographic, are constantly blurred. These films function as a collective memory of colonial violence and postcolonial displacement" (2003, p. 74).

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### 3.2.3 European Contemporary Immigration Cinema

Since the 1980s, European countries have been increasingly targeted by waves of legal and illegal immigrants from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and other regions of the world, in additionally to the former guest workers immigrants who settled in Europe since the 1960s, in response to the emergence of these societies and cultures and its expansion, contemporary European cinema has witnessed an abundance of innovative and critical films addressing immigration in different themes like refugees, borders crossings, clandestine immigration, and social issues in the host countries as racism, diversity, and identity. Isolina Ballesteros indicates that a new genre in European cinema arose. Immigration cinema, whose label refers mainly to its subject matter and the filmmakers' (as well as its audiences') ideological orientation, documents or fictionalizes the social phenomenon of immigration and the unfortunate but unavoidable ramifications of racism and xenophobia and gives voice to the social group of immigrants and their allies on the margins, the "undesirables" of society that constitute the broader category of Otherness (2015, p. 12).

Germany has the largest foreign-born population in Europe, primarily Turkish, while France is the second with the most significant share of immigrants from the Maghreb countries. France and Germany present vital film industries, and both are known to host the most productive national film industry in Europe. Italy has transformed from a country of emigration to one that receives immigrants and a land of arrival to Europe due to its geographical location close to Eastern Europe and Africa by the Mediterranean. By the mid-1980s, the number of immigrants from North and Southern African countries increased, which made filmmakers address the phenomenon. The other European countries' cinema has differed in their approach to immigration, and each country depends on its characteristics and deals with the migration issue through the nature of the phenomenon in the nation. Isolina contends that despite the differences among European countries' cinematographic industries, it is possible to identify common patterns of representation, particularly in terms of cinematographic formats and genres, the filmmakers' ethical commitments, and audience responses to them. (2015, p. 12)

Germany has a massive population of Turkish origin due to guest worker agreements with Turkey in the 1960s, and they are the most prominent immigrant representatives in Germany. What made German films that dealt with immigration interested in the issue of the Turks, beginning with *Shirins Hochzeit* by Hilma Sanders Brahms (1975) and *Yasemine* by Hark Bohm (1988), films about the oppression of Turkish women by their patriarchal families and the struggle of the second generation with their families. In the 1990s, diaspora filmmakers of this generation acquired immigration films providing an understanding of the Turkish community in Germany. Despite the large number of immigrants and the diversity of their work, “white” German directors still address the issues of immigrants from their perspective, looking for the issues of integration and multiculturalism. Like *Ghetto-Kids* (Christian Wagner, 2002), *Fremde Haut/Unveiled* (Angelina Maccarone, 2005), *Meine verrückte türkische Hochzeit/Kiss me Kismet* (Stefan Holtz,2006), *Lola auf der Erbse/Lola On The Pea*, (Thomas Heinemann, 2014).

In France, after Beur films became recognized and delved into the lives of immigrants through the gazes of the immigrants themselves, some other films appeared by “white” French directors that dealt with the issue of immigrants and integration, representing the host society's view. 1995 was decisive in French immigration cinema; it witnessed six banlieues and Beur films, three by white French directors and three by filmmakers of Maghrebi descent representing identity and ethnicity. The most notable “white” French films are *Raï* (Thomas Gilou,1995) and *La Haine/Hate* (Mathieu Kassovitz,1995). Both represent the banlieue as a site

of violence, the values ascribed to the culture of the parent's generation, and the construction of gender and sexuality; while *La Haine* has no representation of the family backgrounds, it is a film directed by a white middle-class filmmaker to give a voice to poor immigrant youngsters in France, the cast, the narrative, the style, and the references are all at odds with the idea of "accented cinema" as the expression of ethnicity, diaspora or exile. By inserting the film into global cinematic discourses on urban exclusion and violence (Goss & Chávez, 2013, p. 37).

*Samia* (Philippe Faucon, 2000) addresses the situation of ethnic minorities and integration in France through narratives that move beyond the semi-autobiographical base on a story of a young lady who struggles to get some freedom in her paradoxical life as she is from a Muslim Arab conservative family and living in the freedom country of France. *Wild Side* (Sébastien Lifshitz, 2004) addresses sexual orientation freedom for second-generation immigrants in France. *Eden à l'Ouest/Eden Is West* (Costa-Gavras,2009) follows Elias, an undocumented immigrant who takes risks across Western Europe to Paris, where miraculous promises, new friends, and dangers await him at every turn. *Welcome* (Philippe Lioret, 2009) Bilal, a Kurdish undocumented minor, takes on an adventure-filled journey across Europe. He wants to get to England by swimming the canal from France to see his love who lives there. *Bienvenue à Marly-Gomont/The African Doctor* (Julien Rambaldi, 2016) portrays the challenges of immersing in a new and very different society that does not accept the "other," a journey from rejection to acceptance.

Italy was known as the country of emigration towards America and Western Europe. However, due to its economic development and geographic location in the Mediterranean, it became a host country, making it an essential destination for immigrants. Italian cinema was interested in immigration and dealt with Italian emigrants abroad and the issue of immigrants from Eastern Europe. However, in the mid-1980s, filmmakers started addressing the transformation in society following the emergence of the new immigrant community. Through dozens of films, Italian directors search for the conditions and issues of immigrants in Italy. In *Pummarò/Tomato* (Michele Placido,1990), the film tackles racism and intolerance in Italy and shows the conditions of immigrant workers on the farms. In *Vesna VA Veloce/Vesna Goes Fast* (Carlo Mazzacurati,1996) and *Sud Side Stori/South Side Story* (Roberta Torre, 2000), the filmmakers tell the story of undocumented women immigrants in Italy and what they are exposed to through their journey in Italy. *Vesna VA Veloce* tells the story of a young Eastern European girl who arrives in Italy, seeking a new life. Nevertheless, the reality is more tragic, the film shows the struggles she faces and the path she must take to survive by becoming a prostitute. *Sud Side Stori* centers on the integration of African immigrants into southern Italian society, it portrays the difficulty of the African prostitutes who try to find a way to set up a life in Italy but are trapped into endless prostitution by pimps who exploit them and take away their passports upon their arrival. *Saimir* (Francesco Munzi, 2005), under the main theme of marginalization, generational conflict, and rebellion, is a story about minor immigrants who face significant challenges in a new country where they have no rights. *Terraferma* (Emanuele Crialese, 2011) deals with the most urgent issues in immigration in the previous decade, the influx of clandestine immigrants by the deadly boats on the shores of Italy. The film is set on the Sicilian Island of Lampedusa, which has received many immigrants in recent years, and Italians used to see these events in the daily news. *Terraferma* puts the audience at the center of events by telling the story of a fisherman who risks out against the law and tries to help immigrants from drowning after their boat capsizes. *Io sono Li/I am Li* (Andrea Segre, 2011) is A story of the friendship between two immigrants in Italy, one from old Yugoslavia and the other from China. *L'ordine delle cose/ The Order of Things* (Andrea Segre, 2017) is the story

of an immigration agent torn between his job and his humanity when he meets a young Somali woman on a field assignment in Libya. *Io Capitano/I am a Captain* (Matteo Garrone, 2023) is the story of two Senegalese teenagers who embark on a journey from West Africa to Italy.

Along with many other films from various European countries, Immigration Cinema produced many films whose discourse varied according to the characteristics of each country and the immigration situation in it, as well as according to the filmmakers and their backgrounds. However, the immigration cinema remains a powerful alternative to the media's partial coverage. The abundance and variety of these cinematic products that depict the stories of immigrants in Europe may help to change the social and cultural relations between Europeans and the "Others" in their societies, that the realist exposition of injustice and the fictional harmony and solidarity found in immigration cinema may translate into concrete social transformation, with the condition the commitment of white-engaged European filmmakers to give voice to disenfranchised groups. (Ballesteros, 2015, pp. 25-26)

Although I have consistently limited the scope of immigration in European cinema to the most vital and prolific productions, such as French, German, and Italian cinema, I must mention the most critical immigration films from all over Europe that discuss the immigration phenomenon in several aspects.

From the Nordic countries: *Pelle erobreren/Pelle the Conqueror* (Denmark/Sweden 1987, Bille August), *Lilja 4-Ever* (Sweden/Denmark 2002, Lukas Moodysson), *Andið eðlilega/And Breathe Normally* (Iceland 2018, Ísold Uggadóttir). From Southern Europe: *Apo tin akri tis polis/From the Edge of the City* (Greece 1998, Constantine Giannaris), *Πολίτικη Κουζίνα, Politiki Kouzina /A Touch of Spice* (Greece 2003, Tassos Boulmetis), *Rezervni deli/Spare Parts* (Slovenia 2003, Damjan Kozole), *Transe/Trance* (Portugal 2006, Teresa Villaverde). And some films from the west Europe countries: *La Promesse/The Promise* (Belgium 1996, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne), *Nordrand/Northern Skirts* (Austria 1999, Barbara Albert), *Madly in Love* (Switzerland 2010, Anna Luif), *De nieuwe wereld/ The New World* (The Netherlands 2013 Jaap van Heusden*), Zielona granica/Green Border* (Poland 2023, Agnieszka Holland), Among many others.

## 3.3 SPANISH CINEMA FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION

Spain has a long history of both emigration and immigration, making it a unique case study in the field of migration research. While in the previous century, Spain was marked by a significant outflow of people, particularly to Latin America and Western Europe. Recently, it became a major destination for immigrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa due to the country's close proximity to Africa. This has created a diverse and multicultural society with a significant presence of immigrants from Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia. Spanish cinema has gone through substantial changes over the years, reflecting the social, political, and cultural changes taking place in the country.

Migration cinema started in the 1950s with a focus on rural immigration. Nevertheless, few films have been made earlier addressing the emigration of Spaniards to the Americas. Between 1950 and 1981, a rural exodus occurred in Spain that gradually depopulated the countryside. It began in the fifties with the mobilization of the field to the provincial capitals and the poorest regions towards the most industrialized (Madrid, Catalonia, the Basque Country, and the

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Valencian Community). This mobilization was represented in the regime-supported cinema and produced by its official production company, CIFESA[11]. (Ballesteros, 2016, p. 249)

The early emigration of Spaniards as part of the guest workers' schemes of the 60s and 70s emigration has been represented in cinema. It often portrayed the struggles and hardships faced by the emigrants who left the country to seek better economic opportunities abroad as they adapted to life in a new country. During the Franco dictatorship rule (1939-1975), Spanish cinema was heavily censored and controlled by the government, resulting in a lack of artistic freedom and creativity and difficulty in addressing the emigration issue. The regime's ideology influenced the final outcome of a vast number of films exhibited in the country at the time. For many, Francoist censorship was primarily limited to the scissoring out of some scenes and the sporadic suppression or sanitizing of taboo expressions. (Díaz-Cintas, 2019, p. 182). Nevertheless, Spanish cinema during that period produced some films that documented the phenomenon of Spanish emigration.

In the post-Franco era, the country's transition to democracy and integration into the European Union led to economic growth in the late 1980s and increased demand for labor in specific industries, particularly the construction, agriculture, and tourism sectors. The country quickly experienced significant immigration, particularly from Latin America, North Africa, and Eastern Europe, in addition to the return of many Spanish emigrants. Therefore, Spain shifted from a country which sending emigrants to receiving immigrants, a period of immigration rather than emigration. As a result, Contemporary Spanish cinema began to change its focus to immigrants instead of emigrants and has depicted the theme of migration in various ways. Some films have focused on the experiences of immigrants themselves, portraying their struggles and challenges as they try to adapt to life in a new country and how they interact with Spanish society. successso tend to show the difficulties, discrimination, and prejudice that immigrants face in Spain, but also the resilience and the will to survive and succeed of these people. Other films have focused on the impact of immigration on Spanish society, exploring the ways in which immigrants are perceived and treated by the broader population. Most films represent different perspectives, but all of them show the complexity and diversity of the immigrant experience in Spain.

### 3.3.1 The Image of Spanish Migrants When They Were The "Others."

The image of Spanish migrants in cinema varies depending on the film, the country of production, and the context of the production period. It may be influenced by other factors, including the filmmaker's personal experiences and society's attitudes toward immigration. The representation of the Spanish immigrant in foreign films is often linked to the two periods of immigration that Spain witnessed, the first during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries towards the Americas and the second in the fifties until the seventies to Western Europe. The Spanish cinema has consistently documented internal migration and exodus from rural areas in the fifties and the emigration of temporary workers to Europe in the sixties. (Ballesteros, 2016, p. 249)

During the mass migration, a large number of Spanish people emigrated, looking for the promise of new opportunities in other countries such as the United States, Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela, among others. Many of these migrants were from rural areas seeking better

[11] La Compañía Industrial de Film Español, S.A. (The Spanish Industrial Film Company, S.A) Known as Cifesa, it was a Spanish company based in Valencia that produced and distributed films. The company was founded in 1932 by the Trénor family. Its heyday was between 1942 and 1945, and it closed its doors in 1961.

economic opportunities, while others fled political persecution or the effects of the Spanish Civil War. Most notable in this period is the migration of Galicians. It is not easy to produce exact data regarding the full extent of this phenomenon. Still, expert estimates agree that "until the late 1950s, most Spanish immigrants to Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil came from Galicia (between 40% and 50% of all immigrants). Galicia would be among the European countries characterized by the highest emigration rates during mass migration (1850–1930) (Seixas, 2018, p. 1).

Only a limited number of Spanish films portrayed the emigrants to South America, often not as the main plot, like Carmiña, Flor de Galicia (Rino Lupo, 1926), which tells the romance story of Carmiña and refers to rural immigration in Spain, and the Spaniards' emigration to the Americas. It should be noted that this film particularly concerns the Galician diaspora, as it appears timidly in the narrative plot. Yet, it occupies a prominent place despite its meager presence at first. Scanty is the presence of Galician in the labels of this silent film, limited to a traditional register of the type taken from a poem by Rosalia de Castro. (Pérez Pereiro & Redondo Neira, 2018, p. 108). Another film that addressed the emigration to South America is *El Emigrado/The Immigrant (Ramón Torrado, 1946), released during the rule of Franco; it* tells the story of Ignacio Ibarrola, a Basque sailor who emigrates to Brazil in search of a better life. He leaves behind his wife and two children. The film portrays the challenges and hardships that Spanish immigrants face. His employers often exploit Ignacio, and he is forced to live in poverty. He also experiences loneliness and isolation but never gives up on his dream of providing a better life for his family. Eventually, he succeeds, but he never forgets his family in Spain. *El Emigrante/The Immigrant* (Sebastián Almeida, 1958), A Spanish immigrant in Cuba, returns to his hometown after many years, and he fears facing the absence of his loved ones. He remembers the welcome he received the last time he returned, his youth, and his emigration decision. The film depicts the return of the immigrant awaking nostalgia. *Camarote de lujo/ Luxury Cabin* (Rafael Gil, 1959), the film tells the story of Aurelio Romay, a young man from a small town in Spain who dreams of becoming a writer. He travels to Madrid to pursue his dream but soon struggles to make ends meet. He works as a waiter on a luxury cruise that goes to America, where he meets various interesting characters. The film portrays immigrants as both sympathetic and critical. It shows how immigrants can be both victims and perpetrators of discrimination. There are other contemporary films made later addressing the Spanish emigration of this period, like *Frontera Sur/Southern Border* (Gerardo Herrero, 1998), *La línea del Cielo/Skyline* (Fernando Colomo,1984*), The Other Shoe* (Joan Cuevas Pareras 2003), *El Vasco/The Basque* (Jabi Elortegi, 2022).

Conversely, Spanish emigration has been addressed in many Latin American films. However, the image of Spanish immigrants in foreign films can be different from that of the national industry. Spanish films present a positive and empathetic portrayal of immigrants, highlighting their contributions to society and their struggles in a new country. Films produced by the hosting countries may reflect society's view and cultural context. While some show the good experiences of immigrants, others focus more on the opposing side. However, some filmmakers represent the Spanish diaspora in their new countries and produce films about the Spanish immigration experience. Immigrants are constantly criticized and addressed as plural and bear the burden of individuals. Film representation is never a reflection of reality but rather a narrative, visual, discursive construction mediated by multiple factors. (Laguarda, 2009, p. 354). Nevertheless, the way that immigrants are portrayed in films can have a significant impact on public perceptions and attitudes toward immigration and lead to reinforcing unfavorable stereotypes and prejudices against immigrants.

In Latin American cinema, the most notable Spanish representation is the Galician character, as the massive emigration of Galicians has been well presented in cinema through the character of Cándida in several films as a Galician emigrant who arrived in Argentina and worked as a housemaid, it interpreted by the actress Niní Marshall[12]. She was inspired by the Galician maid she had grown up with, Francisca Pérez, but also conveyed the most common features of Galician emigrants like naïveté and fear. The thousands of Galicians who arrived in Argentina for centuries were seen as ignorant, dirty, pious, and stubborn, but also hard workers and loyal (Pérez Pereiro & Roca, 2020, p. 268). Although the films in the Cándida series were made at a time when said migratory flow had decreased in magnitude, they refer to the historical experience of those tremendous, massive migrations to Argentina (Mestman, 2015, p. 193). From the opening scenes of the first film, *Cándida* (Luis Bayón Herrera, 1939), descending from the ship and going through the immigration procedures, the character displays the gestural and linguistic traits that will characterize her comedy throughout all the films, while she becomes a stereotype and is placed in the place of the "other." It seems like the objective was to establish an alterity that is historically grounded and publicly acknowledged. The three films will undergo updates featuring recurring episodes that satirize the innocence or customs distinguishing their foreign origin from their natural habitat. Throughout the Bayón Herrera trilogy where the migration phenomenon is represented from the initial arrival of the ship, where melodies from the old continent resound, or the passage of the character through the *Hotel de Inmigrantes* at the very beginning of Cándida (1939), until the final image (visual and sound) of *Cándida Millonaria* (1941), in which the camera frames the protagonist, her husband Marcial and his friend, Benito, the three Galician immigrants who succeed to integrate into Argentine society (Mestman, 2015, p. 193). Niní Marshal interpreted the role of Cándida as a Galician immigrant in several other films as well as *Una Gallega en México* (Julián Soler, 1949), *Una Gallega baila mambo* (Emilio Gómez Muriel, 1951), *Los enredos de una Gallega* (Fernando Soler, 1951), *Una Gallega en La Habana* (René Cardona, 1955). From the postcolonial approach, one key aspect of Cándida's character is using humor and satire to critique the social hierarchies and power imbalances that underpin Argentine society and explore the image of the Spaniards in the Argentinian collective mind. The character also engages with language and communication issues, highlighting how linguistic and cultural differences can create barriers to understanding and connection. Cándida struggles with Spanish, as she represents the Galician immigrants who speak the Galician language. Her attempts to speak Spanish often result in comical misunderstandings. This reflects the broader challenges marginalized communities face, which must navigate linguistic and cultural barriers in a society that often privileges dominant cultural norms.

Other notable films from Argentine*, El ángel de España/The Spanish Angel* (Enrique Carreras, 1957), is a musical comedy that portrays a young man from a small town in Spain who travels to Buenos Aires to pursue his dream of becoming a singer. Along the way, he meets Mercedes, a young Spanish immigrant, and falls in love. The image of the Spanish immigrants in *El ángel de España* is generally favorable. The main character, Pedro, is portrayed as a hard worker and ambitious young man determined to succeed in Argentina. He is also shown to be a kind, compassionate person willing to help others. The other Spanish immigrants in the film are also portrayed positively. They are shown to be hardworking and family-oriented people trying to improve their lives in Argentina. Nevertheless, the film also poses challenges for

[12] Marina Esther Traveso (June 1, 1903 – March 18, 1996), known by her stage name Niní Marshall, was an Argentine humorist, comic actress, and screenwriter nicknamed The Chaplin with a skirt and The Lady of Humour. She was famous for the role of the Galician housemaid in her first films. (Niní Marshall. 2024, April 17.
In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nin%C3%AD_Marshall)

Spanish immigrants in Argentina. Pedro and Mercedes both experience discrimination and prejudice from native Argentines. The film shows that Spanish immigrants can succeed in Argentina and are essential to Argentine society, the country's culture, and history. They contribute to the economy, culture, and diversity of Argentina. Another film released in the mid-1970s, *La Patagonia Rebelde*/*Rebellion in Patagonia* (Héctor Olivera, 1974), portrays the events of the Patagonian sheep farm labor strike in 1921-1922, which resulted in a violent confrontation between striking workers who were immigrant laborers from Spain and the Argentinian government, against their exploitative working conditions and low wages. The film shows the Spanish immigrants in a sympathetic light, as they are portrayed as reliable, exploited workers who have been forced to endure harsh conditions to make a living. The Spanish immigrants in the film are shown as proud, dignified people willing to stand up for their rights, even in the face of violent repression. They are depicted as having a strong sense of community and solidarity. This positive image of Spanish immigrants was shaped in the 1970s, even though it tells the story of historical events in the 1920s.

In Mexico, the first Spanish characterization made by Joaquín Pardavé in films such as *Los Hijos de Don Venancio/The Children of Don Venancio* (1944) and *Los Nietos de Don Venancio/The Grandchildren of Don Venancio* (1945), in which he plays a good-natured, hard-working man who loves his family, whom he is torn between the suffering caused by being uprooted from his native country and the gratitude towards Mexico for receiving him. Another Mexican film touches on the memory and exile, *En el balcón vacío*/*On the empty Balcony (Jomí García Ascot, 1961),* which explores the Spanish Civil War seen through the eyes of a girl called Gabriela, who becomes an adult and is exiled to Mexico, remembers the events that marked her during that stage. “Full integration is achieved in these films through the children and grandchildren of the immigrant, born on Mexican soil and raised according to their cultural guidelines.” (Laguarda, 2009, p. 363).

The portrayal of Spanish immigrants in Latin American films is intricate and multifaceted. It reflects the diverse experiences of Spanish characters and the filmmakers' perspectives, which are influenced by the historical period, the socio-political context, and the postcolonial lens of each country.

The second part of Spanish emigration refers to the period between the 1950s and the late 1980s. It can be separated into two parts: rural emigration and temporary workers’ emigration to industrialized countries due to the demand for low-skilled workers under the scheme work programs.

During the so-called (años de hambre/Hungers years), in 1947, the regime lifted the ban on permanent migration within Spain while initially resisting this immigration. (Richardson, 2002, p. 27). At the beginning of the 1950s, a rural exodus took place in Spain that gradually depopulated the countryside and the poorest regions towards the provincial capitals and the most industrialized like Madrid and Catalonia. “This internal migration favored the urbanization of Spanish society but generated unprecedented regional imbalances in the country's demographic development.” (Ballesteros, 2016, p. 249). Although making movies about migration was difficult and risky, this mobilization was represented in cinema, touching on the social issues and causes of migration in Spain during the Francoist dictatorship. The fascist government exercises rigorous control over the film industry (Díaz-Cintas, 2019, p. 185). Filmmakers had to be careful not to violate the regime's strict censorship rules and were limited in accessing information about the migrant experience. On the other hand, some filmmakers represented the propaganda of the regime.

Many films represented the regime's perspective before the rural exodus, like *La Aldea Maldita/The Cursed Village* (Florián Rey, 1942) and *Surcos/Furrows* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1951). Both films offer a glimpse into the lives of rural immigrants in Spain. *La Aldea Maldita* shows rural immigrants' hardships after the Spanish Civil War. *Surcos*, conversely, shows rural immigrants' challenges as they try to adapt to their new lives in the city. After the regime switched to promoting immigration toward the industrialized region, several films have been produced addressing this shift. *El Pisito* (Marco Ferreri, Isidoro M. Ferry, 1958) is a romantic comedy that shows the challenges of finding affordable housing in the city. *Segundo López, aventurero urbano/ Segundo López, Urban Adventurer* (Ana Mariscal, 1953) marked the directorial debut of Ana Mariscal, a leading actress in General Franco's Spain. The film's style contains elements of neorealism, dealing with social issues affecting migrants from the countryside.

Despite all the challenges of making a film and criticizing the regime, some filmmakers managed to produce powerful films that shed light on the struggles of migrant communities during this time, such as *La Ciudad no es para mí/City life is not for me* (Pedro Lázaro,1966) reproduces in comical key the dichotomous rural purity scheme versus urban corruption. The film reflects some substantial problems of internal emigration, urban expansion without planning, and the accelerated and asymmetric condition of Spanish modernization in the 1960s. *La piel quemada/Burnt Skin* (Josep Maria Forn, 1967) is about the internal mass migration in Spain from Andalusia to Catalonia in the 1960s. The film is divided into two parts: the first part follows the husband, who must adapt to his new environment and find work and a place for his family to live, and the second part follows the wife and children, who must also adapt to their new life. The film shows how migration can lead to poverty and social exclusion.

Most previous films show that the rural provincial environment is idealized versus the city, chaotic and inhospitable. The outcome is the struggle of villagers to adapt to the city. In some films, the protagonist stays in the city and adapts. In others, the villager character returns home, disenchanted after his experience in the city.

In the same period, when rural emigration peaked, another type emerged: emigration to Western European countries that needed labor. The government encouraged emigration to solve the economic crisis. With low qualifications, emigrants were arranged under the guest worker scheme. (Alaminos, Albert, & Santacreu, 2010, p. 16). These emigrant workers were often employed in low-skilled jobs such as agriculture, factories, mines, and construction sites.

In the development period (1961-1973), Spain experienced significant economic and industrial growth due to the rural exodus and benefited from the remittances of emigrants. Most notably, films of that period that address the image of Spanish emigrants are *Llegar a más/ Reach more* (Jesús Fernández Santos, 1963), *Vente a Alemania, Pepe/ Come to Germany, Pepe* (Pedro Lazaga, 1971), *Españolas en París/Spaniards in Paris* (Roberto Bodegas, 1971), *Inqueda Volta* (Equipo Lupa, 1973).

*Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (1971) is a Spanish comedy film. It depicts the challenges faced by Spanish migrant workers in Germany during the 1960s and tells the story of a young Spanish man, Pepe, who is tempted by his friend who returns to his boring hometown in Aragon, talking about how wonderful Germany is. Pepe decides to go to Germany with him and starts dreaming of working in the Volkswagen factory and making a fortune to return home and marry his girlfriend, Pilar. Once in Germany, Pepe finds life is more challenging than he thought. He struggles to adapt to the German culture and language and has trouble fitting in with the other

workers at the factory (Garrido & González-Allende, 2022, p. 17). While the film does not overtly address issues of discrimination or racism, it does highlight the challenges and prejudices that Spanish migrant workers faced. Some scenes in the film depict the German characters as cold, unfriendly, and unwelcoming towards the Spanish migrant workers. On the other hand, the Spanish characters are portrayed as struggling to adapt to the German language and culture, often feeling isolated and alienated from their surroundings. The film plot is resolved in the end with the happy return of Pepe to his hometown.

*Españolas en París* (1970) is a Spanish comedy film about three Spanish women who move to Paris to fulfill their dreams. They face various challenges and obstacles, including language barriers and cultural differences, as they are sometimes unsure how to behave in certain situations. They also struggle to make ends meet as they try to establish themselves in Paris. The film also portrays the experiences of this group of Spanish women who are liberated from the constraints of their traditional roles and are free to enjoy themselves in a foreign country. Despite all the challenges, the film depicts the Spaniards' characters as determined and resourceful, and they work together to support each other and achieve their goals. Both films were released in the last years of Franco's rule. They addressed the Spanish emigration experience and challenges and explored cultural identity and adaptation themes. Both films offer a portrayal of the experiences of Spanish emigrants, highlighting their strengths and vulnerabilities, as well as the challenges and opportunities that come with migration to a new country. The films also reflect the changing attitudes towards immigration and cultural identity during different periods, while *Vente a Alemania, Pepe,* reflects the challenges faced by Spanish emigrants during the 1960s and reflects the conservative perspective of the regime in that period, *Españolas en París* implies the changing attitudes towards emigrant women's roles and independence during the 1970s, indicating the progressive perspective happening in society.

It is worth mentioning that “In 1973, just over 1,100,000 Spaniards lived temporarily or permanently in other European countries, particularly Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.” (Alaminos et al, 2010, p. 16)

In the transition period, several films distinguished by increased political freedom and cultural expression were released. The emigration topic took its share, too. Filmmakers have returned to address the phenomenon of emigration in the past decades to different European countries from various angles. “Throughout the two following decades, films have been made that fictionalize or document for the first time in a serious way the real conditions of Spanish emigrants, particularly in Switzerland and Germany.” (Ballesteros, 2016, p. 254). *Volver a empezar/Begin the Beguine* (José Luis Garci, 1982), *El techo del mundo/ The roof of the world* (Felipe Vega, 1995), *El tren de la memoria/The Memory Train* (Marta Arribas y Ana Pérez, 2005). *Un Franco, 14 Pesetas* (2006), and *Dos Francos, 40 Pesetas* (2014), both directed by Carlos Iglesias, these two films are contemporary productions dedicated to the memory of the past. With an autobiographical focus, the director portrays the story of his childhood as the son of Spanish emigrants in Switzerland. The plot begins in Spain with the hope that emigration evokes and ends with the protagonist's return to Madrid. Also, the cultural and linguistic context confronts the emigrant with Swiss German in addition to Italian because of the multilingualism established in Switzerland and emigration from Italy (Komori & Berger, 2011, p. 22). And finally, *Perdiendo el norte/Off Course* (Nacho G. Velilla, 2015) tells the story of two young Spanish men with a university education who are tired of unemployment and decide to move to Germany. But soon, they will find out that finding a better living is not as easy as they expected. This film deals with emigration wave post 2008 economic

crisis addressing themes similar to classic 1970s films *Vente a Alemania*, Pepe (1970), and *Españolas en París* (1971), which deal with the experiences of Spanish immigrants in foreign countries, specifically Germany and France. While all three films share similar themes, they approach the subject of immigration in different ways. The first two films made under Franco's rule used humor and satire to explore the cultural differences and difficulties that emigrants face, with the concept of Spanish characters always seeking to return home to Spain. *Perdiendo el Norte*, in contrast, is a more modern film that tackles the subject of immigration with a more serious and realistic tone. The film explores the economic and social realities that drive young Spaniards to emigrate to Germany, portraying their struggles and difficulties with empathy and understanding, while the film still contains elements of humor and satire.

These films offer diverse perspectives on the Spanish emigration experience to Europe, reflecting the changing attitudes towards migration and cultural identity over time. Some films focus on the challenges of language barriers, discrimination, economic struggles, and prejudices faced by Spanish migrants in their new environments. In contrast, others celebrate the resilience and resourcefulness of the migrant experience.

However, contemporary films approaching past events can be affected by various factors and can change the facts depending on the current gaze on the past. In the Spanish cinema of the time, it can be seen that not all Spaniards went with their documents in order, a myth currently created as a comparative excuse concerning current emigrants. (Sánchez, 2008, p. 248), «Until 1956, the Spanish government not only did not provide any official stimulus to emigration, but border surveillance tried to limit departures as far as possible. Most departures were carried out clandestinely». (Término et al., 1995), as cited in (Sánchez, 2008).

Regarding how Spanish immigration is portrayed in the cinema of host countries, it's important to note that foreign films can offer perspectives and themes that are not present in Spanish cinema, providing a different approach to the phenomenon. The hosting Western European countries produced several films. However, only a few addressed the immigration of Spaniards directly from the 1950s to the 1970s, but they mainly mentioned the topic or included Spanish characters as immigrants and guest workers. “While in 1968 the Spanish community represented the first minority in France, the figure of the 'Spanish migrant' was the subject of only a few films, most of them between the 1930s and 1960s.". (Richer Rossi, 2015, pp. 103-104). Some of these films are *Le bonheur est pour demain/Happiness is for tomorrow* (Henri Fabiani, France1960), *La Mandarine* (Edouard Molinaro, France 1971), *Le bonheur est dans le pré/Happiness Is in the Field*, (Étienne Chatiliez, France 1995), *Les femmes du 6eme étage/The Women on the 6th Floor* (Philippe Le Guay, France 2010).

West Germany, France, and Switzerland were among the main destinations for Spanish emigration during this period. German cinema produced some films, including the Spanish immigrant characters, such as *In Frankfurt sind die Nächte heiß/Playgirls* (Rolf Olsen, West Germany 1966), *Der Unfall/The Accident* (Peter Beauvais, West Germany 1968), and *Der Übergang über den Ebro/The Ebro Crossing* (Armand Gatti, West Germany 1969).

Switzerland and Belgium also received Spanish immigrants and have some representations in cinema, such as *La Salamander/The Salamander* (Switzerland 1971) and *Le Retour d'Afrique/Return from Africa* (Switzerland 1973), directed by Alain Tanner, and *Sur la terre comme au ciel/Between Heaven and Earth* (Marion Hänsel, Belgium 1992).

In this above selection, many films portray Spanish immigrants as facing discrimination, racism, and cultural clashes as they try to adapt to a new country and culture. Films also show

the economic struggle and social inequality and depict Spanish immigrants as working in low-paid jobs and living in poor conditions, often exploited by their employers or facing difficulties finding work. Nonetheless, some films show Spaniard's image of being hardworking and trustworthy. However, the image of Spanish immigrants in European films is complex and varied, reflecting their production's social, cultural, and historical context.

It is challenging to answer exhaustively what the image that cinema has given of Spanish emigration since it is necessary to contextualize it in the case of each cinematography and then keep in mind a series of fundamental variables, such as when the films have been made, if they have been produced within or outside the industrial margins, if they have approached it from fiction or non-fiction, if they had or not a propaganda will, who has directed them and what relationship does it have with the migratory experience, etc... To do otherwise would mean issuing biased assessments. Thus, apart from the ideology that underlies the films and regardless of their time of production, the issue of returning to or staying outside the homeland is undoubtedly a fundamental issue for the emigrant and so reflects the cinema. Likewise, the melancholy and sorrow they suffer from living far from their land is also a common component because of whether the emigrant cannot or does not want to return for political or economic reasons. (Lloret, 2017, pp. 1235-1236)

Overall, whether or not there is a match between the actual context of Spanish emigration and the representation that the films propose. There is a difference between national production and foreign. Spanish films transmitted the image that should always have positive consequences for Franco's ideology, but they never put it into question. Therefore, it is interesting to compare the image that cinema gives us of emigration and the real context in which it occurs. For this reason, it is significant to attend to the representations proposed by other European cinematographies since they could reflect the phenomenon with greater freedom and without all these restrictions and obstacles in such a way that they were allowed to address issues that were challenging for Spanish cinema produced at that time.

### 3.3.2 The Spanish cinematic response to the wave of immigration in the late 1980s

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw a significant influx of immigration to Spain; whereas the first wave of immigrants came mainly from Latin America, the second wave saw an increase in Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa immigration along with Eastern Europeans. This influx of immigrants significantly impacted Spanish society and culture, including the reflection in Spanish cinema. Ballesteros outlines that the representation of the foreigner in Spanish film throughout the twentieth century has been non-existent or stereotyped. Only in the 1990s, although still limited, did a cinematographic trend start to focus more or less explicitly on the current phenomenon of immigration and xenophobia (2015, p. 50). However, "Spanish cinema did not acknowledge immigration until the beginning of the 1990s with films such as *Las Cartas de Alou/The Letters from Alou* (Montxo Armendáriz, 1990)" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2010, p. 117). The Spanish cinematic response to immigration was marked by a growing interest in representing the experiences of immigrants in Spain and highlighting the social and cultural changes brought about by their presence in the country. Through their films, Spanish filmmakers sought to promote understanding and empathy towards immigrants, as well as to shed light on the challenges faced by those who leave their homes in search of a better life.

The Spanish filmmakers who deal with the issue of immigration, who are primarily white citizens, share the socio-liberal ideology that considers that immigration is something positive and that Europe has an obligation to assume its responsibilities for the colonial past by

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welcoming and granting asylum to the displaced. Their films are aligned with postcolonial intellectual proposals that preach a conscious reflection on the diversity of European identity and reveal to audiences the real conditions of immigrants. (Ballesteros, 2016, p. 256). Nevertheless, some films espouse anti-immigration discourse by creating and reinforcing stereotypes that can perpetuate negative attitudes toward immigrants.

The entire body of the immigration cinema of Spain includes the representation of various identities, such as Sub-Saharan countries, North Africans, Latin Americans, South Asians, and East Europeans. Most films dealing with migration try to focus on the human aspect of the immigrants, of the desire to pursue the dream for a better life and highlight the similarity in human experiences irrespective of nationality. These are the alternative representations of migrants compared to the sensationalist and negative images circulated by newspapers and television news channels. However, according to Isolina Ballesteros (2016, p. 255) the collective consciousness about the migratory situation is ambiguous and melodramatic. The traumatic experiences of immigrants are filtered and selected for their spectacular and tragic nature in the media and directed to a passive receiver in search of catharsis. This treatment continues without exposing to the public light the socio-cultural reality of immigrants: the causes of emigration, the social demand for cheap and complacent labor, subhuman housing conditions, geographic and spatial segregation, and marginalization and work they experience.

Sub-Saharan African characters have been featured in Spanish films since the beginning of immigration cinema and have symbolized the "other." Santaolalla (2005) argues that even considered as a whole, the sub-Saharan community is not the largest. Yet, it is one of the most visible. (p. 120) However, their portrayal has changed over time. In the early days of Spanish cinema, African characters were often portrayed as stereotypes, such as exotic, savages, and mysterious figures. In recent years, there has been a shift from invisible characters to more interactive, complex portrayals of African characters. Here are most films that portray Sub-Saharan African characters:

*Las cartas de Alou/Lettres from Alou* (Montxo Armendáriz, 1990) tells the story of a Senegalese man named Alou who immigrates to Spain in search of work and a better life. He faces discrimination due to his race, national origin, and legal status. He realizes that life in Spain is not as easy as he thought it would be. Alou begins writing letters to his family and friends back home, describing his struggles and experiences in Spain. Kieffer (1991) posits, "Letters from Alou is an engaging and playful picture of the illegal immigrant in a European Union country. Suppose the basic problems - difficulties of adaptation of the illegal workers, victims of racism and exploitation in a rich country – remain posed. In that case, Montxo Armendáriz tackles them without miserabilism and complacency, moderating with harmony the force of direct cinema and the ethics of the documentary investigation." (Kieffer, p. 41) *Las Cartas de Alou* has been considered one of the first films to deal with immigration as a cinematic response to immigration in the late 1980s, and it is notable for its portrayal of the immigrant experience in Spain, particularly the challenges faced by African immigrants. It also explores themes of identity, culture shock, and the search for a sense of belonging. The film also boldly presents a love story on screen between Alou and Carmen, a white Spanish woman. It is precisely the kind of interracial relationship that has always caused great anxiety in Western societies due to its potential threat to "racial purity." "Las Cartas de Alou, its vigorous and, at the same time, moving story, has acquired added value, becoming a fetish text of the Spanish anti-racist discourse and the associations committed to it. The film has also been frequently

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used in textbooks and web pages as an anti-racist pedagogical resource or for training in interculturality. The Pangea portal serves as an example". (Santaolalla, 2005, p. 121)

*Bwana* (Imanol Uribe, 1996) is a drama that explores varying degrees of Spanish xenophobia and racism, ranging from stereotypes to violent hate crimes (Palardy, 2015, p. 829). The film tells the story of a xenophobic Spanish family stranded on a remote beach with an illegal African immigrant. The family's initial fear and mistrust of the immigrant gradually gives way to understanding and compassion as they learn more about his life and his reasons for coming to Spain. The immigrant, Ombasi, is not portrayed as a victim or a villain. He is a complex character with hopes, dreams, and fears. The family members have negative stereotypes and prejudices about immigrants that have been perpetuated in Spanish society and media, which will change throughout the film events based on their new personal experiences. Yet, “the end of the film shows that the "noble savage" has been betrayed by the "ignorant" Spaniards, the family's cowardice allows the neo-Nazis to capture Ombasi, and the "bad guys" win. The film deals with many topics associated with immigrants in the changing Spain of the 90s.” (Garzón, 2015, p. 6). *Bwana* puts the Spanish viewer in front of the African immigrant character who faces prejudice and stereotypes from a Spanish family and racist attacks by the neo nazis. Julie Blazar states, “The racism and discrimination portrayed in the film show the indifference and causal racism of the Spanish family and the violent and drastic actions of the neo-Nazis as well as the pervasiveness and depth of these attitudes.” (2020, p. 57) The film's plot explores the immigration issue in Spain in a thought-provoking way.

*Salvajes/Savages*, directed by Carlos Molinero in 2001, is a disturbing look at the immigration issue in Spain. The film tells the story of Berta, a nurse who lives in a working-class neighborhood in Valencia. Berta is raising her three nephews after their mother dies, and she is struggling to make ends meet. One day, Berta's nephews beat up a Senegalese immigrant, and she is forced to confront the racism and xenophobia that is rampant in her community. The filmic flexibility of *Salvajes* is already favored by the expressive richness of the text by Alonso de Santos, who tries to overcome in his writing the direct transposition of reality in the style of what the writers of "Mirror Along the Road" did (Gutiérrez Carbajo, 2004, p. 181). *Salvajes* shows the human cost of immigration, affecting both the newcomers and the inhabitants in their new surroundings. The film also sheds light on the intricate dynamics between immigrants and the local population, uncovering the conflicts and misconceptions that can arise due to cultural differences. Moreover, it delves into the elaborate connection between racism and classism.

*El Traje/The Suit* (2002), directed by Alberto Rodríguez, is a moving story about the migration experience of Patricio, an undocumented African immigrant who works as a parking lot attendant in Sevilla city. One day, Patricio helps a wealthy person change his flat tire, and in exchange, he gives him a suit as a gift. The suit transforms Patricio's life, gives him self-confidence, and allows him to move more freely in the streets. He is suddenly treated with respect by the people in his town and even gets to date a white Spanish local. Santaolalla points out that "the suit that Patricio gets is more than a piece of clothing: it is the passport that provides him with social acceptance in a society in which appearances are more important than substance” (2005, p. 121). However, Patricio's newfound happiness is short-lived when he crosses paths with a deceptive Spaniard, losing his place where he was living with friends, and being exposed by the girl he meets. He realizes that the suit cannot change the fact that he is an outsider.

Ilegal (Ignacio Vilar, 2003) depicts the journey of two journalists as they delve into the human trafficking network, facilitating the illegal entry of immigrants into Spain. The film

denounces the exploitation of immigrants and sheds light on the harsh realities faced by undocumented individuals. Opening with a meeting between the reporters, Sara and Javi, and a group of trafficked immigrants, the film portrays the immigrants' harrowing experiences and the exploitation they endured at the hands of their traffickers. Deeply affected by these accounts, the reporters solemnly pledge to assist the immigrants in any way they can. Their investigation uncovers a ruthless criminal network profiting from human trafficking. While the reporters succeed in exposing the ring, the triumph is tinged with sorrow. The trafficked immigrants remain undocumented, living in impoverished conditions and under constant threat of deportation, and their future in Spain is uncertain. The film explores the multifaceted issue of migration, shedding light on clandestine migration and the myriad dangers and obstacles faced by undocumented immigrants. Additionally, it serves as a poignant critique of the immigration policies of the European Union, which have significantly impeded the ability of undocumented immigrants to establish livelihoods in Europe.

*Catalunya über alles!* (Ramon Térmens, 2011), explores the experiences of three individuals from diverse backgrounds, all navigating the complexities of Catalonia amidst a period of financial crisis. The first story follows an ex-convict who is released from prison and struggles to reintegrate into society, as society shows no mercy for his crimes that concern pedophilia. The second story follows an unemployed Senegalese immigrant who secures a job as a debt collector, a role that involves publicly shaming debtors into payment. His employer recognizes the potency of a black man in this position and costumes the immigrant in local attire, sending him in pursuit of a local politician who campaigns on an anti-immigration platform. The third story follows a successful businessman who kills a thief who broke into his house. He will be like a Catalan hero who defends his family against the thief, who is an immigrant, marking society's reactions against the “other”. It is worth mentioning that the film's title is in German, translated as Catalonia, above all. The title is adapted from "Deutschland Über Alles," the national anthem of Germany from 1922 until the end of World War II and associated with the Nazi regime and the concept of German superiority, reflecting a sense of national pride and unity. In the context of the film, this title can be read as satirical about the supremacy of the Catalan ethnicity and their apparent lack of acceptance towards immigrants. Marta Boris Tarré notes that the structural division of the film into three different stories are parts of the same Catalan society, as revealed at the end of the film when characters from one infiltrate the other. The viewer realizes that the three stories belong to the same fictional level, which takes place in Catalonia, although it could represent any global society (2020, p. 297)

*14 Kilometros* (Gerardo Olivares, 2007) tells the story of three immigrant candidates from West Africa who make a dangerous journey across the Sahara Desert to reach Europe and become stranded in the desert with little hope of survival. Buba is a car mechanic living in Niger with his brother Mukela, their village is mired in poverty, and given Buba's talent as a football player, they decide to migrate to Spain, where they believe Buba might have a chance at playing as a professional. Unable to travel legally into Europe, Buba and Mukela pay a smuggler $1,000 each for passage in the back of a panel truck into Algeria, where they can cross to Morocco and then Spain. On the road, they meet Violeta, a teenage girl from Mali who is escaping an arranged marriage with a man she hates. During the trip to Algeria, the three begin to doubt the smuggler’s intentions, and their fears become a reality when they are dumped in the desert fourteen kilometers from their destination and told they are only a four-hour walk to reach. Still, without navigation tools, they find themselves lost in the sandy plains with no idea how to make their way to civilization. In the end, only one of them makes it to Spain.

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According to Jorge González del Pozo, the film attempts to eliminate the differences between considering the immigrant as a human being and not as a second-class citizen regardless of their origin. In this way, the film advocates understanding the nature of migratory flows and assimilating that it is a growing process in order to develop more appropriate attitudes towards the arrival of these people and to be able to establish parameters worthy of cordial coexistence in contemporary society (2011, p. 51). *14 Kilometres* deals with the journey of African immigration candidates before they can reach the shores of Spain and shows how smugglers and traffickers often exploit them. The film offers a glimpse into the lives of those who are willing to risk everything in search of a better life.

*La causa de Kripan* (Omer Oke, 2009*)* tells the story of Alhassane, a young man from Burkina Faso who lives in Kripan (a small town in the Basque Country), receives a call from his brother Ali, announcing that his parents-in-law have decided to circumcise their six-year-old daughter, Bintou. The ceremony is scheduled for next week. Alhassane only has six months left to adjust his status in Spain. He does not want his daughter to be mutilated, but if he travels to his country, he will not be able to return and throw away the dream for which he has fought so hard. The film explores complex immigration issues, such as policies, cultural identity, and gender inequality. As well as the hardship experienced by immigrants due to feelings of isolation and nostalgia in their new society while being separated from loved ones back home.

*Lo nunca visto/A Remarkable Day,* directed by Marina Seresesky (2019), is about the story of a small rural village in Spain threatened with extinction. The mayor's wife, Teresa, comes up with a plan to save the village by inviting a group of African immigrants to come and live there. The villagers initially resist the idea but eventually accept the immigrants as the only solution for the shrinking population. The film explores the themes of prejudice, rejection, and acceptance. It shows how people can overcome their fears and prejudices when they are given the opportunity to get to know someone from a different culture, the “other”. The film also touches on the aging and shrinking of Spanish society and offers a hopeful message about the future of immigration in the concept of win-win.

The image of immigrant women in Spanish films has evolved over time. In the early days of Spanish cinema, immigrant women were often underrepresented in mainstream cinema, and the focus was mainly on the male characters. However, there has been a shift towards more diverse and realistic portrayals of immigrant women in recent years, thanks to women filmmakers who have increasingly explored the subject of immigration, contributing to a growing body of immigration cinema that offers a unique perspective on this phenomenon. This shift in representation is essential for fostering empathy and understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by immigrant women in contemporary Spain. Furthermore, the work of these filmmakers encourages a more inclusive dialogue on immigration, which can lead to greater social and cultural integration. Female directors, such as Iciar Bollain and Chus Gutiérrez, have been the pioneers who created space for immigrant women's voices in Spanish cinema by highlighting their experiences. Their films challenge traditional gender roles and present diverse portrayals of immigrant women.

Icíar Bollaín, director of (*Hola, Estás sola/Hi, Are you Alone*, 1995), (*Flores de otro mundo/Flowers from Another World*, 1999), and (*En tierra extraña/In a Foreign Land,* 2014), one of the most remarkable women filmmakers who is considered the voice of women in Spanish cinema. Bollaín addresses the experiences of immigrant women bringing attention to the unique challenges faced by immigrant women. Through her films, she challenges national and ethnocentric traditions and approaches the drama of immigration in contemporary Europe.

Her film *Hola, Estás Sola* is the story of a journey and friendship between two twenty-year-old girls who have in common a past without affection, a present in which they have nothing to lose, and a future as open as they want. During their trip, they will share everything, including Olaf, a Russian immigrant who speaks only his language. While the film does not address immigration as the main topic, Bollaín emphasizes the multicultural character of the new Spanish society that, upon entering the European Union and the global economic system, has been forced to face the phenomenon of immigration. Martínez-Carazo argues, "The presence of the Russian immigrant character and the sequence in which an African couple tries to rent an apartment works in the same direction. In addition to insisting here on the newly released Spanish plurality, he takes advantage of the scene - a verbally abusive and dismissive owner with this couple - to denounce the intolerance of Spanish society in the presence of the "other"" (2002, p. 91).

*Flores de Otro Mundo/Flowers from Another World* (1999), Starts with a busload of women, most of them immigrants, brought to the small, traditional town of Santa Eulalia for a festival where the men in the town meeting. Their goal is to find wives as there is a lack of women in the town, and men seek immigrant women who come to obtain legal papers. "*Flores de Otro Mundo* fictionalizes the initiative of Caravans for women and single parties that some rural communities have implemented since the 1990s to promote rural repopulation." (Ballesteros, 2016, p. 258). The film focuses on two undocumented immigrants, Patricia, from the Dominican Republic, and Milady, a young Cuban lady, and another woman, Marirrosi from Bilbao, who is not an immigrant but is looking for love. Bollaín points out to the gender issue through Milady, and the immigration issue through Patricia, and the transition to a new Spain through Marirrosi. Ballesteros implies that "Icíar Bollain exposes the prejudices and intolerance towards immigrants in rural areas, but the family is presented as the core of interracial negotiation and the potential creation of a more tolerant and multi-ethnic society" (2016, p. 257). However, Latina women and their bodies are depicted as sexual commodities for the townsmen in exchange for marriage and gaining legal permits for the immigrants. Martín Cabrera comments, "This porno-tropical tradition, whose particular Spanish variant is explored in the film, is part of a broader tradition of European representations of black sexuality, which flourished as Europe modernized and expanded its colonial regime." (2010, p. 51). The film ends with the enthusiastic anticipation of the village's children for the upcoming bus, which will bring in more immigrant women. This highlights the younger generation's responsibility to rectify the previous generation's prejudiced and intolerant beliefs, ultimately paving the way for a more diverse and inclusive Spain. *Flores de Otro Mundo* was the first immigration film directed by a woman filmmaker. It reflects the woman's gaze behind the camera, addresses women immigrants, and provides a different perspective of Spanish immigration cinema and enriches it.

Icíar Bollaín directed another film (*En Tierra Extraña/In a Foreign Land*, 2014) that explores emigration through the eyes of three young Spanish emigrants living in Edinburgh, Scotland. The film offers a female perspective and sheds light on the struggles that come with starting new lives in a foreign country. Through the experiences of these immigrants, viewers gain insight into the challenges they face as they strive to establish themselves in a new society.

Chus Gutiérrez is considered one of the most influential and important representatives of the current generation of female film directors. Torres Hortelano acknowledges that "she is an immigrant who moved from Granada to Madrid at age eight. Encouraged by her mother, she traveled to London at 17 to learn English and later to New York, where she made her debut

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film, *Sublet* (1992). Produced by Fernando Trueba, the film narrates the adventures of a Spanish woman in a marginal area of New York. It is clear that Gutiérrez's life has been shaped by her migratory experiences" (2008, p. 198). Her films often tackle social issues like immigration, gender roles, and social class.

In her film *Alma Gitana/Gypsy Soul* (1995), she portrays a love story similar to Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare. The plot follows the relationship between Lucía, a gypsy girl living in a patriarchal household, and Antonio, a Payo (non-gypsy), aspiring flamenco dancer. Milagros López-Peláez Casellas interprets that "*Alma Gitana* presents itself as a conscious attempt to provide an overview of gypsies within contemporary Spanish society, particularly the role of gypsy women. Since the main narrative strategy in *Alma Gitana* is the gypsy component and the meeting of minority and hegemonic elements, this film could be read as a multiculturalist attempt at establishing tolerance to difference" (2014, p. 27). Alma Gitana's primary focus is on the ethnic and cultural diversity in Spain and delves into the gypsy culture and the role of gypsy women in contemporary Spanish society. Although the film doesn't directly address immigration, it provides valuable insights into the experiences of marginalized communities through its portrayal of immigrant characters in secondary roles.

In 2002, Chus Gutiérrez directed a new film, *Poniente*, that addressed the topic of immigration. The drama tells the story of Lucía, a young woman who returns to her hometown in southern Spain after her father's death. She inherits his tomato farm but soon finds herself confronted by the town's hostility towards illegal immigrants. Lucía decides to stand up for the immigrants, and her actions put her at odds with the townspeople. Torres Hortelano points out that "Poniente is often associated with immigration due to its loose connection to the events that took place in El Ejido in 2000. However, Chus Gutierrez clarifies that her film aims to have universal appeal and is not explicitly based on those incidents." (2008, p. 198). The film covers racism and xenophobia in the farms of Almería, where undocumented immigrants work in poor conditions. It explores the complex relationships between immigrants and locals and how prejudice can divide communities.

*Retorno a Hansala/Return to Hansala* is another film by Chus Gutiérrez, released in 2008, that addresses the clandestine migration from the perspective of the crossing and its circumstances. The film tells the story of Martín, a funeral home director in Algeciras, Spain, who is tasked with identifying the bodies of eleven young immigrants who have drowned while trying to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. One of the bodies has a paper with a phone number written in the pocket, which leads Martín to Leila, the sister of the deceased boy. Leila is desperate to bring her brother's body back to their village in Morocco, and she asks Martín for help. The two of them set off on a journey that will change their lives.

*Retorno a Hansala* explores the issue of immigration from the harsh realities of many immigration journeys, but it also offers a glimmer of hope. The relationship between Martín and Leila is one of the film's strongest assets. The two characters are from very different worlds, but they come to understand and respect each other throughout their journey. Blazar notes, "Leila and Martín's journey to Hansala shows that mutual acceptance and understanding is possible but also that leaving your familiar surroundings is sometimes the only way to gain clarity. The border crossing and road movie aspects of the film show the importance of place to identity but also how changes in the environment can create shifts in identity." (Blazar, 2020, p. 34)

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In recent years, filmmakers have increasingly examined the image of female immigrants. There has been a growing recognition of the importance of these characters in immigration cinema, as they offer a unique perspective on issues such as gender and identity. Traditionally, films portrayed immigrant women as submissive and domesticated characters. However, the female filmmakers' contribution to fighting these stereotypes and giving space to the female voice in films has paid off and opened the way to more portrayals.

Films such as *Cosas que dejé en La Habana*/*Things I Left in Havana* (Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, 1997)*, Agua con sal/Salted Water (*Pedro Pérez Rosado, 2005*)*, *El proximo oriente/ The Near East* (Fernando Colomo, 2007), Portrayed the female immigrant characters as often as a marginalized and vulnerable figure struggling to adapt to a new culture and social reality. These characters are frequently depicted as working-class women with limited opportunities for social mobility who must cross the challenges of language barriers, cultural differences, and xenophobia.

Through *Cosas que dejé en La Habana (1997)*, immigrant women took the lead as film protagonists on the Spanish screen for the first time (Zarco, 2017, p. 155). The film follows the story of three Cuban sisters who move to Madrid for a better life. Nena, Rosa, and Ludmila. Nena is the oldest sister and the most ambitious. She dreams of becoming a famous actress. Rosa is the middle sister and the most practical. She is determined to make a good life for herself and her sisters. Ludmila is the youngest sister and the most innocent. She is still trying to figure out who she is and what she wants. They are all beautiful and talented but also naive and inexperienced. They soon find themselves exploited by their aunt Marta, who forces them to work in her sweatshop without pay. and continually reminds them of their condition as "sin papeles"[13]. Through Aunt Marta, the director introduces the old generation of Cuban immigrants, showcasing an example of adaptation in Spanish society. The film highlights the problematic decision many immigrants face in leaving their mother culture behind and the personal struggles that come with working hard to integrate into a new society, as exemplified by Aunt Marta's experiences in the Spanish middle class. Throughout the film, Marta continually rejects folk aspects of Cuban culture. Barrow adds, "she dresses and combs her hair elegantly, imitates Madrid's accent, and criticizes her homeland in the hope that she will be accepted as a Spanish marked by the ideas of a supposedly superior culture, progress, and civilization of the peninsula" (Barrow, 2009, p. 120). Peter Wade (2004) argues that "in contrast to the three sisters, the aunt seems to despise her native nation, which she sees as poorly defined in socio-cultural and economic terms. Consequently, many years ago, she adopted the identity of a well-to-do Spanish woman, and she abandoned her Cuban identity to feel more integrated in her new environment" The director provides a colonial and nostalgic perspective on the Cuban exile. He presents a poignant view of the mixed experience of exile and immigration for Cubans living in Spain through two generations. *Cosas que dejé en La Habana* depicts various stereotypes about Cuban people, familiar to Spanish viewers, which are presented and then dismantled.

*Agua con Sal* (Pedro Pérez Rosado, 2005) narrates the journey of a young Cuban girl named Olga, who arrives in Spain with a scholarship and is convinced she has landed the chance of a lifetime. Once the scholarship ends, she suddenly becomes an illegal immigrant. Suffering the brunt of marginalization and is unable to return home, having to get by as she can. One day, she meets Mari Jo, a young girl from a poor Valencian suburb, born into a family with nothing but problems. Both end up working illegally in a furniture factory where they earn three times less

[13] Undocumented

than the minimum legal salary. Olga has to find other jobs in order to make enough money to send back home to her mother, who cares for her child.

The film depicts the legal and illegal conditions of living as an immigrant in Spain. Being in legal status in Spain provides better opportunities and protection, whereas being an undocumented immigrant can leave one susceptible to exploitation, vulnerability, and the possibility of being deported. Zarco states that "at the beginning of the film, Olga is shown to be very integrated into Spanish society, in the second part, we see how the young woman goes from integration when she has a legal status to (dis)integration when her condition is that of an illegal one, that is when it goes the underground world" (2017, p. 157). Agua con Sal is a compelling film depicting the marginal lives of immigrants. It shows the harsh realities of life for undocumented immigrants, who are often forced to live in poverty and work in dangerous and exploitative conditions and also touches on exploitation in the work environment.

*El Próximo Oriente*/*The Near East* (Fernando Colomo, 2006) depicts the story of Cain, a shy and overweight butcher who lives in the Madrid multicultural neighborhood of Lavapiés, surrounded by Moroccan, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Senegalese, Bulgarian, and Peruvian immigrants... He has a womanizer brother called Abel, who has everything Cain envies. He is handsome, seductive, married to a beautiful woman, and the father of two precious twin girls. One day, Cain discovers that Abel has an affair with Aicha, an attractive young neighbor, the daughter of Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh, and she is pregnant. Cain agrees to marry her as a “false marriage” to save the situation. Through the process of this false marriage, Cain comes to know about the life and culture of this Bengal family. The two end up falling in love and living together, raising the child as their own.

The film thoroughly examines the intricacies of cross-cultural interactions, focusing on diversity and cultural integration. It delves into various perspectives on subjects like language, religion, and identity within the broader framework of migration in Spain. Ana Corbalán explains that "El próximo Oriente can be interpreted as a production that prompts to accept the cultural plurality that defines contemporary Spain, whose national identity is in a continuous process of transformation and redefinition as a result of interaction and dialogue with other cultures and societies. A scene that visualizes the wedding between the protagonists Cain and Aisha symbolizes this intercultural dialogue when the viewers see an Islamic Wedding on a Spanish patio with Indian costumes and Peruvian musicians, where Muslims and Christians live and coexist in perfect harmony. In this way, Colomo suggests that hybrid contact between different cross-cultural subjectivities is possible and positive in the era of globalization." (2013, p. 108)

It may be remarked that the film was released in 2006, a time when Europe was facing a growing wave of Islamophobia, reflected by a series of terrorist attacks targeting European capitals, just two years after the 11M attacks. *El próximo Oriente* addresses the need for tolerance and understanding for Muslim immigrants and their communities to avoid generalization and stereotypes.

Films about female immigrants often depict their challenges in finding employment. These women often have no choice but to take on low-paying, undervalued jobs just to support themselves and their families. Moreover, they face discrimination from their employers and customers. Moreover, female immigrants are more likely to be unemployed and live in poverty, which makes them more vulnerable to exploitation. The lack of access to education and healthcare also poses a significant challenge for them in overcoming such circumstances.

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Female immigrants in Spanish cinema are often portrayed as victims of sexual exploitation, which reflects the real life experiences of many vulnerable women who come to Spain hoping for a better life. These films often depict these women as weak and exploited by their employers, individuals, and criminal organizations. Due to their lack of financial resources and limited options, these characters are often forced into the sex trade. Many films showcase the harsh realities of female immigrant sexual exploitation, portraying their bodies as commodities. These women often find themselves in precarious situations due to a lack of legal status, economic hardships, and language barriers. In the mid-2000s immigration cinema start addressing this topic and gives the voice to this vulnerable category of immigrants.

Starting with *Princesas/Princesses* (Fernando León de Aranoa, 2005), a drama film follows two prostitutes in Madrid who are often marginalized and ignored by society and delves into their stories and struggles. Caye is a Spanish middle-aged woman who has been working as a prostitute for many years, she is struggling to make ends meet and is often treated poorly by her clients. Zulema is an illegal immigrant from the Dominican Republic, she is eager to make money to send back to her family, but the reality of prostitution quickly disillusions her. The two women meet when Caye finds Zulema badly beaten by a client. She is a victim of repeated abuse symbolically exercised by a state officer. He exploits Zulema with promises to provide her with legal permit to adjust her status. Since she is undocumented, she can neither escape from him nor fight. Caye takes Zulema to the hospital and helps her to recover. The two women form a bond over their shared experiences and their common goal of finding a better life. The film displays the harsh realities of the sex work industry, and the challenges faced by those who have chosen this profession for survival or were driven by circumstances. It also critiques Spanish society's attitudes toward sex work, which is often stigmatized and marginalized. *Princesas* sheds light on the marginalized existence of these women and challenges societal prejudices and stereotypes.

*Evelyn* (Isabel de Ocampo, 2011) tells the story of Evelyn, a young immigrant woman from Peru who is tricked into prostitution in Spain. The film is set in Madrid and explores the issue of human trafficking. Evelyn is lured to Spain with the promise of a job as a waitress in a restaurant, but she is forced into prostitution in a road club. She is beaten and abused by her pimp, and she is constantly in fear for her life. Seijas Costa and González Corté state that "the film portrays in depth the drama of the immigrants who find themselves imprisoned and exploited by prostitution networks." (2015, p. 73).

In the same pattern *La venta del paraíso/The Sale of Paradise* (Emilio Ruiz Barrachina, 2012) conveys the story of Aura María, a young and vulnerable Mexican woman who embarks on a journey to Spain in search of a better life with a false promise of finding paradise. However, her dreams are shattered when she falls victim to an agency that preys on immigrants by luring them with false promises and trapping them in Spain. Upon arriving in Madrid, Aura realizes she has been scammed and finds herself stranded with no means to return home. She is forced to work as a Hot Call service in a seedy hotel owned by a mysterious man in return of staying there, where she encounters other immigrants in similar situations. With no way to afford a return ticket, the immigrants intentionally commit minor crimes against private property to earn a free return ticket to their respective countries, which leads to deportation.

Spanish cinema has depicted numerous female immigrant characters, such as domestic workers, undocumented, and sexually exploited. Thus, including the female immigrant narrative in Spanish cinema contributes to expanding the limited portrayals of the migrant experience while exploring gender roles. Focusing on this narrative perspective in Spanish

cinema can provide a comprehensive view and critical insights into the complications of gender identity and migration. Nevertheless, the images given are limited to vulnerable women and challenging experiences, unlike the reality that immigrant women excelled, achieved wide success in various fields, and overcame the obstacle of integration in the host country.

Only few films portray Latin American male immigrant characters which most notably *En la Puta Calle/Hitting Bottom* (Enrique Gabriel,1997) tells the story of Juan, a jobless electrician, decides to leave behind his family and home in northern Spain to seek employment in Madrid. Despite his best attempts and draining his savings, he finds himself in the degrading position of having to sleep on the streets and, to his dismay, accepting help from an undocumented Caribbean immigrant, Andy, which is difficult due to his underlying negative stereotypes towards immigrants. The two men form a bond over their shared experiences of poverty and discrimination, struggling to survive through the underworld of the large city of Madrid. At first, Juan harbored negative feelings towards the immigrant. However, as he spent more time with him, he began to understand and appreciate him, and his initial biases and stereotypes were challenged and changed. Del Pozo questions, “does the film want to make us see a supposed evolution of Juan from a racist position, manifested in his attitudes and comments, to an apparent defense or humanization of the “other”? Throughout the film, he meets African and Latin American immigrants who will help him in one way or another, causing him to question his own assumptions and, therefore, those of the Spanish society that he represents.” (2001, p. 183)

The images of Latin American immigrants in Spanish films are often negative. Male characters are often portrayed as criminals, drug dealers, or gang members. Female characters are often portrayed as sex workers or domestic workers. These stereotypes perpetuate negative images of Latin Americans and contribute to discrimination and prejudice in Spanish society. According to Dias Pereira (2018), in 48 films between 1996 - 2008 contain Latin American immigrant characters, the vast majority working in the services sector, such as workers in the hospitality area. However, the job with the highest representation is prostitution by 18 characters.

The portrayal of North Africans, Maghrebians, and Moroccans particularly, in Spanish films has undergone significant transformations that reflect evolving societal attitudes and political contexts. In the past, these characters were often depicted through stereotypes and exoticized lenses, perpetuating orientalist narratives that reduced them to the "other." These portrayals reinforced the dominant Spanish self-image as superior and civilized while presenting North Africans as backward, dangerous, and culturally inferior. It is worth mentioning that there is a long history of tension between Spain and Morocco, dating back to the 8th century when the "Moros" in English, "Moors"[14], a Muslim people from North Africa conquered the Iberian Peninsula. The Moors ruled Spain for over 700 years, and their legacy can still be seen in many aspects of Spanish culture and architectural heritage. In the last three decades, the increase of Moroccan immigrants to Spain has led to a backlash against them, who are often seen as a threat to Spanish culture and identity. Some Spaniards fear that the growing presence of Moroccan immigrants will lead to the return of the "moors". According to Flesler “this imaginary Moor has little to do with the real lives of Berbers and Arabs in medieval Al-Andalus or Moroccans today. However, these fictional representations have an immense

[14] The term Moor is an exonym first used by Christian Europeans to designate the Muslim populations of the Maghreb, Al-Andalus (Iberian Peninsula), Sicily and Malta during the Middle Ages. (Ross Brann, 2010. Al-Andalus, Sepharad and Medieval Iberia)

popular appeal, and they have multiplied in the Spanish cultural industry, coinciding with the numerical increase of Moroccan immigrants in Spain in the last twenty years." (2008, p. 196). However, in recent decades, Spanish filmmakers have addressed these stereotypes and portrayed North African immigrants with multidimensional identities. This shift can be attributed to various factors, including increased cultural awareness, immigration patterns, and the recognition of North African communities within Spanish society. As a result, the portrayal of North Africans in Spanish films has become more represented and diverse. These films now include a more comprehensive range of narratives, such as stories of immigration journeys, integration, and cross-cultural encounters. However, it is essential to note that negative stereotypes and orientalist tropes persist in some instances. Here are the most notable films of these portrayals:

*Susanna* (Antonio Chavarrías, 1996) tells the story of Susanna, a young Spanish woman who falls in love with Said, a Moroccan immigrant who works as a butcher in the neighborhood. Their relationship is met with hostility from both Susanna's family and Said's community. A few weeks before getting married, Susanna is having an affair with Alex, her ex-boyfriend, who has just been released from prison. The film culminates in Susanna's brutal murder by Said when he discovers her affair. Susanna is one of the films that contain inter-racial relationships between a Spanish woman and an immigrant man in their stories. Santaolalla argues that "this pairing can be seen as a mere reflection of reality: the majority of North African residents in Spain are single men. On the other hand, it may be a plot device aimed at creating tension identified with the possible "contamination" of the white woman and the anxiety created by the direct effect of such a relationship on the "racial" constitution of the country" (2005, p. 136).

*Saïd* (Llorenç Soler, 1999) is about a young Moroccan man convinced that life in Europe will be wonderful. The small boat in which he crosses the strait of Gibraltar is the first thing that disappoints him, and when he arrives in Barcelona, he realizes that the undocumented immigrant's life is not as easy as one may think. Only music and Anna will help him in the struggle against rejection, contempt, and difficult work conditions. But a violent encounter with some skinheads New-Nazi group drastically changes everything. Saïd is forced to choose between pursuing the struggle to fulfill the dream that led him to immigrate and which, thanks to Anna's support, is now beginning to look possible, or acting according to his conscience and testifying against the skinheads, which would bring to light his illegal status and lead to immediate deportation.

*Saïd* can be considered the first Spanish film that portrays a North African immigrant, particularly a Moroccan character, which leads the narrative and lets the Spanish audiences hear his story and voice. Santaolalla (2005) implies that the effort to build Saïd's character gives, provides a human and credible portrait that provides access not only to their realities but also, occasionally, to their dreams and fantasies.

The films *Susanna*, and *Saïd,* in addition to *El Faro* (Manuel Balaguer, 1998), share a commonality: the immigrant character hails from Morocco, and they get involved in a romantic relationship with a local Spanish girl. However, unlike typical romantic narratives where couples face challenges before achieving a happy ending, these three stories depict relationships that do not endure.

*Un novio para Yasmina/A fiance for Yasmina* (Irene Cardona, 2008). Yasmina is an educated and attractive young Moroccan who has come to Spain intending to continue her university studies. She lives in a town in Extremadura with her brother, Abdel, and other

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Moroccans who work in agriculture. She spends most of her time in a social center teaching Spanish language to Moroccan immigrants. She is about to finish her studies and loses her permit. Therefore, she starts looking for a solution to solve this problem. Yasmina is dating Javi, a young municipal police officer. The relationship works well until she raises the question of marriage. Javi begins to mistrust her and, feeling used, refuses to marry her.

The portrayal of the Moroccan community in Extremadura is one of the film's most striking aspects. It showcases how men work in the farms and spend the spare time playing board games, while women go to the center to learn Spanish language and meet up to gossip. Most of the immigrants are undocumented and live in marginal are of the town in a miserable condition. The film also sheds light on immigrants' struggles in adjusting their immigration status. While some immigrants explore different options, Yasmina resorts to marriage to obtain residency.

*A Escondidas/Hidden Away (Mikel Rueda, 2014)* delves into the struggles of minor undocumented immigrants face in Spain. The main character, Ibrahim, is a Moroccan immigrant living in Spain without legal documentation. Despite falling in love with Rafa, a Spanish boy, their relationship is complicated due to Ibra's undocumented status and the looming possibility of deportation, besides the challenges they face due the fact of being in same-sex relationship. The film offers a portrayal of the obstacles undocumented minor immigrants face and highlights the impact that the fear of deportation can have on their lives. Additionally, the film addresses the sexual orientation of immigrants, and the dual discrimination can face.

*Seis días corrientes/The Odd-Job Men* (Neus Ballús, 2021) is a fiction-documentary that portrays the daily lives of three workers employed at a small plumbing and electricity company located on the outskirts of Barcelona. The film's emphasis on the ordinary lives of its characters creates a feeling of authenticity and realism. Moha is a young Moroccan immigrant who is on a one-week trial period, starts working with Valero, a middle-aged white man who has been with the company for a long time and Pep, a retired man working part-time. The film is structured into six chapters, representing the six days of Moha's trial job and his coworkers' reactions from day one, where tension arises. Valero initially mistreats Moha due to his prejudices toward immigrants, this leads Moha to experience racism and discrimination at work. However, as they spend time working together over the following days, they get to know each other better. Valero eventually overcomes his prejudices and shows acceptance towards Moha, the "other".

The immigrant population in Spain is widely represented in the diverse range of characters portrayed in Spanish films, with a notable focus on immigrants from Sub-Saharan and North Africa, as well as Latin America. Moreover, there are films that delve into the stories of smaller immigrant communities, such as those from Asia and Eastern Europe. Films such as *Hola, estás Sola (*Icíar Bollaín*, 1995), El Sudor de los Ruiseñores (Juan Manuel Cotelo, 1998), Vasil* (Avelina Prat, 2022) portray immigrants from East Europe, while *Pidele Cuentas al Rey* (José Antonio Quirós, 1999) depicts an immigrant character from Portugal. South Asian immigrants, mainly from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, are also represented in Spanish films, such as *Rastres de Sandal* (María Ripoll, 2014), *Masala* (Salvador Calvo, 2007), *El Proximo Oriente* (Fernando Colomo, 2006), *Tomándote* (Isabel Gardela, 2000). However, these films will be analyzed in the next chapter.

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# CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, we will analyze the findings and results of 39 Spanish films released from 1990 to 2022 that revolve around immigration topics or include immigrant characters. These films feature a total of 149 immigrant characters segmented into three categories: Protagonists, supportive, and minor roles. The findings will be divided into two major sections: Quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis. This will help us answer the main research question and sub-questions.

In the first section, we delve into the findings derived from quantitative content analysis of immigration films, operating at two distinct yet interconnected levels: films and characters. These findings will be presented and displayed through charts and graphs with comments.

At the film level, we meticulously examine various aspects, including the distribution of films across genres, the temporal evolution depicted through the number of films by release year, the thematic focus of plots, the diversity of film settings, and the exploration of issues such as xenophobia, integration, and cultural diversity. Additionally, we critically assess the presence and frequency of thematic keywords, scrutinizing the depictions of stereotypes and their impacts, the interactions of immigrant characters, the conflicts they encounter, the resolutions presented, and the implicit messages embedded within the narratives. This comprehensive approach aims to provide a precise and data-driven understanding of the Spanish immigration cinematic landscape.

Transitioning to the character level, our analysis delves into two essential components: Characteristics and stereotypes of the immigrant portrayals. In the first segment, we explore the characters' demographics, investigating gender distribution, age groups, geographical origins, and their roles within the narratives, distinguishing between protagonist, supportive, and minor roles. Furthermore, we delve into the linguistic dimension, examining the languages spoken by characters and recognizing the potential linguistic complexities that unfold within immigration films. In the subsequent segment, we scrutinize the stereotypes associated with immigrant portrayals. This includes an in-depth analysis of socioeconomic factors, job domains, marital and legal statuses, traits, and social interactions. We also explore the broader scope of overall behavior, acculturation processes, and intellectual representations. Through this dual-layered examination at the character level, we aim to reveal the tapestry of immigrant characters in Spanish cinema, shedding light on the complexities of their portrayals and the underlying stereotypes that may shape audience perceptions through cultivation.

In the second section, our analysis results take a qualitative turn as we employ meticulous qualitative content analysis to delve deeper into immigration films. This approach allows us to find underlying themes and detect frequent patterns within cinematic narratives. By subjecting the films to qualitative analysis, we aim to extract the subtleties and complexities that may not be readily apparent through quantitative measures alone. Our objective is to unravel the tapestry of each story, as well as the character dynamics and cultural traces that contribute to the overall

narrative of immigration films. Following this analysis, we will adeptly group the film sample based on the emergent themes, providing a comprehensive and insightful framework for understanding the varied dimensions of immigration portrayed in cinema. This qualitative exploration aims to uncover layers of meaning, facilitating a more profound comprehension of the narratives woven into the cinematic depiction of immigration. The following are the three general themes that include different topics and related to research questions:

1) Immigrants confronting intolerance and violence theme, which explores the struggles of immigrants against discrimination and oppression in cinema, including Neo-Nazis attacks and police abuses, as well as the rise of xenophobia and hate crimes. Notable films include *Bwana, Taxi, Saïd, Salvajes,* and *Poniente.*
2) Intersections of Otherness: Local-Immigrant relationship theme explores the significance of immigrant-local friendship and romantic relationships amidst cultural differences. It looks at the comparison between parallel migration, internal and external. It also explores the complications and obstacles faced by immigrant-local couples from different cultural backgrounds. Films address these topics, such as *En La Puta Calle, El Sudor de los Ruiseñores, El Traje, Princesas, Agua con Sal, A Escondidas,* and *Vasil*.
3) Immigrant journeys and fleeting dreams: Assimilation, Integration, and Social Rejection theme, which centers around the personal struggles, hopes, and shattered dreams of immigrants in their migratory journey experiences in Spain from the arrival to the film's conclusions. Films to be analyzed are *Las cartas de Alou, Cosas que dejé en La Habana, Naufragio, Evelyn, La venta del paraíso, Un Novio Para Yasmina, El Dios de Madera, Lo Nunca Visto, and Seis Días Corrientes,* and *Vasil.*

## 4.1 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS FINDINGS

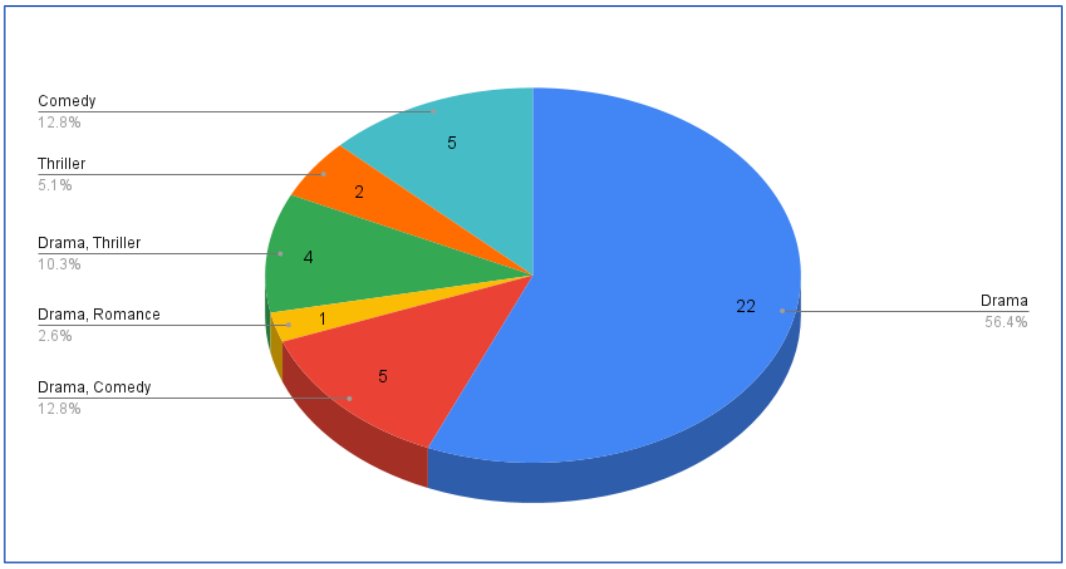
### 4.1.1 Film Level

#### 4.1.1.1 Immigration Films Characteristics

The genre distribution reveals insights in the examined sample of 39 Spanish immigration films. Drama emerges as the predominant genre, encompassing 56.4% (n=22). This majority suggests a strong inclination towards narratives that explore diverse, complex, and realistic themes. The prevalence of drama might be indicative of the filmmakers' choice to match the topics of immigration experience. Comedy follows closely, constituting 12.8% (n=5) of the sample. The parallel presence of drama comedy films implies a desire to blend humor with compelling narratives. This dual approach may be a strategic move to meet a broad audience, appealing to those who enjoy laughter and storytelling depth. The combination of drama and comedy can offer a diverse range of emotional experiences for viewers. Thrillers and drama thrillers take the third position with 15.4% (n=2+4); this implies filmmakers have less interest in employing suspenseful, tense, and exciting narratives to address immigration. Drama romance is the least popular genre, with only 2.6% representation, indicating a limited interest in romantic stories in immigration-focused films.

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**Figure 3: Film Genre**

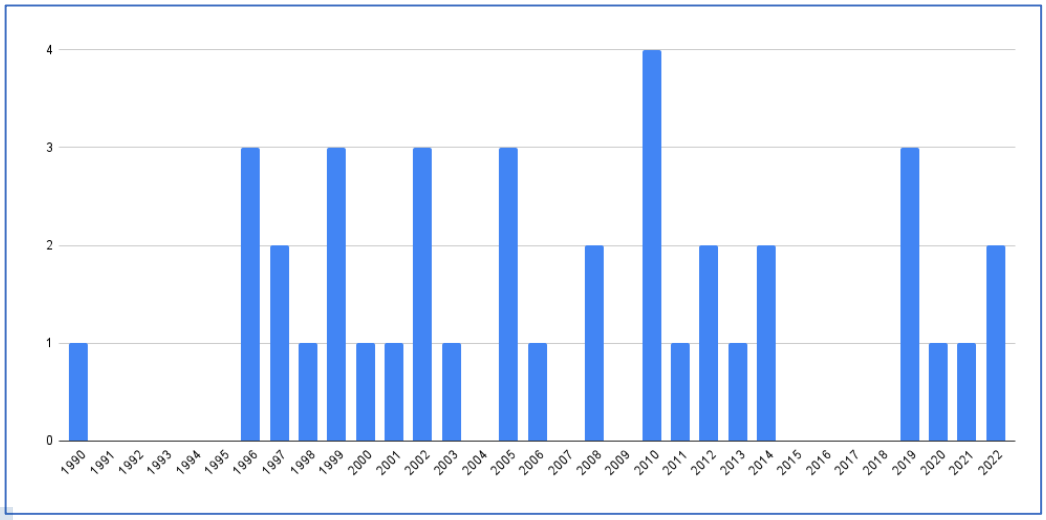



Source: Own elaboration

The dominance of drama and comedy in 39 films is evident, accounting for 82% of the total. This indicates a strong inclination toward narratives that either delve into dramatic and realistic plots of immigrant experiences or use comedy narratives to touch on immigrants' struggles. The combined influence of these two genres on most films, encompassing 32 out of 39, underscores their significance in shaping the storytelling landscape within the Spanish immigration cinema.

The chart below depicts the number of immigration films released in Spain from 1990 to 2022, revealing several noteworthy trends and patterns. It provides insights into the dynamic relationship between cinema and migration in Spain, showcasing both a general upward trend in the number of films and specific peaks corresponding to significant socioeconomic events.

**Figure 4: Number of Films by Release Year**



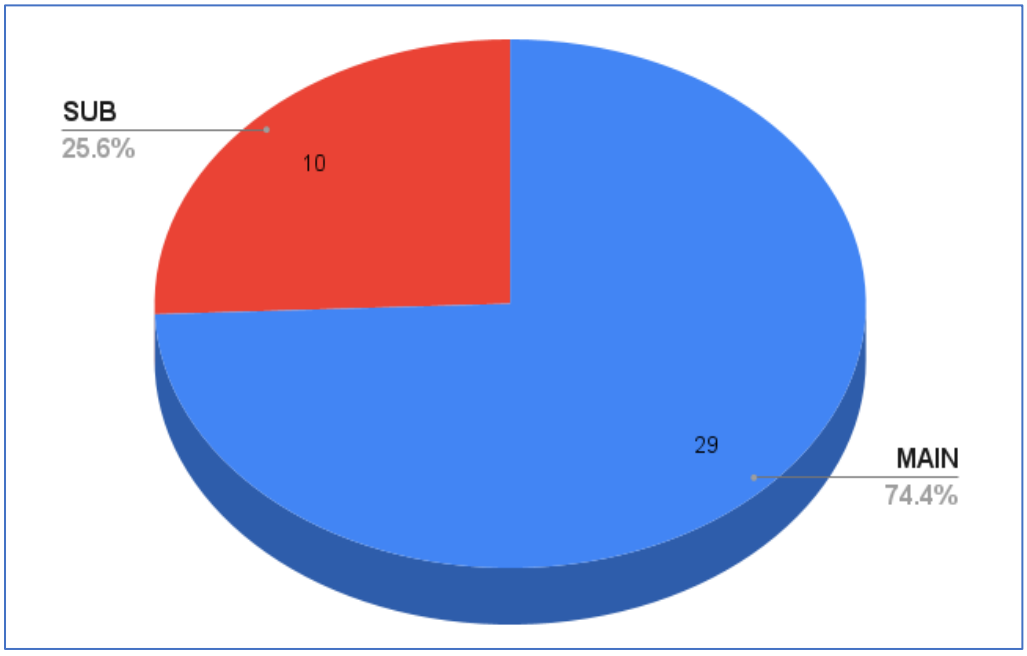

Source: Own elaboration

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Firstly, there was an overall discernible increase in the number of immigration-themed films from 1996 to 2014. This upward trajectory suggests a growing interest, awareness, or societal concern regarding migration issues in Spain and the broader European context during this period. Filmmakers may have been motivated to explore and depict the complexities of immigration, reflecting a desire to engage with and shed light on the evolving dynamics surrounding immigration. A notable peak in the graph occurred in 2010, with four films released. This spike aligns with the global financial crisis, significantly impacting Spain and other nations. The correlation between the economic downturn and the surge in immigration films could indicate a heightened societal focus on immigration issues during economic uncertainty. The crisis may have influenced immigration patterns, policies, or public perceptions, prompting filmmakers to address and reflect on these socioeconomic challenges through their work.

Moreover, the graphic illustrates some variability in the number of films released about migration in other years, ranging from 1 to 3. This fluctuation suggests the diverse, complex, and often unpredictable nature of immigration topics and trends in Spain. Filmmakers may have been responsive to shifts in public discourse, policy changes, or evolving perspectives on immigration, resulting in a varied cinematic exploration of migration themes throughout the years.

**Figure 5: Immigration Films Plot Focus**




Source: Own elaboration

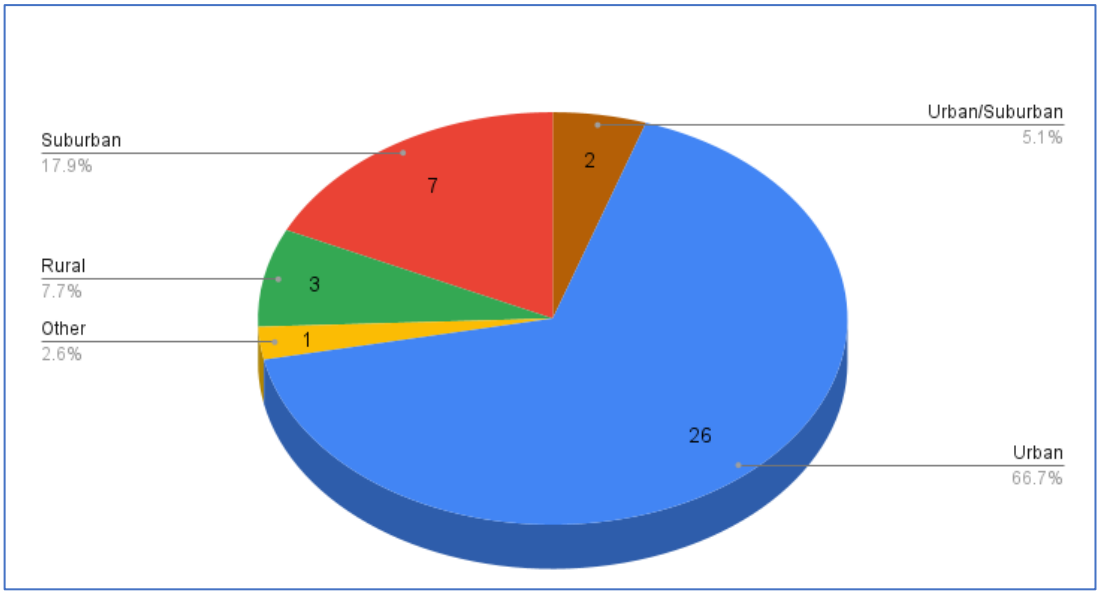
The quantitative data provides a comprehensive analysis of plot focus in a sample of 39 Spanish films dealing with migration. The key distinctions lie in whether the immigration topic takes a main plot or subplot role in the films. The findings derived that most Spanish films addressing the immigration phenomenon adopt a main plot focus, constituting 74.4% (n=29); this prevalent narrative choice among filmmakers reveals a deliberate emphasis on migration as the central theme, allowing exploration of immigrant characters' experiences, challenges, and opportunities. Additionally, some films adopt a distinctive approach by depicting immigration as a driving force in the plot from the perspective of Spanish locals, with immigrant characters

playing a supportive role only, as seen in films such as *Salvajes* (2001) and *Poniente* (2002). Conversely, certain films within the sample, like *Taxi* (1996), maintain a focus on immigration without including immigrant characters in the narrative. Despite this variation, the overarching plot focus signifies the filmmakers' conscious effort to delve into the cultural and social dimensions of immigration. This choice provides audiences with a more profound examination of the impact of migration, not only on individual characters but also on society as a whole.

In contrast, a minority of films, totaling 25.6% (n=10), exhibit a subplot focus. This implies that migration serves as a secondary or peripheral element in the plot of these films, with the primary focus directed toward other themes or topics. In these instances, immigration functions as a side story or subplot, giving hints and reminders to audiences about immigration, as seen in the films *Pidele cuentas al Rey, Ismael,* and *Seis días Corrientes.*

The discernible trend observed in the representation of immigrant characters in Spanish films that address various narratives suggests an augmented awareness among filmmakers regarding the phenomenon of immigration and the social diversity it covers within Spain. This reflects a mindful effort to portray the multifaceted aspects of immigration experiences authentically, which has resulted in the evolution of a comprehensive portrayal of immigrants.

**Figure 6: Immigration Film Settings**




Source: Own elaboration

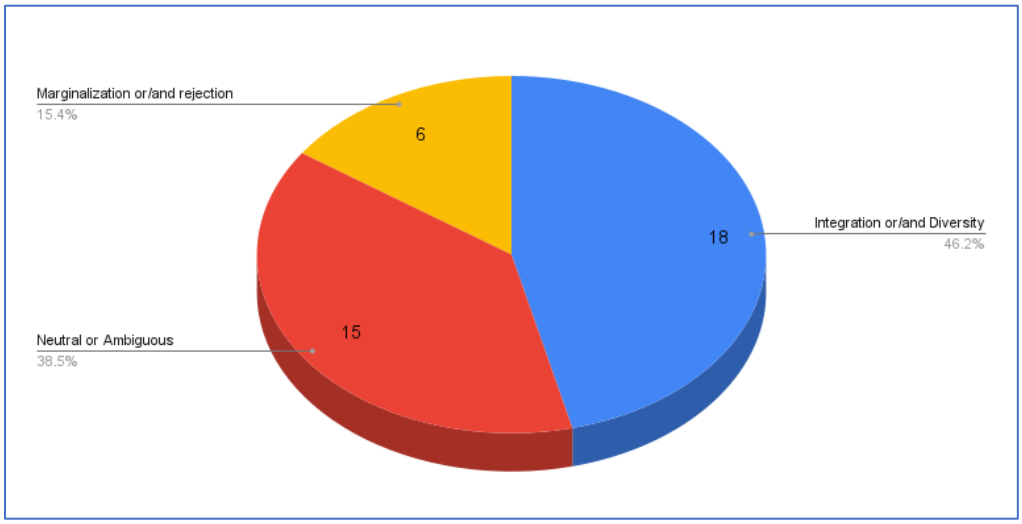
The film's setting is divided into urban, suburban, and rural settings. Urban means that the film takes place in a city or a large town. Suburban means the film takes place in a smaller town or a residential area near a city. Rural means that the film takes place in the countryside or a village.

The data shows that most films are set in urban settings 66.7% (n=26); this indicates that these films depict the immigration experience of the urban environment, such as the opportunities, challenges, interactions with natives, and conflicts that immigrants encounter in the city. It is worth noting that Madrid and Barcelona represent the majority of cities in which narratives take place, followed by Bilbao, Valencia, and Palma de Mallorca. Suburban is the place where 18.4% (n=7) are set, besides two films that are set between urban and suburban. Rural by 7.9% (n=3), settings.

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These films explore the migration experience concerning the suburban or rural environment, such as the integration, adaptation, isolation, or identity issues that immigrants face in smaller or more remote communities, mainly in Andalucia and Catalonia regions, where many farms welcome undocumented immigrants for agriculture jobs.

**Figure 7: Film Resolution and Implicit Messages**




Source: Own elaboration

This graph defines the resolution and implicit messages encapsulated within each film within the sampled dataset. The focus revolves around discerning themes related to integration and/or diversity, marginalization and/or rejection, and instances categorized as neutral or ambiguous.

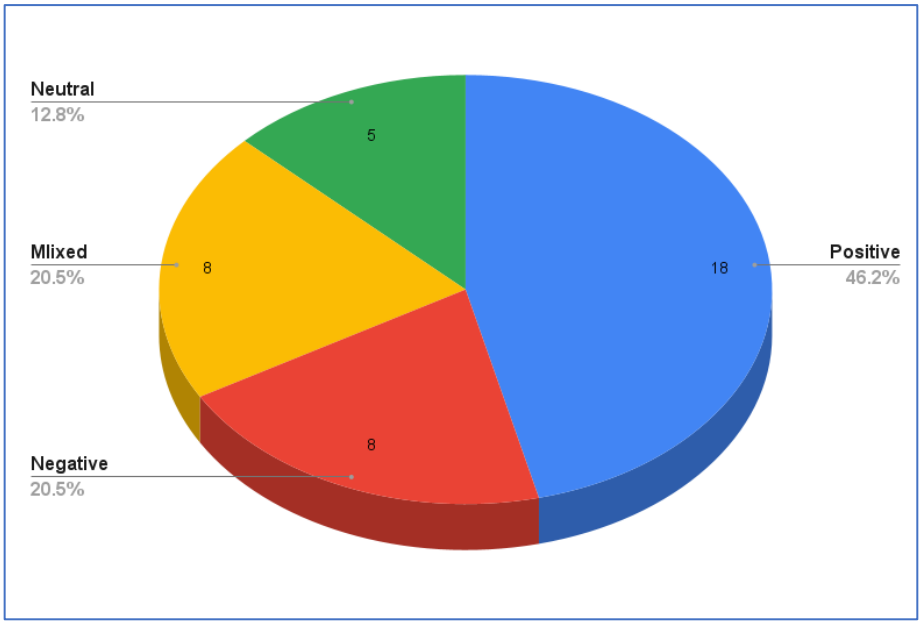
Notably, a significant portion of the films, constituting 46.2% (n=18), portray narratives emphasizing integration and diversity. In contrast, a smaller percentage, precisely 15.4% (n=6), conveys messages centered around the themes of marginalization and rejection. The remaining 38.5% (n=15) of the sample represents films that exhibit neutral or ambiguous messaging, mainly when immigration takes in subplot narratives. This distribution can signify an overall favorable inclination towards positive representations of immigrants within the realm of Spanish cinema and underscores the diverse narratives told by filmmakers in this context.

#### 4.1.1.2 Stereotypes of the Immigrant Portrayal

The immigrant characters portrayals analysis shows that almost half of the immigrant characters, 46.2% (n=18), are portrayed in a positive way, meaning that they are shown as sympathetic, integrated, or contributing to Spanish society. This may reflect the influence of some Spanish filmmakers who have tried to challenge the stereotypes and prejudices about immigrants. Negative portrayals represent one-fifth of the immigrant characters 20.5% (n=8); they are portrayed negatively, meaning that they are shown as criminal, violent, or threatening to the Spanish society. This may reinforce the influence of some Spanish media and political discourses that have depicted immigration as a problem or a threat. While mixed portrayals take another one-fifth of the immigrant characters, 20.5% (n=8), indicating that they are shown as having both positive and negative traits or experiences. Neutral portrayals are the smallest portion of the immigrant characters at 12.8% (n=5); this mostly reflects the films that used immigration as a minor element in the narratives.

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**Figure 8: Immigrant Characters Portrayals**

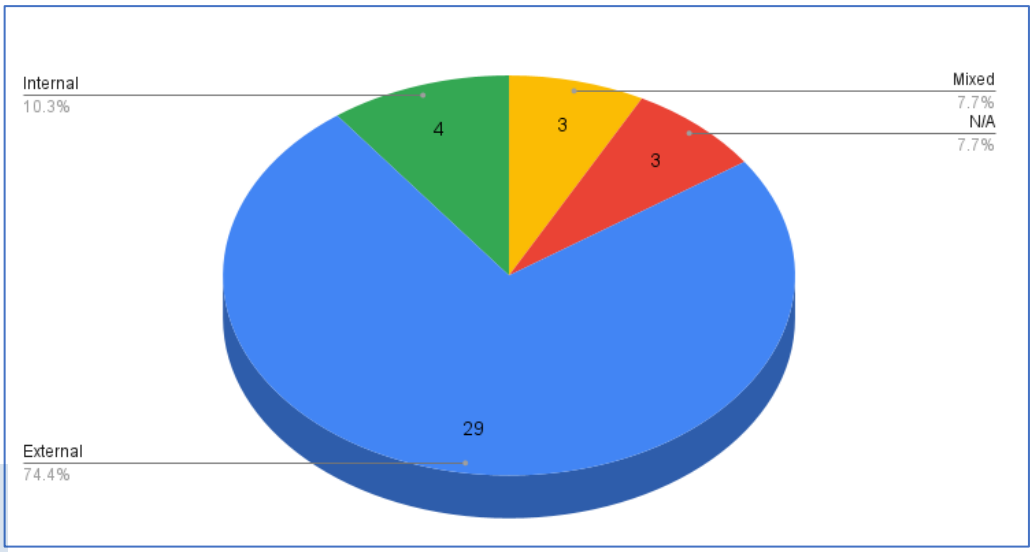



Source: Own elaboration

This overall positive depiction of immigrant characters is separate from the narrative and plot evaluation. However, further qualitative analysis will try to prove this.

In films, immigrant character conflict is presented as external, internal, and mixed. Data demonstrates that most immigrant characters, 74.4% (n=29), have external conflicts, implying that they face challenges and obstacles from the outside world, such as discrimination, violence, or legal issues. This may reflect the reality of many immigrants in Spain who struggle to integrate and adapt to a new society and culture. Internal conflicts are represented by a small portion of the immigrant characters, 10.3% (n=4), which means they deal with psychological or emotional issues, such as identity, homesickness, self-esteem, or trauma. We can see this conflict in filmmakers who have tried to explore immigrants' inner lives and feelings in their films, such as *Un Novio para Yasmina* and *Naufragio.*

**Figure 9: Immigrant Character Conflict: External, Internal, or Mixed**

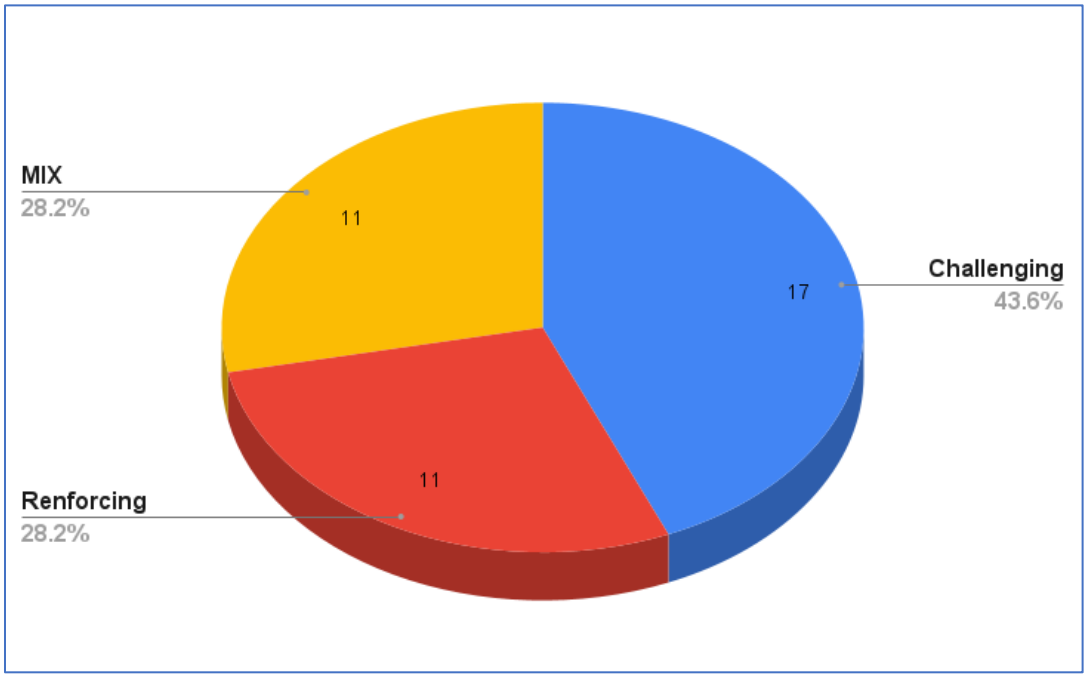



Source: Own elaboration

The chart reveals that an even smaller portion of the immigrant characters, 7.7% (n=3), have mixed external and internal conflicts, such as *Las Cartas de Alou* and *Evelyn*. By the same proportions, another small section is labeled as not available. Some immigrant characters are portrayed without conflicts, or the conflict is unclear or unknown, like in *Hola, Estas Sola*, and *Rastros de sándalo*, where immigrants take minor roles or just in backgrounds.

Stereotype impact in films shows that the majority of Spanish immigration films challenge negative stereotypes of immigrants, which make up 43.6% (n=17) of the sample. This means that the impact of stereotypes in the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema is mostly positive, with the most frequent portrayal challenging stereotypes. Reinforcing stereotypes represent 28.2% (n=11) of the sample, which signifies that more than a quarter of films depict immigrants negatively, leading to reinforcing stereotypes. While an equal rate of 28.2% (n=11) presents a combination of both reinforcing and challenging stereotypes in the same narratives when the portrayal of immigrants contains both positive depiction and negative at the same time, like the case in *Un Novio para Yasmina* (2008), the depiction of Moroccan characters challenges stereotypes by highlighting their positive contributions to the community and their efforts to improve themselves by learning the local language. The protagonist, Yasmina, is particularly notable as she is educated and supports her fellow immigrants by teaching them Spanish. At the same time, she exploits locals to adjust her legal status.

**Figure 10: Stereotype Impact in Films**



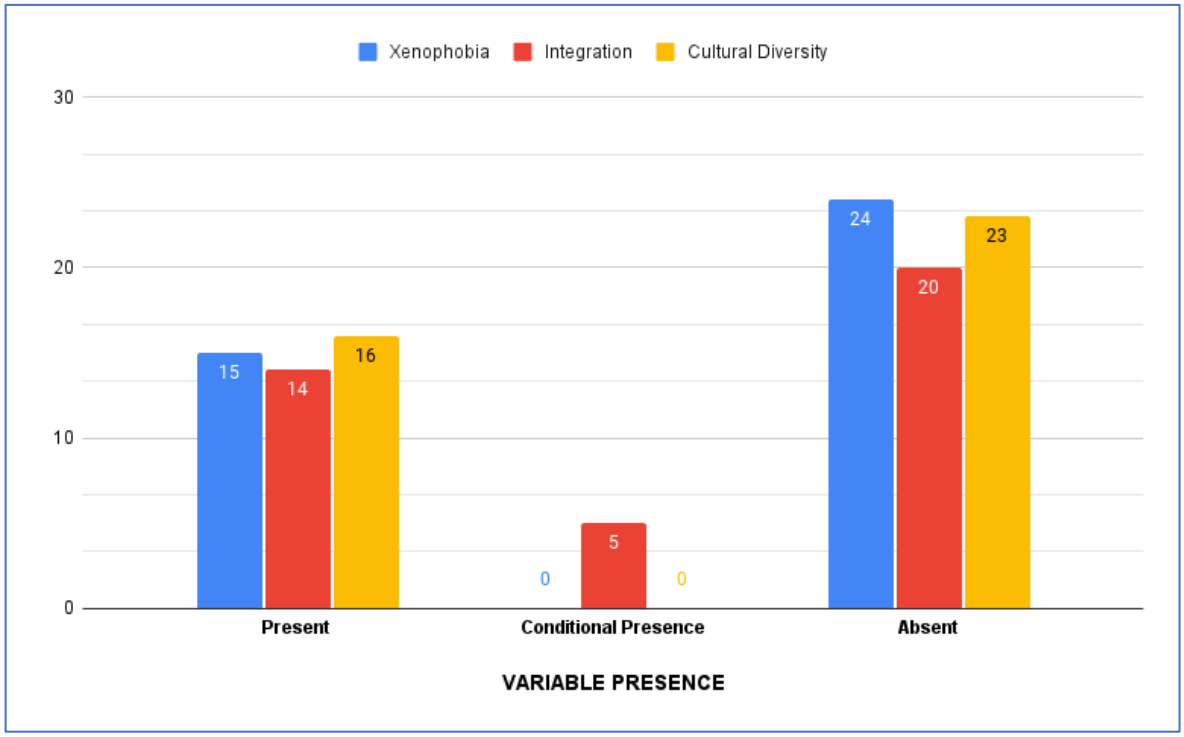

Source: Own elaboration

The chart below measures the presence of xenophobia, integration, and cultural diversity in the narratives through analysis of the sample films to detect the variable elements that could be displayed through dialogue, character interactions, plot elements, or visual signs. Xenophobia variable can be seen as demeaning, violent, or discriminating against immigrant characters based on their nationality, ethnicity, or immigration status. Integration is divided into two options: whether or not the integration is conditional to abandoning the immigrant's culture. While cultural diversity refers to the presence of elements of immigrant culture.

Xenophobia is present in 15 films, mainly in the 90s and early 2000s, when the Neo-Nazi movements were very active and targeted immigrants. Hence, the cinema responded and addressed this phenomenon in *Bwana*, *Taxi*, and *Saïd*. On the contrary, in 24 films, xenophobia is not present, particularly in more recent films.

While integration is present in half of the sample, 14 films indicate the integration of immigrants with their culture, and five films contain narratives that show a condition of abandoning the immigrant culture to integrate. On the other hand, 20 films do not have any integration elements. Cultural diversity is present in 16 films and absent in 23. This can signify that integration, and cultural diversity is complete with each other and are mostly present with the condition of assimilation in society without the immigrant background culture.

**Figure 11: Presence of Xenophobia, Integration, and Cultural Diversity in Films**



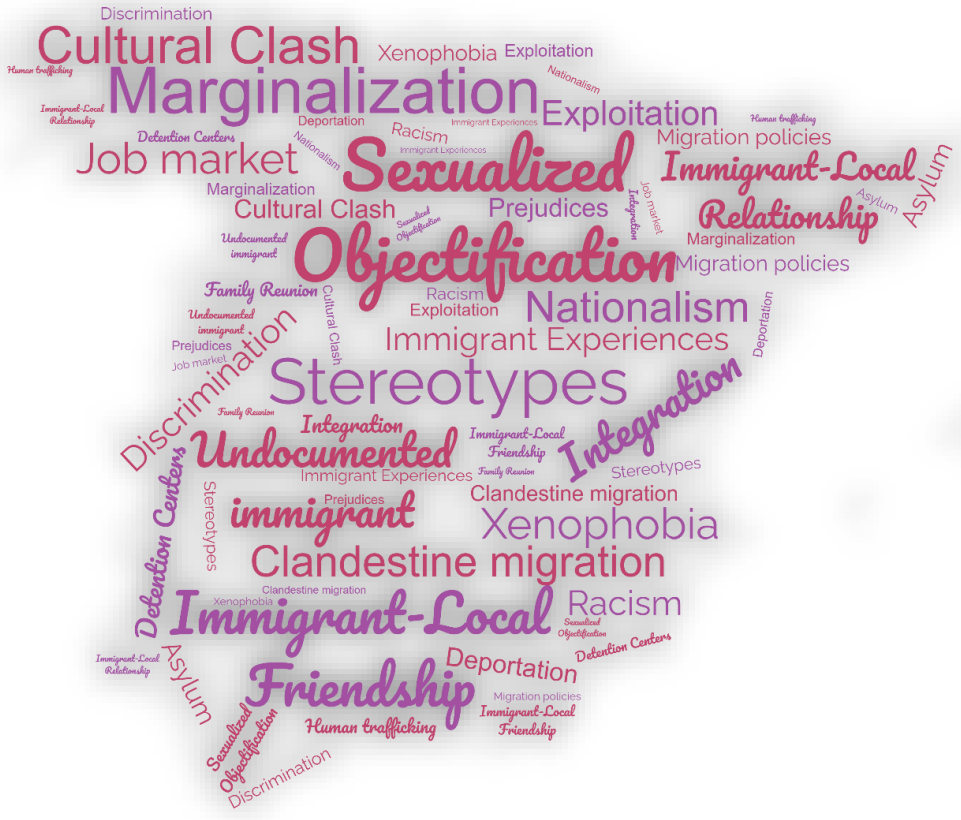

Source: Own elaboration

Thematic keywords variable captures the notable themes related to immigrants and immigration that are evident in each film. These could be mentioned through dialogue, displayed in settings, or fundamental to plot elements or visual cues. A list was created while watching films, and the frequency of each theme in the sample was counted.

The following themes are ordered by the most frequent: Undocumented immigrant: 25, Racism: 17, Integration: 17, Immigrant-Local Friendship: 16, Marginalization: 14, Sexual Objectification: 14, Job market: 14, stereotypes: 14, Immigrant-Local Relationships: 13, Immigrant Experiences: 13, Xenophobia: 12, Discrimination: 11, Exploitation: 11, Cultural Clash: 10, Migration policies: 8, Nationalism: 8, Deportation: 7, Clandestine migration: 7, Human trafficking: 5, Family Reunion: 4, Detention Centers: 3.

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**Figure 12: Thematic keywords**




Source: Own elaboration

The frequent thematic keywords demonstrate a comprehensive exploration within the film sample, shedding light on various dimensions of Spanish immigration cinema. Undoubtedly, the prevalence of the "Undocumented immigrant" theme as the most frequent indicates a significant focus on narratives revolving around the immigrants' challenges who lack legal documentation. The antonym of the themes "Racism" and "Integration" can signify the conflict that occurs in immigration films in two trends and its change over time from racism to integration. The theme of "Immigrant-Local friendship" is one of the most prevalent narratives depicting the friendship between locals and immigrants. It often compares the challenges between them or shows the parallel challenges they face in seeking a better life, in addition to the romantic relationship between the two sides, these themes highlight the adversities immigrants encounter and also portray instances of resilience, cultural exchange, and interpersonal connections.

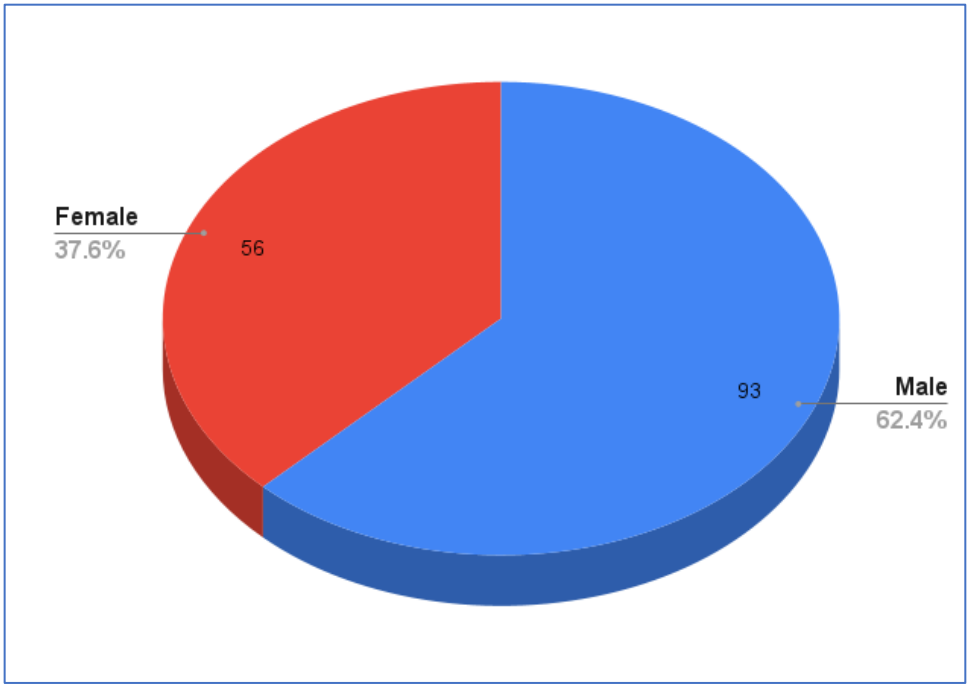
Additionally, the existence of themes like "Marginalization," "Sexual Objectification," and "Job Market" points to a recognition that immigrants face a variety of struggles involving societal prejudices, objectification, and economic challenges. These thematic elements contribute to a richer and more realistic portrayal of the immigrant experience within the cinematic landscape. The inclusion of themes like "Xenophobia," "Discrimination," and "Exploitation" further highlights the exploration of societal attitudes and reactions toward immigrants about socioeconomic events. These themes collectively also emphasize the filmmakers' evolvement to delving into the complexities of immigration, moving beyond surface-level narratives.

### 4.1.2 Characters Level

In analyzing gender representation among 149 immigrant characters in 39 films of the sample. The data reveals a significant gender disparity. Male characters represent 62.4% (n=93) of the total, while females represent only a little more than the third by 37.6% (n=56). However, it should be noted that the actual gender immigration data indicates different numbers. According to the United Nations International Migrant Stock, as of mid-2020[15], female migrants made up 48.1% of the global international migrant stock, while male immigrants comprised the remaining 51.9%. In Spain, the National Institute for Statistics stated in a 2022 report[16] that 50.1% of immigrants in Spain are male, and 49.9% are female.

This representation of inequality highlights the need for further exploration into the portrayal of gender in immigration cinema. It raises questions about the potential impact of such representations on Spanish audiences' perceptions and stereotypes about immigrant experiences.

**Figure 13: Immigrant Characters Gender**




Source: Own elaboration

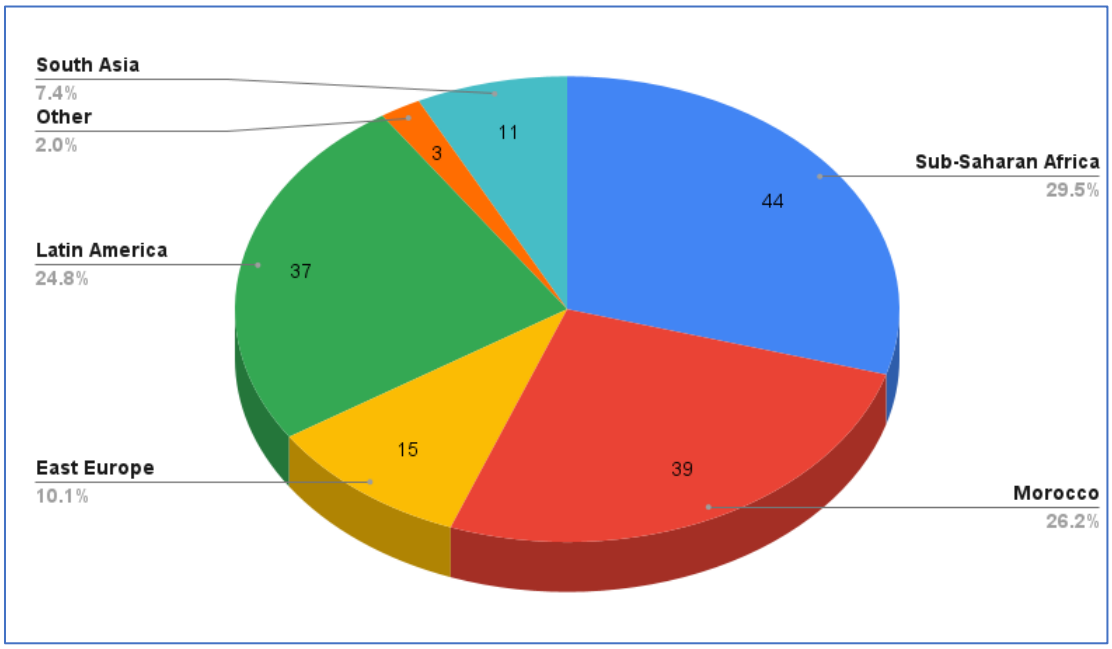
Moreover, it should be noted that the majority of films portraying women immigrants are directed by women filmmakers, such as Icíar Bollaín and Isabel de Ocampo, who represent the challenges of Latin women in *Flores de Otro Mundo* and *Evelyn*, While Chus Gutiérrez and Irene Cardona give the voice to Moroccan women immigrants and bring them out of the shadow through their films *Retorno a Hansala* and *Un Novio para Yasmina*. (2023)

The data analysis also indicates that the share of immigrants' gender among geographical origin tends to be majority female for Latin American immigrants, the opposite for Africans and East Europeans, and almost equal among Asians.

[15] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020). International Migrant Stock 2020.
[16] Report on the Population of Immigrant Origin in Spain, INE (National Institute of Statistics),(2023)

This geographical origin of immigrant characters in the analyzed films provides a valuable understanding of the diversity of immigration narratives. The data reveals that at 29.5% (n=44), Sub-Saharan Africa is the largest segment, indicating a significant representation of characters originally from Sub-Saharan African countries. This may reflect the image of immigrants in the imagination of the Spanish individual.

**Figure 14: Geographical Origin of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

Moroccan immigrant characters by 26.2% (n=39), it brings a focus on the experiences of immigrants who are often referred to as "Moros", considering that Morocco shares borders and is characterized by geographical proximity to Spain, besides the fact that there are more than 776,000 Moroccans in Spain, making them the largest immigrant group.[17]

Latin American character representations are set by 24.8% (n=37), underlining the importance of exploring the narratives of immigrants from this region. It may provide insights into issues such as economic migration and the impact of sociopolitical factors on immigration. Moreover, the common characteristics between this category and Spanish native locals include language, religion, and the cultural effects of post-colonialism. At 10.1% (n=15) is the number of characters from East Europe, highlighting the diversity of immigration experiences across different European regions. This segment may offer perspectives on the experiences of immigrants from this region and how they are received in the society as it is inter-Europe migration compared to other regions. South Asians, at 7.4% (n=11), the presence of characters from Asia implies a relatively smaller but significant representation as it is the farthest region from Spain. Yet, it is ambiguous and full of prejudices and stereotypes; by exploring the stories of South Asian immigrants can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of global migration patterns.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Chinese immigrants are not represented in Spanish cinema except in the Hollywood production film *Biutiful (2010)*. Despite their actual existence in

[17] Report on Foreign population by Nationality, provinces, Sex, and Year INE (National Institute of Statistics), 2022.

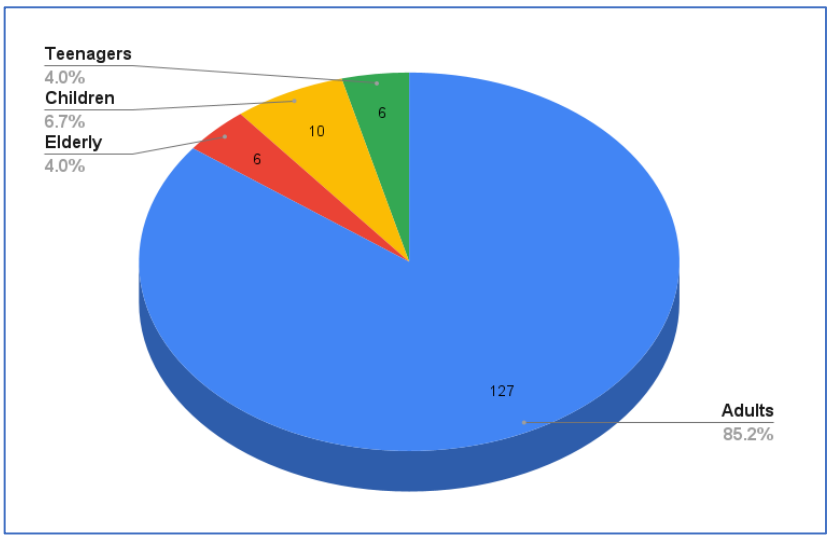
society, as of 2022, there were about 193,129 Chinese living in Spain[18]. Moreover, Madrid has a large neighborhood named Barrio Chino (Chinatown) where the Chinese community lives, and their economic and cultural influence is evident. This lack of representation is perhaps related to the stereotypes about this category, as the purpose of Chinese immigrants' migration is more for investments and openness to new markets. They mainly contribute to the economy and job market and create work opportunities for locals. Unlike immigrants from developing countries, whose objective is to search for better opportunities, this threatens the local workers, particularly in times of crisis.

The last part represents individual characters, such as a Tunisian character who is the only national in the Maghreb and North Africa except for the massive presence of Moroccans. An immigrant character represents Syrian refugees; a character from Portugal can refer to the migration of the economic region.

Spanish immigration cinema is rich with diverse representations of immigrant characters from various geographical regions, emphasizing their different immigration experiences. This diversity serves as a foundation for understanding the cultural, social, and economic dimensions of immigration in Spanish society.

The age distribution of immigrant characters in Spanish cinema provides valuable insights into the representation of different age groups. The dominating category of 85.2% (n=127) indicates a substantial focus on adult immigrant characters in Spanish cinema, constituting most of the sample. This emphasis on immigrant adults' narratives concentrates on the experiences, challenges, and journeys of the most common age group, reflecting the actual immigration statistics in Spain.

**Figure 15: Group Age of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

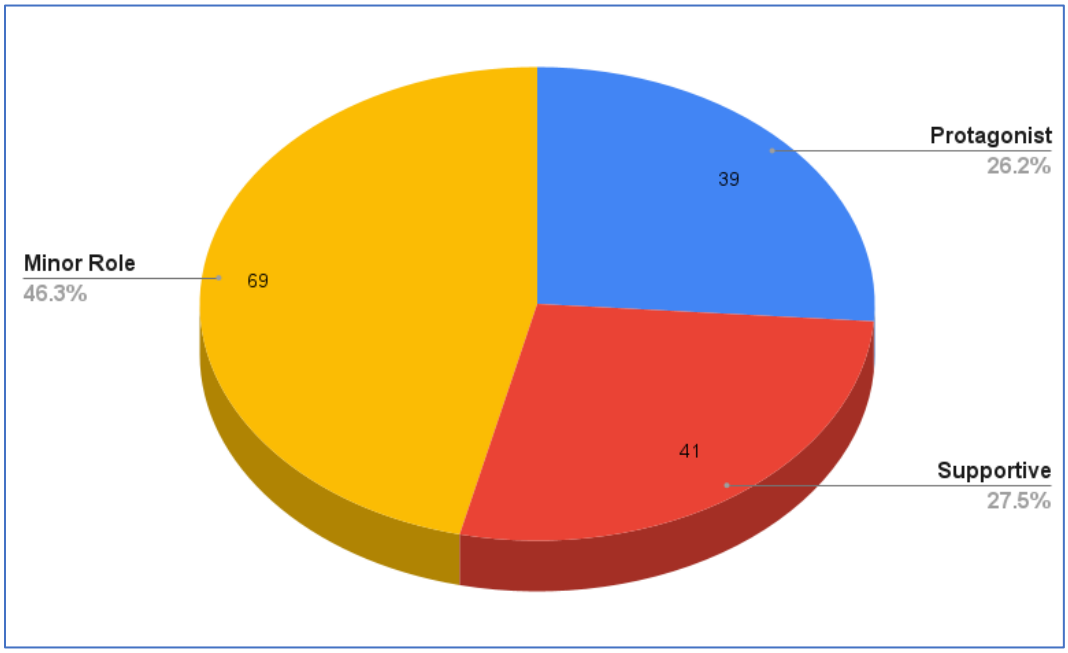
Children by 6.7% (n=10) comprise a more minor but notable proportion, besides the teenager's group at 4% (n=6), suggesting recognizing immigrants' unique experiences and vulnerabilities in Spanish cinema. Their stories may involve issues such as unaccompanied minors, culture clash, acculturation, and the new generation of immigrants. The elderly by 4% (n=6), although

[18] Rosa Fernández (2023, Nov 16th) Foreign population residing in Spain in 2022, by nationality. Statista Research Department. https://www.statista.com/statistics/445784/foreign-population-in-spain-by-nationality/

a minor portion, symbolizes the unique challenges and perspectives of elderly immigrants, such as the integration of the first generation.

The roles played by immigrant characters in films are divided into three sections: protagonist, supportive, and minor role. The most extensive section is minor roles, at 46.3% (n=69), and the second is supporting roles, at 27.5% (n=41), while the smallest percentage of roles is protagonists, at 26.2% (n=39). This data indicates that immigrant characters in leading roles in the narrative migration films are the minority. Yet, the 39 number equals the sample. In contrast, in some films, most immigrants remain back in the background and take minor and supportive roles when the story is told and led by a local Spanish perspective, which can lead to a reinforcement of the stereotype, such as white savior in some narratives. Such films as *Bwana, Taxi, Salvajes, Poniente, and Ilegal*. These films share one commonality: they were all released in the 1990s and early 2000s.

**Figure 16: Role of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

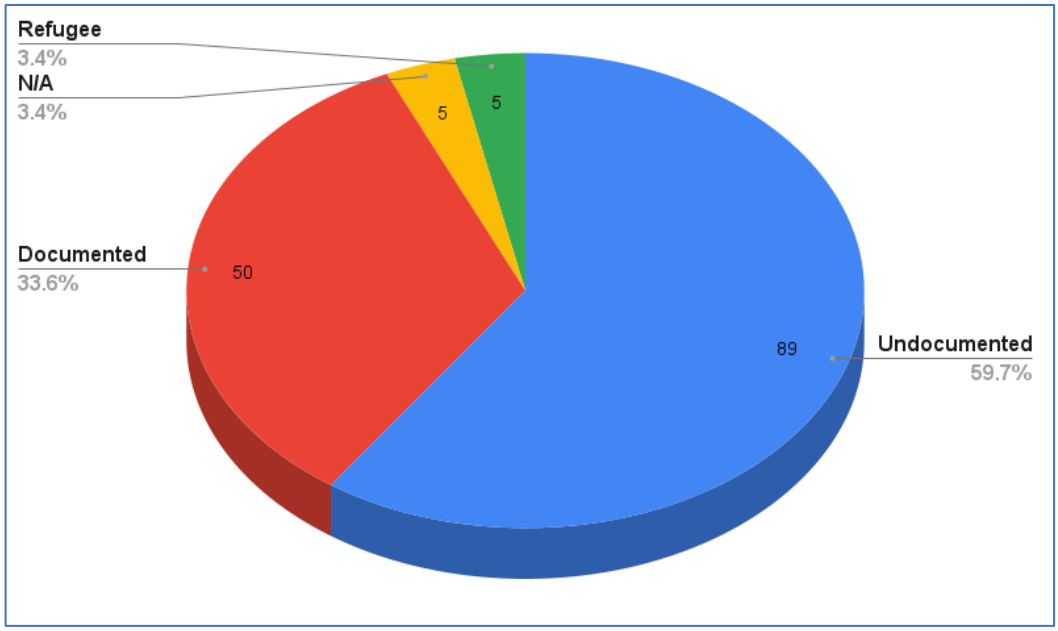
In contrast, immigration narratives told by immigrant characters lead the plot and tell experiences from their perspectives, giving more accuracy to the elements of immigrants, and the impression on audiences is stronger. Though this does not mean that it represents reality, it differs from the director's point of view and the film's background and production and may be more harmful to the strength and reinforcement of the stereotypical portrayal. These examples started in the early films such as Las Cartas de Alou. Still, the structure of immigration films changed by the mid-2000s until nowadays when more narratives led by immigrant characters increased, such as *Agua con Sal, Un Novio Para Yasmina, El Dios de Madera, A Escondidas, and Vasil.*

This shift in the representation of immigrant characters can be read as a result of the fact that in the 1990s, immigrant characters were less visible. Spanish society spoke for them through Spanish characters who led the plots and presented immigrant issues to the society. This shift, which is a significant evolution in immigration cinema, resulted in increased

accuracy in portraying immigrants, their diversity, issues, and challenges. Filmmakers kept pace and gave them more opportunities, resulting in a more comprehensive vision.

The analysis of the legal status of immigrant characters is based on the information provided or suggested within the film's context, whether explicitly stated or indirectly implied in the narrative or visual cues. The figure below shows the finding data that most immigrant characters are portrayed as Undocumented at a rate of 59.7% (n=89). This indicates a deliberate choice by filmmakers to address this category by exploring the challenges, vulnerabilities, and difficulties that undocumented immigrants face. This narrative depth is something that the audience can feel and be moved by. Such narratives could delve into topics such as living in the shadows, fear of deportation, the struggle for fundamental rights, and being subjected to exploitation. At the same time, focusing on this category could reinforce stereotypes and lead to generalizing portrayals. As of 2018, the highest immigrant arrivals occurred at national borders. Specifically, around 645,600 (90.91%) immigrants flow legally into the country, while only 64,298 (9.09%) managed to do so irregularly.[19] However, the representation of this crisis in cinema addresses the minor category.

**Figure 17: Legal Status of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

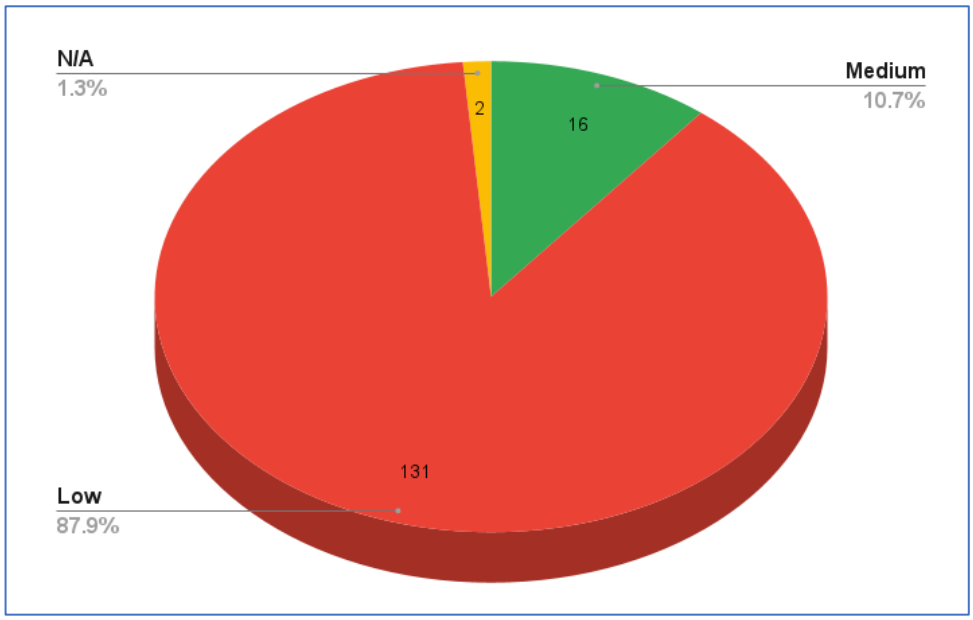
Documented characters represent 33.6% (n=50) of the sample; this recognizes the category with legal documentation, and they still face challenges related to integration, discrimination, or navigating bureaucratic systems. Nevertheless, the depictions of those characters are related to marginalization and struggles. Refugees are the smallest part, by 3.4% (n=5), representing only a few characters in a minor or supportive role. Despite the vast number of asylum seekers every year, especially in 2015 by Syrians and 2021 by Ukrainians. Recently, according to the Spanish Ministry of Interior, a total of 118,842 persons applied for international protection in Spain in

[19] Rosa Fernández (2023, June 19th) Total number of regular and irregular immigrants who arrived in Spain between 2015 and 2022. Statista. https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/1095033/inmigrantes-regulares-e-irregulares-llegados-a-espana/

2022.[20] Thus, the focus of immigration films in Spain is the undocumented and illegal immigrants rather than other categories.

The figure below illustrates the socioeconomic status of immigrant characters. It is extracted from the sample by watching the characters and classifying them into three categories: Low: characters who may be unemployed, working in low-wage jobs, or living in impoverished conditions. Middle: Characters who hold mid-level jobs, own a business, or otherwise demonstrate moderate financial stability. High: Characters in high-income professions or who exhibit significant wealth.

**Figure 18: Socioeconomic Status of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

The data shows that characters from low socioeconomic backgrounds are significantly overrepresented, with 87.9% (n=131). This dominant representation indicates a deliberate focus on portraying the challenges, struggles, and realities faced by immigrants from underprivileged backgrounds. These narratives emphasize issues related to working and living conditions, exploitation, and societal marginalization. In contrast, with a medium socioeconomic status rate of 10.7% (n=16), a smaller proportion represents immigrant characters in good conditions. Most are documented and integrated into society with good jobs or owning small businesses. In contrast, the high socioeconomic level is absent.

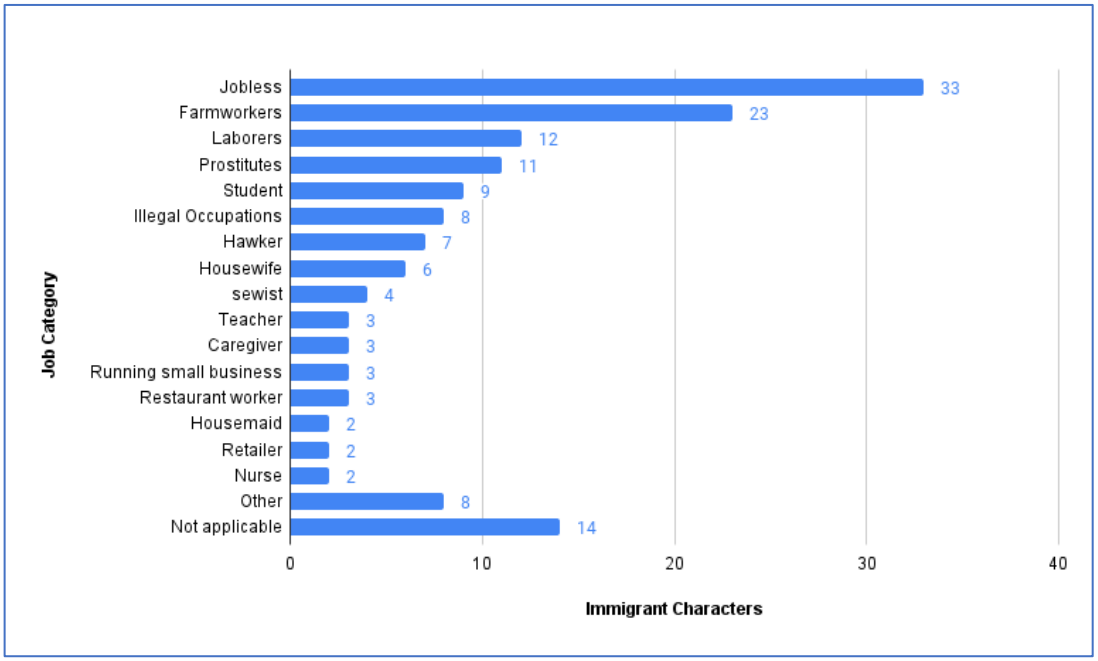
The preponderance of immigrant characters of low socioeconomic status in Spanish films implies a deliberate choice to highlight the struggles and complexities of vulnerable immigrants in poor conditions. However, focusing only on a category of immigrants and generalizing it may lead to reinforcing stereotypes, and it could not reflect the actual numbers. As per Statista, in 2022, there were 2.6 million legally employed immigrants in Spain[21].

[20] Ministry of the Interior, Undersecretariat of the Interior, General Directorate of Internal Policy, Advance of requests and proposed resolutions for international protection. Provisional data accumulated between January 1 and December 31, 2022, and January 2023, available at: https://bit.ly/3KC9Feg.
[21] Rosa Fernández (2023, Nov 17th) Number of foreign workers in Spain 2006-2022. Statista. https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/511868/evolucion-del-numero-de-ocupados-extranjeros-en-espana/

The job domains showcase various job representations among immigrant characters in films. Many of these characters are depicted as jobless, highlighting a potential emphasis on the struggles immigrants face in finding work opportunities, which also can result in going into exploitative work environments or illegal occupations and criminal acts. Farmworkers and laborers are prevalent job categories, shedding light on the exploitation of undocumented immigrants, particularly in the greenhouses of Almería, where they face miserable conditions and wages below the minimum, in some cases working all day in exchange for a place to sleep and food. It is well presented in *Las Cartas de Alou, Poniente, Un Novio para Yasmina*. Laborers in poor working conditions and subjected to sexual harassment are represented in films such as *Princesas* and *Agua con Sal.* These films shed light on the harsh reality of dominant jobs among immigrants.

The variety of other Jobs prevalent among undocumented immigrants, including maids, sewists, odd jobs, Hairdresser, Service by Commission, Office jobs, Parking lot attendants, Delivery boys, Florists, Hostel runners, Street performers, and others, reflects the multifaceted nature of immigrant experiences.

**Figure 19: Job Domains of Immigrant Characters**



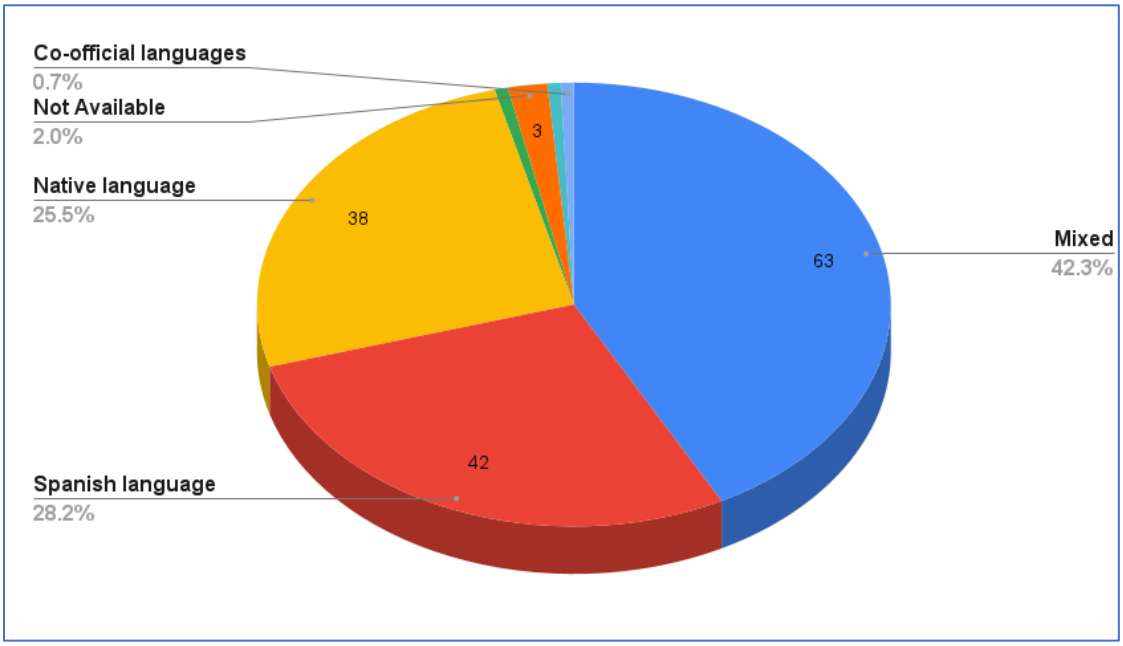

Source: Own elaboration

In addition to the frequent depiction of illegal occupations, such as drug dealers, criminal acts, prostitution represents a 19.6% of immigrant women. These portrayals offer a narrative focus on the low socioeconomic status and the lack of good opportunities for immigrants in Spanish society, which is reflected in cinema. Hence, the dominance of the jobless and these low-level jobs and roles in this portrayal might imply prevalent societal stereotypes or biases about immigrant communities and their employment opportunities.

The figure depicts spoken languages among immigrant characters in immigration cinema, revealing a diverse linguistic landscape. The most significant portion, at 42.3% (n=63), showcases characters who converse in mixed languages, combining their native language with Spanish. Following closely, 28% (n=42) speak only Spanish, indicating significant efforts for

integration into society. Characters using their native language only represent 25.5%(n=38), mainly referring to immigrant communities that live together and preserve their culture and identity. Other small parts are divided between the native and Spanish languages and only the co-official languages. Language can often be the initial barrier new immigrants encounter, hindering their way to achieving goals and integration into society and potentially leading to exploitation.

**Figure 20: The Spoken Languages of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

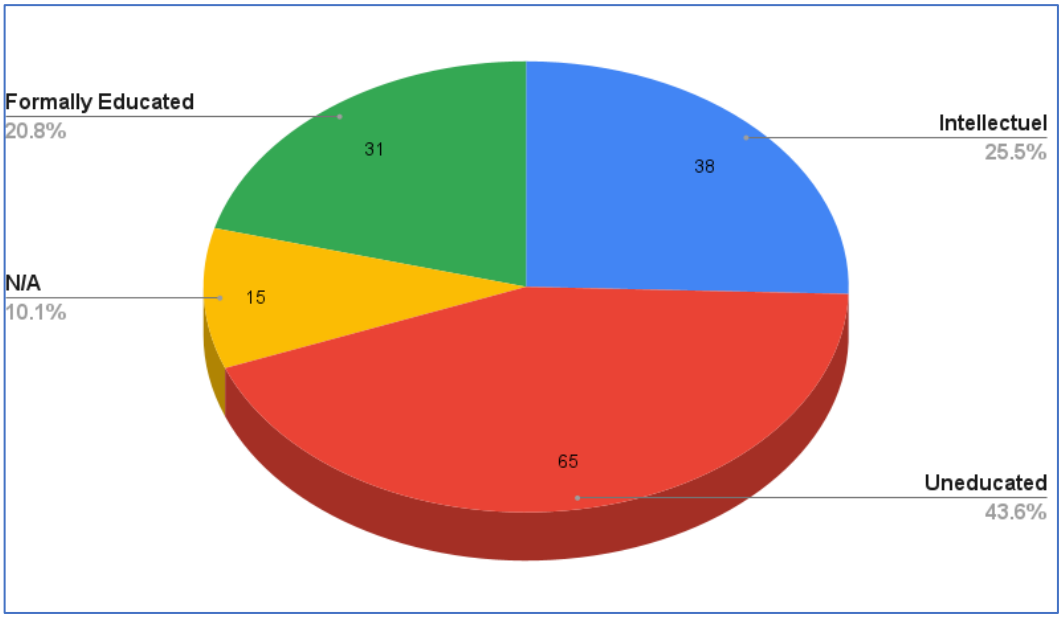
On the other hand, if immigrants can speak Spanish, it can facilitate their integration and open up more opportunities. This makes it crucial for most new immigrants and more accessible for Latin Americans.

The chart presenting immigrant characters' intellectual and educational backgrounds in Spanish films offers insight into their diverse portrayals. The largest segment, accounting for 43.6%(n=65), depicts uneducated characters, potentially highlighting socioeconomic disparities or emphasizing this category of immigrants who migrate to Spain. Following closely at 25.5% (n=38), characters categorized as intellectual propose a representation of knowledgeable inclined individuals among immigrants. The formally educated category comprises 20.8% (n=31), indicating a significant but less represented group among the characters, showcasing them with structured educational backgrounds. At 10.1% (n=15), the minor portion, which is not applicable, denotes characters whose academic backgrounds are not explicitly addressed in the narrative.

This distribution shows that education among immigrant characters in Spanish cinema is portrayed as declining, leading to a decrease in cultural and educational levels within immigrant communities. The trends in Figures 14, 15, and 16 reinforce the conclusion that immigrant portrayals are mostly limited to low socioeconomic and cultural levels.

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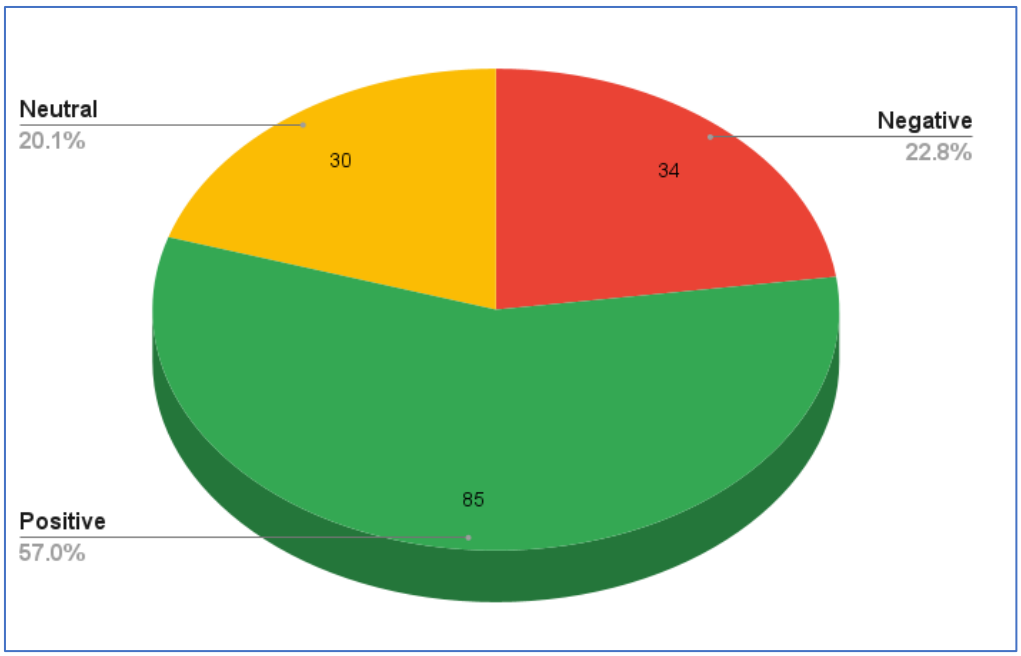
**Figure 21: The Intellectual Level of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

The immigrant character's observable behaviors in films are divided into three categories: positive if an immigrant character displays high moral or ethical standards; negative if an immigrant character is depicted as inherently criminal, lazy, or exploiter; and neutral. The figure reveals that positive behavior dominates the dataset at 57% (n=85), indicating a largely favorable portrayal of immigrant characters, more than half of the sample. However, it is essential to note the significant presence of negative comportment at 23% (n=34). Additionally, the 20% (n=30) neutral behavior may indicate the need for more engagement of the characters or portrayals in films that are not the main focus of the migration topic.

**Figure 22: The Behavior of Immigrant Characters**



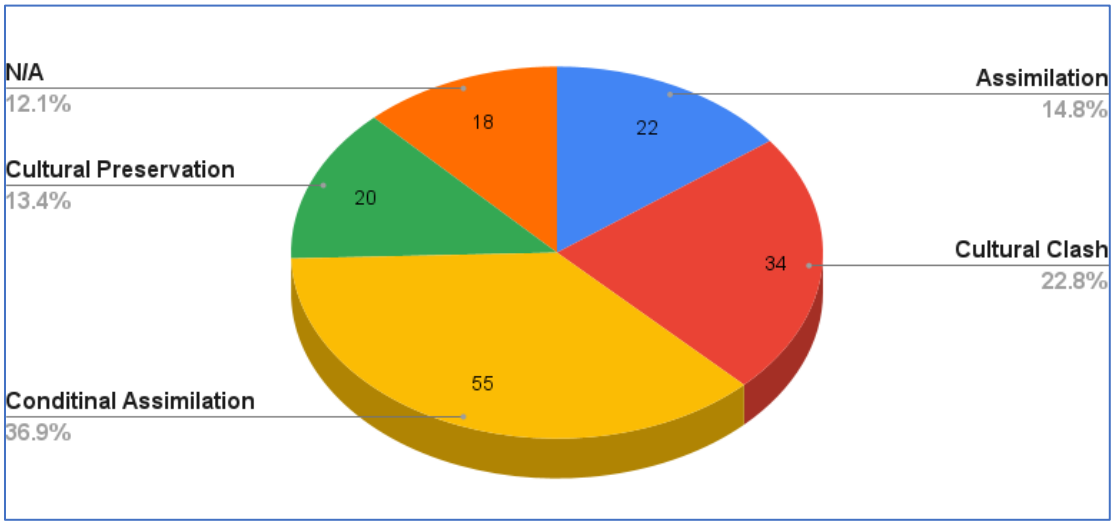

Source: Own elaboration

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These findings can be unpredictable as they do not match previous data that distribute the immigrant image as a low socioeconomic level, jobless, or unskilled worker who is mainly uneducated and mostly undocumented and still excessively positively portrayed. However, sometimes, these depictions oppose the plot itself.

The figure below delineating the attitudes toward acculturation among immigrant characters in Spanish cinema illustrates a diverse perspective. Notably, "Conditional Assimilation" emerges as the predominant attitude at 36.9% (n=55), signifying a prevalent inclination toward adapting to the new culture and integration into society. However, this assimilation is conditional to immigrants abandoning the original elements and mother culture. Following closely is the "Cultural Clash" attitude at 22.8% (n=34), portraying a significant representation mainly associated with cultural differences between natives and immigrants from Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa. These differences are related to customs, traditions, and religion; they can lead to significant challenges in understanding and accommodating each other. "Assimilation" at 14.8% (n=22) denotes a relatively lower but discernible presence, showcasing characters' varying degrees of assimilation into the new culture, particularly immigrants from Latin America who are the most representative in this category as the language and religion break the barriers and make the assimilation and integration into society easier.

**Figure 23: The Acculturation of Immigrant Characters**




Source: Own elaboration

"Cultural Preservation" attitudes at 13.4% (n=20) indicate efforts to maintain immigrants' culture and traditions while creating a barrier to integration. This is often encountered in small immigrant communities where they tend to stick together and avoid interacting with society. These communities have their own markets, shops, and cafes, like diverse communities in El Raval in Barcelona and Lavapiés in Madrid, and several slum neighborhoods in the southern region of Andalucia, where undocumented Sub-Saharan and Moroccan immigrants live near the greenhouses where they work.

This data effectively encapsulates the multifaceted attitudes toward acculturation among immigrant characters in Spanish cinema, highlighting the complexity of integration and assimilation in Spanish society, which requires adopting the new local culture and can lead to the abandonment of the original one. This may result in the creation of cultural resistance and preservation of marginalized communities, which can make the complex of segregation and the

gap between the immigrant communities and Spanish society, resulting in estrangement from society and raising the question of identity for the new generation of immigrants.

## 4.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The portrayal of immigrants in films serves as a lens through which society's attitudes, prejudices, and challenges surrounding migration are scrutinized and confronted. In the film analysis, we search for recurring themes and patterns to understand better how Spanish immigration cinema portrays immigrants.

The evolution of immigration cinema since its emergence in the early nineties is clearly shown by the different depictions of immigrants in films and through various styles. Sometimes, films led by immigrant characters, such as *Las Cartas de Alou*, and sometimes through the point of view of Spanish characters and leave the immigrant behind, invisible or not participating in the narrative, such as *Taxi* and *Ilegal*, or with the participation of the immigrants, but without enough space to defend their perspective to leave the viewer with a point of view of the Spanish character only like the case in *Bwana*. Both sides participate in plots in more recent films which clearly show an evolution of immigrant depictions, such as *Lo Nunca Visto* and *Seis Días Corrientes,* and give a sense of different points of view. Spanish immigrant cinema has depicted the issues of immigrants in various ways, focusing on individual experiences such as friendships and romantic relationships by exploring the complexities and dynamics of relationships between immigrants and native locals in terms of cultural exchange, social integration, identity and belonging, prejudice, and empathy. Furthermore, it delves into the difficulties and exploitation faced by undocumented immigrants in the workplace. It also analyses images of immigrant assimilation and integration and the reflection of societal stereotypes. Filmmakers also touched on socio-economic events that have an impact on immigrants in the host society, such as terrorist acts, the financial crisis, local social incidents and public opinion cases like the *Poniente* of El Ejido.

In recent years, immigration cinema has evolved significantly, reaching a high maturity level. Films delved into a wide array of critical issues and themes, spanning from clandestine immigration to human trafficking and prostitution to the complexities of immigration laws, policies, and the injustices prevalent in detention centers, as well as the work environment. These films have also featured a diverse range of immigrant characters, exploring their origins, gender dynamics, and age differences. This section aims to conduct a qualitative analysis of these cinematic portrayals, organizing our findings into three overarching themes. Each one addresses a spectrum of topics and concepts, providing a comprehensive framework to understand and interpret the multifaceted narratives presented in immigration cinema. The selection of these themes emerged from a systematic exploration of recurring motifs and patterns across the selected films.

The first theme, "Immigrants Confronting Intolerance and Violence," emerged as a response to the prevalent depiction of xenophobia, hate crimes, and the poignant struggles of immigrants against discrimination and persecution in cinematic narratives. It explores the rise of xenophobia, hate crimes, and the struggle of immigrants against discrimination and persecution in cinema. The second theme, "Intersections of Otherness: Local-Immigrant Relationship," is derived from recognizing the profound connections between native locals and immigrants, which explores the depth and significance of friendships, highlighting the forging of relationships amidst cultural differences. This theme is divided into two sections: Native local-immigrant friendships and romantic relationships. The last theme, "Immigrants Journeys

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and Fleeting Dreams: Assimilation, Integration, and Social Rejection" is conceptualized to encapsulate the rich tapestry of immigrants' personal stories, emphasizing their aspirations, challenges, and shattered dreams in pursuing a better life. Films depict the initial optimism upon arrival, contrasting it with harsh realities. Some highlight immigrant resilience, while others portray the journey's failure and return. In addition, it Encapsulates the pivotal role of immigrants' interactions with the host society, determining their acceptance or rejection and navigating the delicate balance between assimilating into the host culture and preserving their cultural heritage; sometimes, this creates a paradox, resulting in barriers hindering integration and fostering isolation.

The chosen thematic framework thus offers a structured and comprehensive analytical approach, allowing for a detailed exploration of the multifaceted narratives presented in immigration cinema. Through this systematic lens, we can unravel the intricacies of each theme, gaining valuable insights into the broader discourse on immigration and the human experiences encapsulated in these cinematic portrayals.

### 4.2.1 Immigrants Confronting Intolerance and Xenophobia

The intersection of intolerance and violence against immigrants emerges as a poignant and compelling focal point. Through cinematic narratives, the multifaceted experiences of immigrants navigating cultural clashes and systemic discrimination are vividly depicted, shedding light on the harsh realities they often face. Filmmakers addressed the actual incidents in their films, such as *Poniente*, which references an episode that took place in 2000 when a Moroccan immigrant killed a Spanish woman in El Ejido, a village in Almería. This resulted in social tension, leading locals to chase and attack hundreds of Moroccan immigrants who were working in the greenhouses.[22] In the 1990s and early 2000s, cinema often portrayed the resurgence of neo-Nazism. Many films highlighted the tension and conflict between nationalist ideologies and the immigrants, especially those who come from countries with different cultures and religions that let the neo-Nazis believe they are a threat to society and their cultures; films like *Bwana*, *Taxi*, *Saïd*, and *Salvajes* addressed this phenomenon. The violence can affect more immigrant women as they are more objective to exploitation and human trafficking; some films address this, like *Evelyn* and *Princesas*. Some other violence types are discussed in immigration cinema, like police abuses in *Saïd* and *Ilegal Donna*.

#### 4.2.1.1 Navigating Narratives: Immigrants Face neo-Nazism' Xenophobia and Daily Racist Encounters

#### Immigrants Face Neo-Nazism Xenophobia

Since the early 1990s, Spanish cinema has produced a variety of narratives about immigrants and their harrowing journey and difficult arrival to Spain. The first decade was marked by challenges immigrants faced in terms of integration, racism, and xenophobia they encountered in the new society. Many films depict these topics and address violence, discrimination, and the focus is more on the rise of neo-Nazi, skinhead, and white supremacist groups as a phenomenon. These results will be displayed first, followed by the daily racism immigrants encounter in the narratives.

Neo-Nazi has been addressed in films *Bwana* (Uribe, 1996), *Taxi* (Saura,1996), *Saïd* (Soler, 1998), *El sudor de los ruiseñores* (Juan Manuel Cotelo, 1998) and *Salvajes* (Molinero, 2001).

[22] Constenla, A. & Torregrosa, A. (07 Feb 2000) Vecinos de El Ejido armados con barras de hierro atacan a los inmigrantes y destrozan sus locales. El País. https://elpais.com/diario/2000/02/07/espana/949878022_850215.html

Immigrant characters depict the racism they encounter and the abuses they face by the neo-Nazis and skinhead extremist groups. There is a pattern in how immigrants are portrayed in these films, and despite different narratives and plots, the results remain almost the same.

In *Bwana*, Ombasi is an African immigrant who has just reached the Almería shore with the body of his friend who did not make it alive. He meets a typical lower-middle-class Spanish family having a picnic on the beach. The family mistreats Ombasi as the "other" stranger through prejudices, but the worse is the presence of a group of neo-Nazi skinheads on the same beach to let events escalate. In *Saïd*, a Moroccan immigrant had crossed the Mediterranean Sea clandestinely and continued to Barcelona, where his friend would host him. He struggles to make a living; one day, he meets Ana, a Spanish journalism student doing research about Moroccan immigrant's experience in Barcelona; she spends time with Saïd and his friends until the two fall in love. This relationship attracted a neo-Nazis group to attack Saïd and his friends. Investigations will take place after that, and Saïd will be forced to choose between staying in Barcelona in hiding or testifying, but at the price of being deported and leaving his lover Ana.

In *Taxi*, the immigrant characters remain in the shade; the story revolves around Paz, a young girl who did not pass a degree exam, drops out of university, and cuts her hair as a way of rebelling. Her father got angry and forced her to work with him as a taxi driver and take a morning shift. Soon, she discovers that her father is not only a Taxi driver but also a member of a fascist group formed with other cab workers called "The Family," who meet every night to clean Madrid of the garbage that inhabits it by eliminating immigrants, homosexuals, transgenders, junkies, and black people, supported by their nationalist and fascist ideology. Meanwhile, Paz falls in love with Dani, a young boy and the son of another cap driver. He also drives a taxi and recently joined "The Family" and got involved in a death attack on Moroccan immigrants. *Salvajes*, a film set in Valencia, follows the story of Berta, a middle-aged nurse with a strong personality but a fragile appearance; she looks after the three teenagers of her recently deceased sister. One day, she meets Eduardo, an alcoholic police detective, when he visits the hospital; they hit it off and begin dating. Nevertheless, Berta's new romance could pose a problem for her niece, Lucía, whose boyfriend, Fausto, has a lucrative illegal business smuggling illegal immigrants from North Africa into Spain.




Figure 24: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Salvajes,* Molinero. Brothers and Sisters S.L., 2001).
Note: In this screenshot image, Raúl, Berta´s nephew, is suspected of the brutal attack on a Senegalese immigrant.

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Adding to tensions around the house, Lucía's brothers, Raúl and Guillermo, are members of a neo-Nazi group who have been implicated in the brutal beating of a Senegalese immigrant. Berta tries to ignore the ugly truth about her nephews. Still, when Eduardo is assigned to investigate the case of the assaulted immigrant and suspected of her nephews, her relationship is disrupted, and she is forced to face the reality of her family's actions.

At the beginning of the films *Bwana* and *Saïd*, before the plots develop to the point of conflict with the neo-Nazis, each character in the narratives is given a prologue to manifest their hopes and goals. On a remote beach, Ombasi arrives on the shore of Almería and meets a stranded Spanish family. Despite the lack of communication due to his ignorance of Spanish, Antonio loses the car key in the sand. Consequently, they spend time together with Ombasi and are forced, along with his family, to stay the night on the beach and share the fire space with him. The film explores the poignant moment when the immigrant arrives with the dead body of his friend, who did not survive the journey. His initial encounter with the local inhabitants vividly describes the formidable challenges he will face in Spanish society, enclosing difficulties in communication, cultural disparities, and prevailing prejudices. Throughout the film, there are many instances where the family, including the children, indicates that the "other" black immigrant is an outsider. These moments are a reminder of the deep-rooted biases and stereotypes.

In *Saïd*, a young Moroccan undocumented immigrant is portrayed as educated and speaks Spanish. He arrives on a boat to the coast of southern Spain and then continues with some young Spaniards by car, whom he apparently met on the way after they were also heading to Barcelona. He arrives at the house of his friend who was his neighbor in hometown in Morocco, Hussein, who emigrated years before him. He used to meet Saïd when he returned home on vacation and told him about life in Barcelona and the many good opportunities there, so he encouraged him to emigrate. Saïd was surprised by his unexpected friend's mistreatment, but at the same time, he met other Moroccans with whom they shared an apartment and helped him start working as a hawker, selling carpets in the streets. Later, he will meet other Moroccans and join a musical band made up of Moroccan immigrants who perform popular songs since he plays the goblet drum. One day, they perform a musical concert at a university, and Saïd meets Ana, a journalism student working on research on the conditions of Moroccan immigrants in Barcelona. They spend time together until they become attracted to each other. The director defines Saïd's transition from his arrival with his dreams of job opportunities and a decent life to a reality that does not resemble his previous dreams much. Despite this, Saïd continues surviving, facing some problems, such as his conflict with Hussein and being forced to leave the apartment, his difficulty working as a hawker, and his constant avoidance of the police for fear of being deported.

The pattern in the films *Taxi* and *Salvajes* differs as the immigrants do not lead the plots but remain in the background story. The local Spanish characters are giving the perspective of the neo-Nazis in *Taxi* and those who defend the immigrants against the new Nazis in *Salvajes*. In *Taxi*, the film begins by introducing Paz and how she will end up working in the taxi so that she begins to discover the truth about her father and his friends, who are forming "The Family" group, and their actions against the "scum people" in society as their leader mentioned. The audience knows about the immigrants' image in the family members through their conversation about the necessity of cleaning the city:

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The Family leader: There is too much garbage to clean up, if we don't do it, no one will[23].

In *Salvajes*, we initially see the brutal attack on Omar, an African immigrant, using cinematic techniques that make the scene tragic and put the viewer in the victim's position. This event is the start of the plot that will look for the reasons and the point of view of the neo-Nazism group. The moment of the attack and assault on the immigrant characters is usually the climax point in films, except in the case of *Salvajes*.

In *Taxi*, when Dani goes with the Family leader at night to a marginal place inhabited by immigrants and encourages him to take revenge for the attack on his father, who has become paralyzed, and accuses immigrants of that. This is a part of the inciting speech the Family leader gives to Dani before the attack:[24]



Figure 25: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Taxi*, Saura. Producciones Cinematográficas Filmart S.L, 1996). Note: In this screenshot image, "The Family" leader gives an inciting speech to Dani and other skinheads.

"The Family" leader:

- The worst of people live here… blacks, queers, drug addicts, and international criminals.
- There is more every day; Madrid is plagued, and the whole of Spain is in trouble... Imported garbage.
- Here are those who steal our jobs and rape our women.
- If you are not careful, you will get AIDS.
- They are to blame for all the evils that appear in this country.

[23] The original conversation in Spanish: Hay demasiada basura que barrer, Si no lo hacemos nosotros, lo hará nadie.
[24] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Aquí vive lo peor de cada casa, negros, maricones, drogadictos, delincuentes internacionales
- Cada día son más, Madrid está plagado, España entera está en cólera... Basura de importación.
- Aquí están los que roban nuestros puestos de trabajo y violan a nuestras mujeres
- Si no tienen cuidado, os pegan el SIDA
- Ellos tienen la culpa de todas cosas malas que aparecen en este país

After this speech, dozens of young skinheads come out, masked, and one of them hands a baseball stick to Dani, and then the attack begins on the tents inhabited by the immigrants. They burn them and beat everyone who comes out of them. In a moment, Dani hits a person and knocks him to the ground. The leader looks at him and asks him to finish him off, but he hesitates for a while, then does it after the leader's insistence. Next, a panoramic shot shows the destroyed camp and burning tents after the vandalism of the neo-Nazis. Dani seems worried and in remorse, asking whether his victim died. The director is alluding to the effects of the leader spreading ideology and brainwashing among troubled youth and pinning accusations on immigrants, who are behind all the problems in the country.



Figure 26: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Taxi*, Saura. Producciones Cinematográficas Filmart S.L, 1996) Note: In this screenshot image, A panoramic shot of the aftermath of the neo-Nazi vandalism reveals the destruction of the immigrants' camp.

Ombasi has created some connection with the family despite the lack of understanding. In the early morning, he goes for a bath on the beach and asks Maria to join him. She hesitates, then accepts, as if she gets the spirit of youth and adventure, and abandons the role of wife and mother, even for a fleeting moment. Agreeing to join Ombasi after hesitation and getting nude could be a hint of a relationship with the immigrant or the Spanish mother's view of more life and youth in a relationship with the "other" alien. All of this will disappear the moment three young men whom Antonio met previously appear riding motorcycles; they seem to be neo-Nazis; one of them is Spanish, and the others speak German with shaved heads and carrying baseball sticks and a knife. They surround Maria and Ombasi and start the following conversation in English:

- German skinhead 1: What is the penalty for a fucking nigger, swimming naked with a white girl?
- German skinhead 2: Castration
- Spanish skinhead: Let's castrate your little friend.

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- German skinhead 2: You should be castrated just like a pig.
- German skinhead 1: Yes, you are a fucking pig, and we are going to castrate you.
- Maria: He is good and has done nothing.

The conversation continues, and Ombasi stares at them, feeling the danger but not understanding what is happening. In a moment of distraction, Maria escapes and runs away with her husband, heading to the car. Ombasi also flees aimlessly, naked, and desperate. A soundtrack begins with drums beating, filling the feeling of hope and action. A jump cut moves among Ombasi as he runs away, breathing hard and seeming exhausted, and the skinhead group on their bikes with faces filled with anger and frustration. The cut also moves to the family as they start the car engine and escape. Ombasi emerges from the unpaved road and intercepts the family car. He jumps on top of it, hoping to hop on with them and escape the imminent danger.

In *Saïd*, Anna spends more time with Moroccans as she is in a relationship with Saïd. One day, they were returning from a night out, and in the darkness of a street, a group of young men who appeared to belong to the neo-Nazis attacked Saïd and his friend while Anna ran away and tried to stop a passing taxi for help. The camera captures Saïd, and his friend being subjected to kicks while on the ground, then swiftly depicts their escape as they slip away, hop into the taxi, and make a hasty departure.

Reactions to a xenophobic attack by neo-Nazi extremist groups differ. In *Bwana*, the family decides not to help Bwana when he jumps into the front of the car and speaks his incomprehensible language. Still, Maria understands the meaning that he is asking for help, so she responds to him:[25]

- Get out of here, don't you understand? Run, run... they are going to kill you. I cannot help you, do you understand, I can't...

The family leaves Ombasi to face his inevitable fate in a scene in which he falls to the ground exhausted, and Antonio gets out of the car, approaches him, and says to him:

- I cannot do anything for you, I am sorry.

The last scene of the film shows Ombasi, in a close-up shot, falling to the ground and looking at the car, which was his last rescue, while it drives away. In the next shot, Antonio and Maria appear with tears in their eyes. In the back, their children are looking through the rear window at Ombasi, who remains on the ground awaiting his inevitable fate, while the two motorcycles approach him.

[25] The original conversation in Spanish:
- ¿vete de aquí, no lo entiendes? corre, corre... te van a matar. No puedo ayudarte, entiendes, no puedo…
- No puedo hacer nada por ti, lo siento.

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Figures 27,28 and 29: Screenshots as shown in the scene from (*Bwana*, Uribe. Aurum Creativos Asociados de Radio y Televisión CARTEL, 1996). Note: In this screenshot image, Ombasi falls on the ground and looks at the family car going away, leaving him to face his fate while the Skinheads approach him.

In *Saïd*, the reaction to the attack was Anna's denunciation and resorting to the police to file a complaint and seeking the help of a lawyer to open a case of a xenophobic hate crime attack, despite her father's reservations. The search for witnesses begins and is met with threats from members of the neo-Nazi group targeting the witnesses, especially Anna. This reaction, suggested by the film, shows that the attack was wrong and a criminal act that requires accountability and punishment. Without knowing the reasons behind the attack and the motives of this group, we follow the events from the point of view of the victims, unlike *Salvajes* and *Taxi*, which both delve into the details of the events from the point of view of the aggressors. In *Salvajes*, the investigation begins directly into the case, and the detective sacrifices his relationship with Berta when he gets to know that her two nephews have a connection to the attack. In *Taxi*, the film shows the reaction through an article in the newspaper that Paz's mother reads and links the event to her husband's friends, so she denounces and urges her daughter to break up the relationship with her lover, Dani, because he does terrible things also, but without more explanation, because she is afraid of her husband. This reaction is disappointing in light of a racist attack that led to the death of a person.

The repercussions of xenophobic attacks orchestrated by neo-Nazi groups and their impact on the trajectory of immigrants in Spain vary across different film plots. In the case of *Bwana*, there is no depiction of the attack on the black immigrant character. Instead, the assault is subtly implied as an inevitable outcome, as the character is abandoned to his fate without assistance from the Spanish family. The culmination of this narrative is depicted in the final scene, where the audience witnesses the character collapsing to the ground. This impactful moment is captured through the lens of the family car, allowing Spanish audiences to perceive the unfolding events from the family's perspective, giving the feeling of being in the place of the

family. The cinematography portrays a moving away shot of the skinhead group on motorcycles surrounding Ombasi before launching the attack, providing a visceral and harrowing portrayal of the outcome of the immigrant. Regarding the impact of the attack on Ombasi's journey in Spain, it logically marks the abrupt conclusion of his brief experience, which spans no more than twenty-four hours from his arrival to the moment of the assault. Consequently, this event signifies the end of his aspirations for a better life, extinguishing the dream he pursued.

A similar outcome unfolds in *Taxi*, but the film provides slight details about the immigrant victim of the xenophobic attack, choosing instead to follow the destinies of the aggressors. In a surprising turn, the conclusion reveals internal conflict among the neo-Nazis, leading to some of them turning on each other. This unexpected twist transforms the storyline into a somewhat positive resolution, especially for the main characters, Paz and Dani, creating a semblance of a happy ending for their love story. Remarkably, despite Dani's earlier deadly xenophobic attack, the narrative depicts him as a hero in the end as he saves Paz, ignoring the punishment, and not portraying him as a xenophobic hate criminal. This can result in evoking sympathy from the audience.

In the other two films, the result of the xenophobic attack on the main immigrant characters, Omar and Saïd, is less harmful as they escape alive. Omar's life will change in *Salvajes*, and the investigation will deepen into the attack on him, as he was also involved in smuggling illegal immigrants. Saïd's life is turned upside down after the xenophobic attack. He loses his friend, Husein, in another attack that targets Anna to silence her; when Husein tries to defend her, he gets stabbed and dies on the spot. Events will reach an irreversible point, and Saïd will have a choice between remaining silent about the repeated neo-Nazi attacks and continuing to live or speaking out and giving his testimony to stop the attacks, but that comes at the cost of his deportation and separation from his love Anna, and that was his choice. Hence, the xenophobic attack ended his experience in Spain and took his friend's life.

The portrayal of xenophobic attacks by neo-Nazi white supremacist groups in Spanish immigration films emerges as a direct response to the escalating prevalence of such groups and their associated violence. In a general sense, these depictions tend to adopt a positive approach, with certain filmmakers seeking to delve into the underlying motivations behind the formation of these extremist groups and the ideologies that fuel their actions. Nevertheless, other filmmakers choose to highlight the aftermath of these attacks on immigrants. However, some reservations arise, notably in films like *Taxi,* where an excessive focus on the neo-Nazi group overshadows any exploration of the victims. The absence of justice in the film's conclusion allows the aggressor, Dani, to evade consequences, a narrative choice that motivates the audience to garner sympathy for him through the ostensibly happy ending of the love story with Paz. A parallel situation unfolds in *Bwana*, where the director opts to conclude the film by portraying the immigrant character as a victim. However, there is a notable absence of repercussions for the Skinhead groups, and the Spanish community's abandonment of the immigrant, symbolized by the family.

In *Saïd*, a more optimistic tone prevails as the film introduces a Spanish character who aids the immigrant victim in seeking justice. The narrative culminates in the trial of the perpetrators and the deportation of Saïd, presenting a realistic conclusion that refrains from idealizing the immigrant experience in Spain but achieves justice in the context of a racist assault. It is crucial to acknowledge the role of Anna, embodying the white savior trope, as her help and sympathy prove instrumental in the pursuit of justice.

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Figure 30: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Saïd*, Soler. Centre Promotor de la Imatge CPI S.A., 1998)
Note: In this screenshot image, Saïd gives his testimony in court against the neo-Nazi group.

**Immigrant Face Daily Racist Encounters**

Spanish immigration films often portray the racism, discrimination, and xenophobia faced by immigrants daily. However, films handle the issue of racism differently. In most cases, racism is shown as a reality in the lives of immigrants. Although these situations are numerous in most films, sometimes, addressing racism can reinforce stereotypes, even if the general context of the plot is positive. Therefore, it is important to analyze the use of racist speeches and xenophobic actions in immigration films scene by scene rather than as a full context in order to determine whether the stereotypes are being challenged or reinforced. For instance, in *Lo Nunca Visto* (Seresesky, 2019), a seemingly positive narrative unfolds, advocating for themes of integration, diversity, and acceptance of the "others." However, beneath the veneer of this inclusive message lies a paradoxical layer prevalent with racial clichés presented in a comedic guise, inadvertently prompting laughter at racist jokes and perpetuating stereotypes, beginning with the appearance of four immigrants arriving in the village clad in traditional costumes reminiscent of primitive African tribes, accompanied by a backdrop of African drumbeats and linking this scene to the subsequent one where the mayor urges villagers to retreat to their homes during a celebration because there are some black criminals on the loose, and this is the conversation[26]:

- Mayor: Be careful! Apparently, there is a gang of blacks. Close the doors tightly; they can be very dangerous.

Everyone runs away and hides in their houses, and an old woman shouts:

- Most of them are cannibals, I have seen it on TV.

An old man comments as he runs towards his house:

[26] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Alcaide: Tener cuidado, que al parecer hay una banda de negros, y cerrar bien las puertas, que pueden ser muy peligrosos.
- La mayoría son caníbales, lo he visto en la tele.
- Voy a por mi escopeta.

- I will get my shotgun.

In a state of panic and fear, the arrival of "black people" becomes a safety issue for the village. The reaction is based on prejudices, such as the one mentioned by the old woman she saw on TV. Teresa, who is nominated for the position of new mayor, comes up with the idea of convincing the four immigrants to stay in the village. She intends to increase the village's population so that it does not lose its independence and comes under the jurisdiction of another village.



Figure 31: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Lo Nunca Visto*, Seresesky. Lamia Producciones, 2019).
Note: In this screenshot, the first scene shows four Black immigrants in savage attire arriving at the village.

During the initial encounter between the immigrants and the villagers at the municipal hall, a profound tension fills the air as the locals eagerly anticipate Teresa's surprise to save the dying village. However, the atmosphere turns unexpectedly when immigrants appear, causing a collective gasp among the seated villagers. An elderly man dramatically points his shotgun to the black people and the crowd shout[27]:

- Woman 1: They are criminals, dangerous criminals.
- Woman 2: They come to steal our chickens… to make satanic “screams”!
- The old man: Or to take our women!
- Woman 1: Savages, they are savages.

Subsequently, the villagers reached a consensus to welcome the four immigrants into the village community, driven by the perceived advantages they brought and the necessity to sustain the village's independence with an additional four inhabitants. Despite this decision, an air of confusion remains, revealing underlying stereotypes toward the “other”. In a pivotal gathering

[27] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Son delincuentes, delincuentes peligrosos
- !Vienen a robar nuestras gallinas… para hacer “gritos” satánicos!
- ¡O para llevarse a nuestras mujeres!
- Salvajes, que son salvajes

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at Teresa's house, several villagers discuss the integration of the newcomers. Within this conversation, the following exchange unfolded[28]:

- Young man: It seems that the blacks woke up the beast
- Teresa: Do not call them the blacks
- Young man: and what do you want me to call them?
- Teresa: Well, I do not know, people of color... or people of dark race.
- Mother: Dark race, almost black.

These instances exemplify a pattern observed throughout the film, where humorous dialogue and instinctive responses perpetuate stereotypes, shaping and reinforcing prevailing images of immigrants within the Spanish individual's imagination. The narrative also delves into the complex issue of how to appropriately address a black person, initiating a discussion on the challenges surrounding language and representation. Intriguingly, the director refrains from providing a definitive answer, leaving the question unresolved. This ambiguity mirrors the broader societal uncertainty, reflecting the ongoing and complex nature of the discourse on this matter and unfolding the gap between the Spaniards and the "Others" in contemporary society.

In *Bwana*'s film, Jessie, the little girl, falls from a sand dune while she is sneaking to watch Ombasi bury the body of his dead friend, and then her brother runs to his parents to seek help. Suddenly, Ombasi emerges carrying the child and meets the family. The subsequent dialogue captures the first meeting between the family and Ombasi[29]:

- Boy: That's the black guy who killed the other one.
- Father: Do not move, get away.
- Ombasi: Speaking his own language (untranslated to the audience).

The wife asks Antonio what he is saying, and he replies: quien coño sabe, (who fucking knows?) Ombasi kept talking and indicated by hands that he is hungry, and the boy shouts:

- He wants to eat Jessie.
- Mother: Cannibal… and runs away with the children.

[28] - parece que los negros despertaron a la bestia
- No los llames negros
- ¿y cómo quieres que les llame?
- pues no sé, gente de color... o de raza oscura
- de raza oscura, casi negra

[29] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Ese el negro que mató al otro
- No te muevas, lárgate
- Dice que quiere comer Jessie
- Caníbal…



Figure 32: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Bwana*, Uribe. Aurum Creativos Asociados de Radio y Televisión CARTEL, 1996). Note: This screenshot shows first encounter between Ombasi and the Spanish family.

Hence, the audience's initial encounter between the family and the immigrant serves as the film's primary introduction to the "Other," a character who exclusively communicates in his mother tongue, challenging mutual understanding. Consequently, stereotypes and prejudices become the lens through which he is perceived and treated. In a subsequent scene, Jessie questions the repetitiveness of Ombasi's words, prompting her mother to respond by diminishing the culture of the "other"[30]:

- Jessie: Mom, why does he always say the same thing?
- Mother: Because maybe he doesn't know how to say anything else.
- Jessie: Doesn't he know how to talk more?
- Mother: No, these black people are very uneducated.

Analyzing the above conversation between a child's simple question, emanating from innocence and naivety, and the mother's response, which is supposed to be characterized by rationality and positive guidance, besides the boy's joke about Ombasi's wish to eat Jessie, these instances accentuate the pervasive reinforcement of stereotypes surrounding the "other," an unfamiliar stranger from a different world with perceived unconventional customs. These examples are emblematic of a broader pattern within the film, which abounds with similar references perpetuating preconceived notions about the depicted immigrant.

In *Pídele cuentas al rey* (Antonio Quirós, 1999), a miner heads to Madrid on foot with his wife and 6-year-old son as a form of protest against the closure of the mine in which he works in Asturias. He decides to walk 500 kilometers to see the King; since the constitution of Spain states all citizens are entitled to a decent job, he will ask the King himself for such a job. On

[30] The original conversation in Spanish:
- ¿Mamá, porque siempre lo dice lo mismo?
- Porque a lo mejor no sabe decir otra cosa.
- ¿No sabe hablar más?
- No, estas personas negras son muy incultas.

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the way, Fidel meets an immigrant miner from Portugal with his family, who is also heading to Madrid to look for work. The immigrant suggests going together because they have the same situation. Fidel does not accept and replies[31]:

- Fidel: I want to meet my king, and you do not have a king, go to your country and look for job.
- The Portuguese immigrant replies: I have been here for five years, and we are all Europeans, and this country is also my country, and we have the same rights.

In another scene, Fidel enters a farm on the side of the road to stay the night hidden in a stable and finds a Moroccan immigrant hiding there. The immigrant has made a space for himself to sleep. Fidel realizes that the person is an undocumented immigrant, so he changes his attitude and starts shouting and commands him to vacate the space so he can sleep there instead. Fidel threatens to call the police on the immigrant if he doesn't comply.

This is the conversation:[32]

- The Moroccan immigrant (Jihad): No shouting and no police.
- Fidel: I don't shout, but you move.
- Jihad: This place is mine.
- Fidel: Cursing by meaning I don't care.
- Jihad: Me before.
- Fidel: And me later, but I'm from here, and you are not!

Jihad gives up and moves to another corner in an uncomfortable place, allowing Fidel to take his place. Then, he looks at a photo of himself with his wife and two children as a reminder of his goal of the journey. Fidel approaches him and tells him that he also has two children and asks for his name. Fidel finds Jihad's name difficult to pronounce and decides to call him Mohammad instead. He sympathizes with him when he realizes the similarities in their lives. Both of them are fathers who had to leave their families to find a better life and send money back home. Later, they go to a bar together, and once they enter, Jihad is treated unwelcome by the people inside, and no one wants to serve him. Fidel tries to stand with him, but they both face discrimination.

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[31] - Quiero conocer a mi rey, y tú no tienes rey, ve a tu país y busca trabajo.
- Llevo aquí cinco años y todos somos europeos. Este país también es mi país y tenemos los mismos derechos.

[32] The original conversation in Spanish:
- No gritar, y policía no
- No grito, pero vete.
- Este sitio es lo mío
- Los cojones
- Yo antes
- ¡Y yo después, pero soy de aquí y tú no!



Figure 33: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Pídele Cuentas al Rey*, Quirós. Enrique Cerezo Producciones Cinematográficas S.A., 1999).
Note: In this screenshot, in a stable, Jihad explains to Fidel that this is his place.

In this film, the topic of immigration is not the main focus and is limited to two supporting characters. One is from Portugal, a neighboring country and a member of the European Union. He has been a legal resident for five years. The other character is an undocumented immigrant from Morocco. Fidel displays racist behavior towards both characters and implies that they are not equal to Spaniards since they do not belong to Spain. The director indicates the daily racism that can happen to immigrants in Spain. At the same time, he shows conditioned sympathy with the similar situations with immigrants, which does not intersect with locals' interests. Like when Fidel sympathizes with Jihad and offers him a drink, but he does not give him his place in the stable. It is the same with the Portuguese when Fidel sees him as a competitor. Another sign is when Fidel decides to Call Jihad by a common name for Moroccans, which is Mohammad, generating and reinforcing the stereotype of immigrants from Morocco as they are all the same.

In *Flores de Otro Mundo*, Patricia bravely decides to marry Damián and move with her daughter to live with him in his mother's house. She does her best to care for her husband and does housework and farmwork even though she lacks experience. Despite all this, her mother-in-law treats her with coldness and cruelty. It is not just a troubled relationship between a wife and her old mother-in-law; it is a clear case of racism against the foreign wife. This becomes visible when Patricia's friends visit her at home. Gregoria, the mother-in-law, unwelcomes them and makes harmful comments about their culture, food, way of dancing, and way of communicating. She forces her son to prevent those people from entering the house again. Patricia's distress with Gregoria persists until she makes the decision to leave the house. Throughout this tumultuous period, she finds herself subjected to discriminatory treatment, characterized as an immigrant and an outsider with alleged motives of securing a housing and Spanish legal residency through her marriage to Damián.

The manifestations of racism and discrimination may vary, but their common outcome invariably leads to adverse conditions for immigrants, influencing their overall experience within the new societal context. The cinematic portrayal of these events takes a positive stance, attributing Gregoria's ill-treatment of Patricia to racism. The husband emerges as a contrasting figure within the narrative, treating Patricia with kindness. However, the relentless pressure

exerted by his mother eventually prompts a transformation in his behavior. This shift culminates in an explosive revelation upon discovering Patricia's prior relationship. Consequently, the director connects the marriage failure to the mother's actions, implicitly challenging racism and discrimination.

In *El Sudor de los Ruiseñores* (Manuel Cotelo, 1998), Mihai, a Romanian violinist, decides to emigrate to Spain. He arrives in Madrid to visit his immigrant friend, whom he was given the address of. However, when he reaches, he is surprised to find someone else at the door. The person informs Mihai that the friend he is looking for left a long time ago. Mihai asks if the person has a phone number or a new address, as his friend was the only person he knew in Spain, and he had just arrived from Romania. The person shouted at him:[33]

- Come on, damn it... I don't want to know anything and anyone, go to your country with your fucking friend and look for a life, leave me alone.



Figure 34: Screenshot as shown in the scene from *(El Sudor de los Ruiseñores*, Manuel Cotelo. ITP S.A., 1998)
Note: This screenshot image shows Mihai asking a bar responsible for a job.

Mihai spends his days in the streets of Madrid, while at night, he stays in a hostel until his funds are depleted, compelling him to seek employment. Approaching a local bar, he inquiries about potential job opportunities, and the bar responsible responds:[34]

- First, you are not Spanish.
- Second, you do not have a work permit.
- Third, you do not have experience as a waiter.

It seems like the hiring questions for immigrants were unfairly biased against them. Rather than being rejected based on a lack of work experience, Mihai was turned down solely because he

[33] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Venga ya, coño... Que no quiero saber de esto nada y ninguna, vete a tu país con tu puto amigo y buscáis la vida, déjame en paz.

[34] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Primero, no eres español
- Segundo, no tienes el permiso de trabajo
- Tercero, no tienes experiencia como camarero

was not Spanish, which is discriminatory and racist. The responsable should have first inquired about his experience and then apologized for not being able to hire him due to his lack of experience without even mentioning that he was a foreigner. The director's choices leave one to ponder the plight of immigrants in Spain and the daily racism they may face in Spanish society.

In many films, directors choose to highlight racist or moral references, sometimes with explanation and often without, in order to make a fleeting impact on the audience. In *Seis Dias Corrientes*, Moha is a Moroccan immigrant who is given a one-week trial at a small plumbing and electrical company on the outskirts of Barcelona. He is paired with Valero, an older worker at the company who is uncomfortable working with Moha and harasses him simply because of his immigrant. We see several instances that symbolize racism with stereotypes. However, over time, Valero's attitude changes as he spends more time with Moha and gets to know him as a person without any prejudices. In *El Traje*, the life of an undocumented immigrant named Patricio changes when he is gifted a suit as a gratitude for helping a man change his car's flat tire. The suit boosts his self-confidence, and the irony lies in the way he is treated before and after wearing the suit. Earlier, he was invisible and overlooked, but now he exists, gets noticed, and even manages to flirt with a shop assistant until she leaves him when the suit wears off. This kind of exclusion and discrimination, which often makes immigrants invisible, can be seen as the most common type of racism.



Figure 35: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*El Traje*, Rodríguez. Tesela Producciones Cinematográficas S.L., 2002) Note: In this screenshot image, Patricio wears the suit and enters a private exhibition, anticipating the arrival of his date.

In *Ismael*, a young boy named Ismael goes on a journey with his paternal grandmother to meet his father for the first time. His father had previously had a relationship with Ismael's mother but left her without knowing she was pregnant. The mother is an African immigrant who has integrated well into society. They stopped by a bar on the road. Ismael tried to buy juice from a vending machine, but it got stuck. He tries to move the refrigerator to get his juice, but the barman sees him and shouts, calling him an animal and asking him to leave. The barman's racist treatment towards the little boy goes unchallenged by other customers. Ismael asks for his money back or the juice he paid for, but the barman refuses and tries to kick him out. At this point, the grandmother, who is a white woman, steps in and demands that the barman

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give the boy his juice or refund his money. This scene is a reference to the racist attitudes that Ismael is exposed to because of his skin color. Despite being born in Spain to a Spanish father, he is still subjected to the prejudgment that he is an immigrant or of immigrant descent. The director also highlights how the grandmother sees her own grandson treated differently due to his skin color and perceived ethnicity.

Caye, a young Spanish woman, works as a prostitute in the film *Princesas*. She meets Zulema, an immigrant from Ecuador who has recently joined a small square where prostitutes gather to be picked up. In the same corner, there is a salon where she used to meet and talk. There was a discussion about the increase of immigrant prostitutes who have recently joined, creating intense competition for Spanish prostitutes. One of the ladies decides to call the police about the presence of some prostitutes in the square. The aim is to bring problems to foreign prostitutes, making them feel harassed and displaced. This is considered a racist act based on origin and hostility towards immigrants. However, Caye will go out and drag out Zulema to save her from arrest. The director of the film used this to show the presence of these acts in the workplace that create competition between local Spaniards and immigrants, even in the field of prostitution.

In *A Escondidas*, Ibra, a Moroccan minor immigrant, and his friends, residing in an unaccompanied minor's protection center, face instances of racism and discrimination. The dynamics of male competition among Spanish teenagers intensify these issues, particularly in the context of romantic pursuits. A poignant example unfolds at a place of party where everyone initially enjoys dancing without hindrance. However, when a teenage Moroccan attempts to approach a Spanish girl, he becomes the target of aggression from a local Spanish guy. Subsequently, a confrontation ensues between the group of Moroccan immigrants and the Spanish adolescents, leading to the expulsion of the Moroccans from the club. One of the expelled minor immigrants reflects on the recurring pattern that whenever conflicts arise, the Moroccans consistently bear the consequences of expulsion. This sequence underscores the deeply rooted discrimination and violence that can manifest between immigrants and Spaniards, particularly concerning immigrants' interactions with Spanish women. The film effectively portrays how male competition can exacerbate existing racial tensions, bringing to light the complex interplay between racism, competition, and societal attitudes toward immigrants.

Uncovering daily racism against immigrants in Spanish films delves into the intricate realm of narratives that examine the profound complications surrounding immigrant realities in the context of daily racist encounters. Through diverse directors, these narratives weave compelling stories illuminating the struggles, resilience, and identity formation of immigrants confronted by the pervasive specter of racism. By navigating the intersections of storytelling and social issues, most films offer a profound exploration of immigrants' experiences, shedding light on the multifaceted dimensions of xenophobia, resilience, and the pursuit of belonging.

In this cinematic narrative, filmmakers let viewers empathize with and gain insights into the lived experiences of immigrants as they navigate the challenging terrain of daily life amidst racial adversity. The classification of films based on their treatment of stereotypes becomes evident when examining distinct categories, particularly discernible between authorial and commercial productions. Authorial films, exemplified by works like *Saïd, A Escondidas,* and *Seis Días Corrientes*, tend to explore the intricate terrain of immigration issues with precision. These films delicately balance the evaluation of stereotypes, either challenging or reinforcing them. On the other hand, commercial films approach the subject with a more superficial lens, often leaving it unresolved and contributing to the reinforcement of stereotypes. This is

exemplified by films such as *Taxi*, *Salvajes*, *El Dios de Madera,* and *Lo Nunca Visto,* which lack the depth and exploration found in authorial and artistic films.

#### 4.2.1.2 Xenophobia and Racism as a Reaction to Socioeconomic Events

In this subchapter, we delve into the complex interplay between socioeconomic events, specifically times of financial crisis and social issues, which result in the emergence of xenophobic violence and racism as reactionary responses. As societies grapple with economic challenges, a troubling pattern often unfolds, exposing underlying tensions that manifest in discriminatory actions and racially charged incidents. Financial constraints, in particular, emerge as a primary catalyst, bringing up competition for limited resources, immigrants being blamed for taking jobs and resulting in anxiety between native locals and immigrants. Beyond economic factors, difficult political and social conditions can increase tensions among diverse cultures, triggering escalating resentment and fear of the "other." Spanish cinema explores the link between socioeconomic upheavals and the rise of violence and racism. Through the analysis of film findings, we will examine how films showcase the societal effects and aftermath during difficult periods, especially when violence and racism are used as reactionary elements. Furthermore, we aim to investigate how filmmakers manage to portray these themes in their films. As the camera lens captures the complexities of human behavior during these critical times, the exploration will shed light on how the medium deals with the repercussions of societal upheavals, providing both an insightful analysis and understanding of the cinematic representation of these pressing issues.

In *Catalunya über alles!* the film unfolds through three chapters, each is serving as a standalone narrative that effortlessly weaves into the overarching exploration of a society intentionally blind to prejudices against immigrants. While the initial chapter, centered around the concept of social prejudgment, introduces a local convict who returns home after doing time in prison for rape, it sets the stage for the pervasive judgment of victimization faced by those marked by society's preconceived notions. The second chapter highlights the struggles of an unemployed Senegalese immigrant and his family during a financial crisis, offering a poignant portrayal of the integration challenges. In the last chapter of the film, a local businessman returns home with his family to find a burglar who finds out to be an immigrant, whom he pursues and kills. After being arrested, he quickly becomes a local hero as the media presents him as the perfect family man. Subsequent revelations illuminate a more intricate truth: the protagonist was engaged in an extramarital relationship with an escort hailing from Eastern Europe. Complicating matters further, the burglar, initially perceived as a mere criminal, emerges as the pimp associated with the mentioned escort. In a turn of events, the prostitute resorts to blackmail, pushing the protagonist to kill her too. The filmmaker focuses on the reaction of society, media, and the family of the businessman in how to react to the two murders in which the victims are immigrants.

In the second chapter, the Senegalesse immigrant finally finds a job as a debt collector, which in Spain involves publicly humiliating the debtor into payment. He is surprised at how he was accepted at the height of the financial crisis. The audience is able to find out the answer by the below conversation between a manager who is interviewing the immigrant and the business owner:[35]

[35] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Dale el trabajo

- The owner: Give him the job.
- The manager: But he is black, we are “The tax collector of the Catalan”.
- The owner: It is perfect that he's black.
- The manager: Are you crazy.
- The owner: Do not you see?
- The manager: No.
- The owner: It is scarier, being followed screws you up, but if it is by a black man... it kills you! And I have an idea for the costume.

The owner dresses the immigrant in local costume and sends him in pursuit of a local right-wing politician campaigning on an anti-immigration platform



Figure 36: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Catalunya über alles!*, Térmens. Segarra Films, 2011)
Note: In this screenshot image, The Senegalese immigrant gets a tax collector job and wears the local suit of “El Cobrador Català.”

This underscores the reality that the black immigrant secures the job only due to his different appearance, serving as a reminder of his status as an outsider in a predominantly white society. Consequently, his presence draws unwanted attention and exacerbates the discomfort of those under scrutiny, which the business director considers a brilliant idea. Over time, the Senegalese immigrant, whose name remains undisclosed throughout the film, gains insight into the workings of the business. Determined to carve out his own path, he boldly resigns from his position to establish a business of his own and let his family members join him, built upon the same concept of his previous job. Remarkably, their enterprise flourishes rapidly, prompting a mass exodus of customers from the rival agency to their doorstep. This leads to the previous job owner confronting him at his place, consumed by anger, and below the conversation:[36]

[36] The original conversation in Spanish:

- pero es negro, somos “El cobrador del frac catalán”
- Es perfecto que sea negro.
- :¿Estás loco?
- Asusta más, que te sigan te jode, ¡pero si es un negro… te mata! Y tengo un idea para el vestuario.
- Escucha negro, aquí eres una mierda… antes de que llegaras, mis padres, abuelos, bisabuelos y tatarabuelos trabajaron esta tierra y no dejaremos que una banda de monos nos la robe.

- The owner: Listen black man, here you are a shit... Before you arrived, my parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents worked on this land, and we won't let a gang of apes steal it from us).
- The immigrant: Now you have shown your true colors.

The director highlights the issue of racism and xenophobia that can arise from certain situations or circumstances, suggesting that anyone can be susceptible to these negative attitudes towards immigrants when faced with the fear of the unknown, when forced to choose between those who share their culture and language and a foreigner, or when the immigrant threatens their personal interests. The context of the film takes place during the 2008 financial crisis, where the Catalan agency's owner is on the brink of bankruptcy due to immigrant competition. This situation makes him develop xenophobic, racist, and anti-immigrant attitudes towards the Senegalese immigrant, which is a result of the circumstances he finds himself in due to losing the business to an immigrant.

A distinct manifestation of xenophobia and racism that comes as a reaction to social events immigrant-related is exemplified in the El Ejido riots of February 2000. Racial unrest stirred the Spanish public opinion in El Ejido, a small town on Almeria outskirts. The trigger was the tragic killing of a Spanish girl, with suspicions pointing towards a Moroccan immigrant. This incident triggered a surge of anger and protests within the city, escalating into widespread violence specifically targeting immigrants, particularly those employed as agricultural workers in the fields known as greenhouses. The repercussions were devastating, homes and mosques were razed, shops and restaurants owned by immigrants were robbed, and organized campaigns attacked neighborhoods and gatherings of immigrants. The escalating unrest compelled some immigrant families to seek refuge, either fleeing their homes or turning to police stations in search of safety. Among the displaced were women and children, spending anxious nights under police guard. These harrowing events not only heightened racial and social tensions but also left an indelible mark on Spain's immigration and integration policies (Constenla & Torregrosa, 2000). This spontaneous and unorganized violence laid bare the deep-seated animosities that had long simmered beneath the surface. Two years later, Spanish cinema addressed this incident through Chus Gutiérrez's film *Poniente* (2002), which addresses the racial tension and conflict between locals and immigrant workers in the greenhouses through a plot told by locals. Spanish protagonists confront the town's hostility toward immigrant workers, while immigrant characters take supporting roles.

Having spent several years as a teacher in Madrid, Lucía and her daughter Clara decide to return to Lucía's hometown following her father's death. This transition is fueled by inheritance of his tomato farm, cultivated within greenhouses. Amidst the familiar landscape, Lucía rediscovers her childhood and forms new connections, notably with Perla. However, the community's xenophobia surfaces, particularly directed at the newly arrived undocumented workers. In this environment, Lucía finds unexpected love with Curro, the farm's accountant, an aspiring man envisioning a beach bar (Chiringuito) with his Moroccan immigrant friend, Abdenbi, intending to call it Poniente. Together, the couple confront the town's bigotry, including Lucía's strained relationship with her brother-in-law and the foreman, who both abuse immigrant workers. The narrative takes a poignant turn towards tragedy, exploring the depths of racism and bigotry embedded in the town's fabric. The film serves as a poignant commentary on societal reactions to foreign presence, unraveling the emergence of xenophobia and violence

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- Ahora has mostrado tus verdaderos colores.

during periods of increased social tension related to immigration. Delving into contemporary, social, and political sensitivities, the storyline addresses the exploitation of illegal immigrants by unethical entrepreneurs. In a narrative where white characters dominate, immigrant characters remain relegated to the background, shedding light on the harsh reality faced by those who arrive in Spain illegally, forced to accept unsafe work conditions as the only option available to undocumented individuals.



Figure 37: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Poniente*, Gutiérrez. Amboto Audiovisual S.L., 2002).
Note: This screenshot image shows the systematic destruction of property targeting immigrant workers.

The final resolution of the film concludes with distressing scenes, where the homes of immigrants are set ablaze and destroyed by local vandals as a supposed retaliation for the alleged destruction of plastic farms by the immigrants following their strike. The attack, initiated by some farm owners and their agents, quickly escalated beyond their control, with various parties spontaneously and uncoordinatedly participating. This event and its aftermath warrant examination within the broader context of prevalent racism and anti-immigrant hostility in society, acting as a catalyst that ignited existing tensions. The film challenges the mainstream narrative of the locals' attack being a reaction to the killing of a Spanish girl by a young Moroccan immigrant. Instead, it presents an alternative perspective, asserting that the immigrants were not guilty of any crime that triggered the chaos. The escalating atmosphere is exacerbated by some farm owners opposing the working immigrants' strike, leading to a tragic incident orchestrated by Miguel, Lucía's cousin, who was conflicting with her, took advantage of it to recover part of her land, which he claims that it is his, so he sent two men to set fire to the greenhouses. Thus, he tragically and unintentionally killed his son, who had been appointed by Lucía and was sleeping in the reserve. Then, the situation exploded and became an excuse for an anti-immigrant xenophobia attack that resulted in the destruction of their property and the burning of their homes and places of worship. The film highlights the deep-seated hatred for immigrants, driven by economic interests and perceived threats to the indigenous population's living space. As the immigrant workers unite to improve their conditions and announce a strike, economic justifications give way to racism.

Despite the discrepancy between the director's narrative and the news about the El Ejido events, Gutierrez confronts stereotypes, challenging viewers to reconsider their preconceptions.

The decision to narrate the story from the perspective of locals, focusing on the internal conflict within a Spanish family rather than the immigrants, adds a sympathetic tone toward the immigrants indirectly through the protagonist, Lucía, who could have decided to sell the land she inherited from her father and return to Madrid. But she chose to remain in this field. Confronts aggressive masculinity, stands against intolerance and inequality, and, alongside Curro, advocates for immigrant workers, striving to bring them justice.

#### 4.2.1.3 Xenophobia and Violence Against Immigrant Women

In the exploration of societal issues within the realm of Spanish cinema, a particularly poignant and troubling phenomenon comes to the forefront, xenophobia and violence against immigrant women. This subchapter delves into the portrayal and examination of the socio-cultural challenges within the cinematic landscape of Spain. It unravels the complex narratives in the fabric of Spanish films, shedding light on the multifaceted dimensions of xenophobia and its impact on immigrant women. This exploration underscores the artistic representation of such themes but also serves as a crucial entry point for understanding and addressing the broader implications of these issues within the socio-political context of contemporary Spain.

Spanish cinema predominantly depicted immigrants in its early stages, mainly focusing on male characters, although there were noteworthy exceptions in the 1990s. Films like *Cosas que dejé en La Habana and Flores de Otro Mundo* marked a departure by showcasing the experiences of female Latinas. Our quantitative analysis aligns with this observation, revealing a cinematic trend where male immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and Maghreb take precedence. At the same time, female characters are predominantly portrayed as hailing from Latin America. This pattern may stem from both statistical realities and societal stereotypes. As our investigation unfolds, it becomes evident that the cinematic representation of immigrant women undergoes a transformative journey. Over time, it engages with profound issues uniquely affecting women, including but not limited to violence, gender-based xenophobia, human trafficking, and sexual assaults. This evolution reflects a dynamic dialogue between the cinematic medium and the societal challenges immigrant women face, enriching the narrative tapestry of Spanish immigration cinema.

A detailed analysis of key films becomes imperative in our quest to unravel the intricate portrayal of immigrant women in Spanish cinema. The selected cinematic pieces provide a narrative backdrop and reflect and shape societal perceptions. Among the films under scrutiny, *Flores de Otro Mundo* (Icíar Bollaín, 1999) stands as a pioneering work, breaking away from the prevalent male-centric focus of its time and capturing the essence of female Latinas navigating the complexities of a foreign land. *Princesas* (León de Aranoa, 2005) further advances the discourse, offering an exploration of the lives of immigrant women engaged in sex work. This film delves into the intersectionality of gender, immigration status, and economic vulnerability, unraveling the multifaceted challenges faced by its protagonists. The cinematic landscape takes a leap forward with *Evelyn* (De Ocampo, 2011) and *La Dona Il·legal* (Térmens, 2020), which both address the harrowing realities of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, amplifying the urgency of the conversation around exploitation and abuse faced by immigrant women. *Código Emperador* (Coira, 2022) represents contemporary additions to our analysis and explores the abuses and exploitation of vulnerable immigrant women in the pursuit of adjusting their legal status. Each film serves as a critical lens through which we aim to dissect and comprehend the intricate layers of xenophobia and violence against immigrant women in Spanish cinema, contributing to a more profound understanding of the societal issues at play.

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*Flores de Otro Mundo* compellingly portrays xenophobia and violence against immigrant women. It delves into the experiences of immigrant women in a small Spanish town called Santa Eulalia, without marriageable women or a future. The mayor organizes a yearly festival whose purpose is to unite the single men of the town with women from outside, mainly immigrants, to prevent them from ending up emigrating and combat rural depopulation. The narrative addresses these women's challenges as they confront cultural prejudices and xenophobia. The characters grapple with a society that often perceives them as outsiders, leading to instances of discrimination and violence. The director weaves a poignant narrative, shedding light on the intersectionality of gender and immigration, showcasing the resilience of immigrant women as they navigate a hostile environment. As previously mentioned in the daily racism subchapter, Patricia suffers from her mother-in-law's bad treatment and hard time based on being an immigrant and getting married to her son Damián for home and economic security and the sake of adjusting her legal status. Milady, a twenty-year-old Cuban full of life and dreams, leaves Havana and lands in the town with the help of a wealthy and arrogant bricklayer, Carmelo, who has already traveled to Cuba on other occasions. A middle-aged man who is going to have her as a girlfriend to show off in town that he got her without the need for the festival. Where love is obviously conspicuous by its absence, Carmelo is obsessed with an illusion, and Milady only seeks to have fun and uses Carmelo to bring her to Europe in order to one day move to her real boyfriend, who lives in Italy. She crashes into the harsh social reality of machismo and immigration. Carmelo turns her into another trophy, marginalizes her to domestic confinement, and ends up beating her in a fit of jealousy.




Figure 38: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Flores de Otro Mundo*, Bollaín. Producciones La Iguana S.L., 1997) Note: This screenshot shows Milady checking her face after being subjected to violence by Carmelo.

In comparing these two immigrants' experiences and another relationship brought together, Marirrosi, a Spanish woman from Bilbao, also participates in the festival and gets to know Alfonso. The couple is the only normal one that gets along without psychological harm or physical abuse because, in their case, they are two people on the same social level; they can talk directly to each other, and there is no exchange of any kind, such as securing a home, economic help, or Spanish residency permit. Marriosi, as a Spanish woman, has the power to leave Alfonso without any control or fear of losing benefits that she does not need; Alfonso knows he cannot harm or control her because he has nothing on her.

On the other side, both Patricia and Milady are portrayed as victims of a system that does not allow them to live a dignified life nor have the same rights and opportunities as the rest of the Spaniards. This vulnerable situation causes them to be exposed to violence and discrimination. The part in which Damián realizes that Patricia is still married to another man, and with the pressure of his mom, expels her from his house. And then, at the last moment, he decides to keep her, so he gets her items out of her friend's car when they are almost to leave. Patricia gets emotional and starts crying in happiness. She agrees to stay, thus declaring that the relationship will be based on his submission. The rise and fall of the other are a complete concession to psychological abuse. Immigrant women suffer from difficulties of acclimatization, coexistence within another culture, compatibility with old traditions, and integration in the face of masculine dominance, social and family misgivings in the face of ancestral racism, sometimes unconscious but deeply rooted.

*Princesses* intricately weaves the narrative of two sex workers navigating the complexities of multicultural Madrid. Caye, a Spanish woman driven by the pursuit of fast money for breast augmentation through her work as a prostitute, and Zulema, an undocumented immigrant hailing from the Dominican Republic, is saving to be able to bring her son to Spain. The film unveils a social divide from the onset, distinguishing between Spanish prostitutes frequenting a local salon and their immigrant counterparts who gather in a nearby square to meet clients. This separation not only underscores societal marginalization but also exposes the vulnerability of immigrant women, often subjected to abuse and violence due to their precarious legal status, which leaves them unable to defend themselves. Despite the spatial and societal divide, Caye and Zulema's lives intersect when Caye discovers Zulema injured in her apartment, victimized by a Spanish official who exploits her vulnerability under the guise of offering a residency permit. The director astutely avoids explicitly depicting the assaults, leaving room for doubt regarding their occurrence and intensity. As Caye urges Zulema to report the abuse, Zulema, hindered by her lack of legal documentation, expresses a deep-seated fear of repercussions. Here, the film introduces distinctions in Caye's perception of the "other," emphasizing the impact of legal limitations that not only perpetuate gender violence but also obstruct justice for victims. Women immigrants engaged in prostitution often find themselves trapped in a risky web of violence and abuse from various quarters, highlighting the multifaceted challenges they confront. Zulema's experience, where she endures a brutal assault from a client, unveils the vulnerability that permeates this line of work.



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Figure 39: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Princesas*, León de Aranoa. Reposado Producciones S.L., 2005). Note: This screenshot image shows Caye accompanying Zulema to the hospital following a harrowing assault by a client.

Tragically, the cycle of abuse extends beyond clients to include pimps who exploit their precarious situations for financial gain, besides the local prostitutes who see immigrant prostitutes as competitors and make them in trouble with the police as they are undocumented.

*Evelyn* (De Ocampo, 2011) and *La Dona Il·legal* (Térmens, 2020) delve into the darkest corners of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Through their narratives, these films confront the harrowing realities immigrant women face, whose voices often remain unheard in the shadows of society. By shining a spotlight on the exploitation and abuse endured by these marginalized individuals, *Evelyn and La Dona Il·legal* enrich the immigration Spanish cinematic landscape. Both films touch on sex trafficking rings and how they promise young women a new life in Europe and attractive work contracts, only to end up in coercion prostitution and exploited as new modern slavery.

In *Evelyn*, the narrative delves into the insidious tactics used to ensnare vulnerable girls from economically disadvantaged countries into prostitution networks under the guise of promising job opportunities. These girls, lured by false promises of a better life, find themselves trapped in a cycle of exploitation and abuse upon arrival, only to be coerced into sex work against their will. The film follows the protagonist's courageous resistance against this exploitation, highlighting her steadfast determination to defy the perpetrators and reclaim her autonomy. In contrast, *La Dona Il·legal* exposes the grim realities faced by immigrant women who fall victim to deception and coercion within prostitution networks. These women, deceived and subjugated, are stripped of their passports and held captive, their freedom and agency mercilessly stripped away. The film unflinchingly confronts the pervasive influence of prostitution ring managers and sheds light on the pervasive corruption within law enforcement, complicit in perpetuating the cycle of exploitation. Moreover, it explores the sinister role played by foreign detention centers, preying on vulnerable runaways and subjecting them to further victimization and trauma. Through their searing portrayal of exploited immigrant women in the prostitution networks, the two films serve as a different perspective for Spanish immigration cinema to shine a spotlight on the dark underbelly of women immigrants in Spain. They also provide a platform for amplifying the voices of marginalized immigrants through more profound depictions to deliver a comprehensive image of their situations.



Figure 40: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Evelyn*, De Ocampo. Fernando Colomo Producciones Cinematográficas S.L., 2011).
Note: This screenshot image shows Evelyn confronts confinement after rejecting prostitution.

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Evelyn, a young girl from Peru, gets a job contract and emigrates to Spain. She thinks she will work with her cousin in a restaurant. But she is tricked and kidnapped into prostitution at a roadside club. This is the story of brainwashing, the one that transforms a naive village girl into a sex slave. However, De Ocampo indicates that Evelyn is not a desperate girl to leave her home country but is duped into doing so with promises of high-paid employment by a fake agency where everything seems normal, from the contract to the plane journey until she reaches the other side. She certainly wouldn't mind staying at home. Her family isn't particularly wealthy, but they get by, and initially, it is her mom who is more won over by the glamorous woman from an agency who has already helped her cousin Margarita emigrate to Spain who is doing good and sends money to her parents. Under pressure from her family and reassured by phone calls from Margarita, Evelyn decides to take a chance and quickly descends into a nightmare. On arrival in Spain, she finds not the bright new future she had hoped for but the confusing world of a brothel, with Margarita beaten down by months in the place and so fearful for her family back home to be attacked that she coerced Evelyn into joining her rather than tell the truth.

*La Dona Il·legal* unfolds within the office of immigration lawyer Fernando, who emerges as a compassionate advocate for undocumented individuals to arrange their legal status and avoid deportation. As he interacts with immigrants from diverse backgrounds, their testimonies lend an air of authenticity reminiscent of a documentary. However, the narrative takes a dramatic turn when Fernando undertakes the seemingly straightforward task of preventing the deportation of a young woman from Kosovo. Tragedy strikes when authorities announce her suicide while detained in a migration detention center, propelling Fernando into a quest for truth. With the aid of the victim's friend, an undocumented Nigerian immigrant ensnared in a prostitution ring, and an immigrant of Moroccan origin who is an activist in the field of immigrants' rights, conducted further investigation. Fernando got more information about the terrible conditions in the identification and deportation centers and confronted formidable obstacles, including strong opposition from the police chief. As he delves deeper, Fernando unravels a web of corruption, sexual assault, and fabricated suicides plaguing the detention center. A sinister nexus serving the interests of politicians and prostitution network owners alike.




Figure 41: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*La dona il·legal*, Térmens. Segarra Films, 2020).
Note: This screenshot image shows Juliet's ordeal as an undocumented immigrant prostitute: Arrest, Assault, and Abuse by Law Enforcement.

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*Evelyn*'s plot is a journey through the psychological horror that Evelyn experiences; trapped within the four walls of a corrupt world, she shares a room with a Nigerian immigrant who is losing her mind because they took her child away from her, and she does whatever it takes to see him again. The prospects are bleak, with rape and drugs high on the agenda as brothel owner Ricardo tries to break her spirit to let her work in order to extract the trip expenses he paid to bring her to Spain. She bravely refuses to compromise even when things become desperate after two times of escape attempts and punishment. She explores what it means to be stripped of your identity, from your name on down, until it is hard to find the person that you once were. *La Dona Il·legal* examines the inner workings of prostitution networks, and the plight of immigrant women ensnared within this exploitative industry. Coincidentally, picking up where *Evelyn* left off, it delves into the intricate details of individuals who have fallen prey to these networks, resigned to their grim reality, and forced to endure harsh and degrading conditions. Highlighting the pervasive cycle of exploitation, the film exposes how these women are burdened with insurmountable debts and stripped of their passports, leaving them trapped in a relentless cycle of servitude. The final blow comes during police raids, where the thinnest thread of hope snaps, condemning undocumented young women to the confines of foreign detention centers. With each twist and turn, the circle of exploitation tightens, amplifying the nightmare for these vulnerable individuals.

In *Evelyn*, De Ocampo's deliberate decision to refrain from depicting physical punishment or graphic scenes of sexual assault to control the protagonist suggests a deliberate shift in focus from sensationalism to condemnation. By avoiding the typical tropes of the thriller genre, the film instead aims to serve as a potent critique of the systemic issues underpinning sex trafficking. Through the portrayal of immigrant women ensnared in this cycle of exploitation, the narrative provides an important examination of the complex factors that drive individuals into prostitution. Rather than simply presenting these women as victims or villains, the film delves deeper into their motivations through other characters, shedding light on the socioeconomic pressures and vulnerabilities that they look for any opportunity to bring them to Europe. Once they get into a prostitution network, they are trapped for a while; some leave after that, and some continue due to a lack of viable alternatives that compel them to embark on this perilous path. The film challenges conventional stereotypes about immigrant women in the prostitution networks.

The conclusion of *Evelyn* is marked by a disturbing turn of events as the police raid the hotel where she's been ensnared in exploitation. The pimp hands Evelyn her passport along with a small sum of money and a letter. An officer accompanies her to the police station and comforts her. As she finally sees the light at the end of the tunnel, the contents of the letter shatter her optimism. Instead of relief, she discovers a sinister message with a photo of her brother gleefully posing with a new bike alongside the woman from the fraudulent agency that lured her into this trap. Realizing the grave threat to her family's safety, Evelyn makes a daring escape and returns to the same hotel, but this time she is convinced that there is no escape, so her cousin receives her with the impression that the same thing happened to her before and that she has accepted the reality, and that the same thing will happen to Evelyn. Yet, her resigned acceptance of their fate serves as a sobering reminder of the cyclical nature of exploitation.

*La Dona Il·legal* is more optimistic and concludes on a hopeful note, showcasing the victory of justice in the face of corruption and exploitation. When the corrupt policeman attempts to hastily deport Juliet, the Nigerian immigrant he had deceived with false promises of residency permit, he abuses her for a while. Fernando and Fatima, the impassioned activist,

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boldly intervene. They orchestrate a protest outside the detention center, drawing attention to Juliet's plight, the Kosovan woman incident, and the wider injustices within the system. The ensuing media coverage sparks an official investigation, leading to the arrest of the corrupt policeman and the detention center's director. Juliet secures her residency permit with Fernando's assistance, symbolizing a beacon of hope amidst adversity. The film's final moments feature on-camera interviews with real-life immigrants and deportees, their poignant narratives shedding light on the harsh realities of detention centers and the struggles faced by undocumented immigrants.




Figure 42: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*La dona il·legal*, Térmens. Segarra Films, 2020).
Note: This screenshot shows Closing Credits Includes Real Interviews: Voices of Immigrants and Deportees.

### 4.2.2 Intersections of Otherness: Local-Immigrant Relationships

This theme explores the depth and significance of friendships between native locals and immigrants, highlighting the forging of profound connections amidst cultural differences. It is divided into two sections: native local-immigrant romantic relationships and local-immigrant friendships.

The relationships between the native local and immigrant characters in immigration films touch on romantic relationships transcending borders, showcasing the complexities and obstacles faced by immigrant-local couples from different cultural backgrounds. Some films address the challenges of cultural differences, including religion and traditions, like *Tomándote, El Proximo Oriente,* and *Lo Nunca Visto*. Some other films address societal views and expectations toward these relationships and the resilience of love amidst immigration-related difficulties, such as *Las Cartas de Alou, Saïd, El Dios de Madera, Flores de Otro Mundo, and A Escondidas.* The second section of the theme investigates the depiction of friendship. It explores the comparison between the challenges of the two parts in the context of searching for work and opportunities in a large city and a comparison between internal and external migration, such as the case in *En La Puta Calle, El Sudor de Los Ruiseñores, El Traje, Princesas,* and *Agua con Sal*. Another trend examines the friendship built on knowing the Other,

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observing cultural differences, sympathizing, and providing support, like in the case of *Poniente, Retorno a Hansala, Un Novio Para Yasmina,* and *Vasil.*

#### 4.2.2.1 Local-Immigrant Relationships

In this section, we will study and analyze the romantic relationships that arise between Spaniards and immigrants. We will focus, in particular, on how these relationships are portrayed in Spanish immigration films and explore the different dimensions of these interactions. We will analyze the social and cultural complexities accompanying these relationships, including prevailing stereotypes and their challenges. In addition, we will trace the evolution of cinematic depictions of these relationships over the years, highlighting shifts in the narratives and artistic styles used. We will also examine how these films influence audiences' understanding and perceptions of relations between locals and immigrants and whether they enhance mutual understanding or perpetuate stereotypes.

We will divide this analysis into two parts, each one addressing opposing dimensions of these relationships. The first part will address the representation of romantic relationships between local individuals and immigrants based on exploitation. Films such as *Cosas que dejé en La Habana, Un Novio para Yasmina,* and *El Dios de Madera* depicted immigrants resorting to romantic relationships with Spaniards to gain residence permits or ensure a place to live and food. On the other hand, films such as *Tomándote, Bwana,* and *Codigo Emperador* deal with how Spaniards exploit the situation of immigrants as they enter into emotional or sexual relationships for the purpose of casual sex or to achieve material or service benefits. Between these two extremes, some films embody mutual exploitation or mutual interests between the two parties, such as *Flores de Otro Mundo* and *Lo Nunca Visto.* In these films, romantic relationships are presented as a space for negotiation between shared needs and desires, reflecting a complex balance between mutual exploitation and cooperation.

The second part will focus on embodying the relationships between Spaniards and immigrants and how they are reflected in the society and surroundings of the couples. We will look at films that reflect acceptance, diversity, and multiculturalism, where relationships are portrayed positively as an example of cultural understanding and integration. For example, films such as *El Proximo Oriente, Retorno a Hansala,* and *Ismael* portray relationships between Spaniards and immigrants as a bridge for cultural communication and social harmony, reinforcing the idea of multiculturalism and successful integration into Spanish society. On the other hand, other films focus on the negative side of these relationships, where rejection and discrimination are embodied, which leads to the relationship not continuing. Films such as *Las Cartas de Alou, Saïd, El Traje, and A Escondidas* highlight the challenges that relations between Spaniards and immigrants face due to cultural and ethnic biases, which lead to the breakdown of these relations due to their lack of acceptance by society. These films reflect the conflicts and tensions that can arise when love and passion are met with discrimination and social rejection barriers.

By analyzing these two opposing sides, we can provide a full picture of how Spanish cinema depicts emotional relationships between locals and immigrants and the impact these depictions can have on audience perceptions and social attitudes towards multiculturalism and integration in Spain.

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#### 4.2.2.1.1 The portrayal of romantic relationships involving exploitation

In Spanish cinema, the relationships between local Spanish individuals and immigrants are a topic surrounded by many stereotypes, most notably exploitation. Films often show immigrants in irregular situations in vulnerable roles, where they are reluctant to enter into relationships that involve securing residency permits or certain conditions. The immigrant character is depicted exploiting the relationship with the Spaniard, or vice versa, as he/she is exploited with promises to secure what he/she needs.

In *Cosas que dejé en La Habana*, we follow the story of three sisters who arrive to Madrid from Havana in search of a better life. They are received by their Aunt Maria, a Cuban who has lived in Spain for many years. She takes advantage of their presence to work in her small fur workshop. Nena, the youngest sister, aspires to become an actress and has the support of her sisters. She meets Igor, a handsome young Cuban man, and they have a romantic relationship. But her aunt plans to marry her to her friend's homosexual son to hide his sexual orientation, which complicates matters even more. The same depiction of Nena in *Un Novio Para Yasmina is a story of Yasmina, an* educated and attractive young Moroccan woman who came to Spain to continue university studies. She lives in a small town in Extremadura with her brother Abdo and many other Moroccan farmers who appear to be undocumented immigrants living in poor conditions. Despite her presence among them, Yasmina feels completely incompatible with her Moroccan surroundings and strives to remain in Spain after the end of her studies. She faces great challenges in achieving this goal and resorts to romantic relationships to marry a Spanish person to obtain a residency permit. She starts a romantic relationship with Javi, a young Spanish man working as a municipal police officer.

*Cosas que dejé en La Habana* depicts mixed relations from the perspective of mutual exploitation to achieve personal interests, ending up with immigrants being the biggest losers. Nena falls in love with Igor, a handsome Cuban boy who previously immigrated to Spain but is still struggling to make a living. He uses his handsomeness and youth to establish relationships with older Spanish women to obtain a place to stay and a temporary way to live. Spanish women who live alone try to turn these relationships into a permanent connection to get the fun and youth they miss. Nena, the beautiful young woman, faces her aunt's pressure to marry her friend's homosexual son; in return, she is promised to adjust her immigrant status and later obtain Spanish citizenship. Nina will evade this marriage because she wants to love Igor, but she discovers that her neighbor and aunt's friend, who lives above their apartment, is in a relationship with Igor, and he moves to her place. *Un Novio para Yasmina* reflects the tensions and contradictions that Yasmina experiences between her Moroccan identity and her personal ambitions in Spain. Yasmina uses her beauty and culture to attract a Spanish person who can help her achieve legal stability in Spain, highlighting the psychological and social suffering that immigrants go through in their quest for a better life. On the other hand, the film shows how Spaniards are exploited in relationships for personal purposes that can affect the psychological and social dimensions of the person.

In *Un Novio para Yasmina,* at the beginning of the film, it appears that Yasmina's relationship with Javi is going well. However, things change when she brings up the topic of marriage and asks Javi to introduce her to his family and get married. The following is a conversation between Yasmina and Javi about marriage and her need to adjust her legal status. She tries to convince him to marry her; otherwise, she can find someone else to marry just for the sake of adjustment status.

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Figure 43: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Un Novio para Yasmina*, Cardona. Tragaluz Estudio de Artes Escénicas S.L., 2008). Note: This screenshot image shows Yasmina avoiding kissing Alfredo at the marriage ceremony as they agreed to a sham marriage.

- Yasmina: When will we get married? Tell me something![37]
- Javi: I do not know
- Yasmina: You do not want to?
- Javi: Yes, but why do you want to get married?
- Yasmina: What do you mean by why? I want to be with you, right? We are together and doing fine, So what? Do I have to leave?
- Javi: No, I know, I understand, but getting married is a big deal. I would like to prepare everything in more time; it's a bad idea like this.
- Yasmina: Well, if you do not want to, we will stay together, but for the papers, I am looking for another solution.
- Javi: Of course, if you can
- Yasmina: Well, maybe there is a man who can do for me this favor
- Javi: Who?

[37] The original conversation in Spanish:

- ¿Cuándo nos casamos? dime algo.
- No sé.
- ¿No quieres?
- ¿Si, pero tú quieres casar por qué?
- Como porque, ¿quiero estar contigo no? ¿estamos juntos, estamos bien, pero que algo? ¿me voy?
- No, yo sé, lo entiendo, pero casarme es muy importante. me gustaría preparar todo con más tiempo, hacer mala idea.
- bueno, si no quieres seguimos juntos, pero para los papeles busco otra solución.
- hombre si puedes.
- a lo mejor, hay un chico que se puede hacer este favor
- ¿quién?
- No lo sé, algún chico voluntario de la asociación. Javi, yo quiero estar contigo, pero puedo casarme con otro solo por la residencia

- Yasmina: I do not know, some volunteer man from the association. Javi, I want to be with you, but I can marry someone else just because of the residence permit.

Here, Javi's doubts begin, as he feels exploited and refuses to marry her, especially after introducing Yasmina to his family and feeling unsupported by their reactions. Hence, Yasmina cannot achieve her goal, while Javi feels uncomfortable, which is how their relationship ends. The director depicts how Yasmina resorts to exploiting a Spanish citizen to obtain residency and stay in Spain after her legal residency period expires at the end of her studies. Yasmina faces the dilemma of searching for a way to stay in the country. Lola, the head of the Immigrants Community Center, and her husband Jorge help her arrange a marriage. The attempts continue until they find Alfredo, an unfortunate, lazy, and financially strapped friend of Jorge's, and they agree to marry in exchange for a sum of money. After the marriage ceremony at the municipality, Yasmina roundly rejects Alfredo's attempts to approach her.

In *Cosas que dejé en La Habana,* despite both sides benefit, it depicts the exploitation of immigrants by the Spaniards due to their vulnerable situation, leaving them in a losing position although achieving some of their goals. Nena refuses to marry Javier. Hence, her sister Ludmila does, and she will be able to obtain Spanish citizenship. Still, she will be forced to live in an unhappy atmosphere with Javier for a long time until she can get it. Nena fights for her relationship with Igor. As for him, who moves between houses to ensure shelter, he sacrifices his youth and relationship with his beloved Nena. The other party, like Javier and Spanish women, get the desired benefits from these relationships, as Javier succeeded in his marriage to hide his sexual orientation and will continue his life. His mother is proud of him in front of her friends for his marriage and stability. While Spanish women guarantee pleasure and complete control in relationships with Igor, and they can end them at any time.



Figure 44: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Cosas que dejé en La Habana*, Gutiérrez Aragón. Tornasol Films S.L., 1997). Note: This screenshot image shows Nena's sister's wedding day to Javier, which her aunt and his mother arranged for mutual benefit.

In *El Dios de Madera*, the film highlights the sexual exploitation in the relationships of interest between immigrants and Spaniards in the context of illegal immigration. It tells the story of Yao, a Senegalese boy who is a street vendor and is constantly being chased by the

police, and Rachid, a former Moroccan lifeguard who now works as a hairdresser and does whatever it takes to get a place to stay and a job. In parallel, there is Maria Luisa, a mature, tender-hearted widow who lives with her son Roberto, a homosexual web designer, who meets Rachid online and falls in love with him. The film deeply reflects the challenges facing undocumented immigrants, from the economic difficulties of ensuring a livelihood and shelter to the legal threats that may lead to deportation. Immigrants resort to relationships with Spaniards in an effort to facilitate integration into the new society and provide livelihood resources in the hope of obtaining legal residency. Rashid moves in with Roberto in his room above his mother's apartment, ensuring the roof, food, and the opportunity to work in a barbershop with Roberto's friends. Yao, in turn, enters into a sexual relationship with María Luisa, who suffers from loneliness and isolation after the death of her husband. This relationship adds vitality to her life, but society's outlook diminishes the joy of the experience.

The film clearly shows the mutual exploitation between the two parties, as Rashid and Yao get a warm house in exchange for sex. The director clearly depicts this exploitation through intense physical scenes, such as the scene of Rashid after showering with a towel around his waist and bare chest and then his sexy Arab dance in a way that depicts the seductive "Other." Or the scene of Yao naked on Maria's bed and the detailed depiction of his black body and Maria's touching him. This sexual exploitation by the Spanish characters comes in the form of sacrifices on the part of the immigrants, as Yao resorts to a relationship with an older woman despite having a wife in Senegal. At the same time, Rachid forces himself into a relationship with a young man despite not being homosexual, as shown by his affair with a co-worker lady in the barbershop.



Figure 45: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*El Dios de Madera*, Molina Foix. DC Media S.L., 2009).
Note: This screenshot image shows Maria Louisa sharing the bed with Yao.

These concessions indicate the state of vulnerability that immigrants experience, as they are forced to do things that do not fit their principles if they were in a position of power. The depiction of these interconnected relationships reflects the difficulties that immigrant characters face as they seek stability in a challenging environment, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. These depictions may also reinforce stereotypes about illegal immigrants and the ways they go to improve their situation. The film presents a social critique of the psychological

and social difficulties that immigrants face in their attempts to integrate and remain in Spain, in contrast to the exploitation imposed by some local Spaniards to take advantage of the weak situation of immigrants.

On the other hand, some films portray the exploitation of immigrants by Spanish individuals through relationships. In *Bwana*, Ombasi is an African immigrant who arrives at the Spanish shore with the body of his deceased friend. He encounters a typical lower-middle-class Spanish family having a picnic on the beach. The family mistreats Ombasi due to prejudices, and they have a miscommunication as Ombasi does not speak Spanish, and the family does not speak his language. Despite that, he welcomes the family to spend the night with him around the fire after the father loses the car key, and they get stuck on the beach. During the night, Dori the wife, starts to make a connection with Ombasi and shows her interest in him through some sexual imagination and fantasies. The following early morning, Ombasi goes swimming, and Dori follows him and makes a conversation with him despite the lack of understanding, but it is like she is talking to herself about her boring life and how she sees herself flourish again with him; he gives her the spark of youth and life. The scene captures Ombasi naked, moving with the flow of waves, showing his strong black body as a symbol of desire for the "other" body. Dori removes her clothes and joins him swimming, both nude. Later, a group of neo-Nazi skinheads show up and threaten them all with punishment. Dori and her family succeed in running away, but Ombasi fails after the family leaves him behind while they can help him run away with them in the car.

Dori finds herself alive again when she meets Ombasi and imagines herself in sexual positions and fantasies. She has a good time with him, which gives her self-satisfaction and hope. However, when Ombasi needs help to survive a xenophobic attack, and Dori can help, she chooses and her family not to get involved and save themselves only, although she is aware that Ombasi would not make it from the attack. Despite the absence of an official relationship, Dori and Ombasi's interactions can be interpreted as moments of desire. The director depicts in his film how the Spanish character Dori fantasizes about the immigrant Ombasi to fulfill her needs. This dynamic underscores the power imbalance and the commodification of the immigrant's affection and body.



Figure 46: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Bwana*, Uribe. Aurum Creativos Asociados de Radio y Televisión CARTEL, 1996). Note: This screenshot shows Ombasi standing nude on a dune at sunrise, creating an image that resembles an exotic ritual.

The film perpetuates a racial stereotype of the African immigrant body as an object of exotic desire for the other, reinforcing harmful and reductive perceptions of immigrants as perpetually desirable merely for their perceived otherness. This is evident in several scenes, where Ombasi's body is portrayed as an object of desire, such as in Dori's fantasies where both want each other, and when he is shown swimming naked, depicted as a wild person, and also in a scene where he climbs a dune nude and faces the sunrise, opening his arms performing a kind of strange ritual.

*Codigo Emperador* revolves around an exciting espionage story that unfolds in the corridors of authority and power. It follows Juan, a police officer who works for the secret services. In an attempt to obtain information leading to the downfall of a politician involved in weapons smuggling, Juan approaches Wendy, an undocumented immigrant from the Philippines who works as a maid and lives in this politician's house. The plot begins when Wendy is rescued from an alleged kidnapping by Juan, giving him the opportunity to place hidden cameras in the politician's house. Over time, their relationship develops into something increasingly intimate. Juan exploits this relationship for his own professional purposes, using Wendy as a tool to gather the intelligence he needs, exposing her to great danger. She faces multiple threats, including her safety, losing her job, and the only place she has got to stay. Hence, Juan promises to help her improve her legal situation and live with him if she gives him the help he needs. The result is a double exploitation of Wendy. On the one hand, she has been used to achieving his professional goals, and on the other hand, she is exploited sexually. She is in a vulnerable position, relying heavily on him as he controls her fate.



Figure 47: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Codigo Emperador*, Coira. Ley del Plomo, La., 2022).
Note: This screenshot shows Juan meeting Wendy on a date while his plan is to steal the house key to make a copy.

The film does not primarily address immigration issues. However, the Philippine immigrant character presents a strong critique of the unbalanced relationships that can exist between the hegemonic power represented by the local Spanish and illegal immigrants in positions of weakness that lead to exploitation and coercion.

In the next film *Tomándote*, the narrative shifts from the intense experiences of arrival, the fear of police prosecution, potential deportation, and the continuous pursuit of any solution to achieve legal residency to a portrayal of the immigrants' everyday lives and labor as they establish themselves in Spain, their newfound home. The immigrant character here does not

seek a home or a living but for a relationship with a modern Spanish woman away from his community. In this film, we follow Gabi, a young woman in her thirties and an erotic novel writer who returns to her city, Barcelona, after living for a long time in Madrid to win a literary award for her first erotic novel, inspired by extreme life experiences. While searching for inspiration for her next novel, she accidentally meets Jalil, a young Indian Muslim who works in a flower shop. Gabi feels an immediate attraction to Jalil, and they begin a romantic relationship that quickly develops into sexual adventures and fantasies in which Gabi takes control. They spend a summer full of adventures together, discovering themselves and having new experiences. The relationship takes a sharp turn when Jalil goes on vacation to his country, and problems arise upon his return. Feeling exhausted by Gabi's adventures, Jalil demands that the relationship pattern be changed to something more balanced and stable. However, Gabi finds it difficult to give up her adventurous and controlling nature, and they enter into a conflict where neither can adapt to the other's demands. It gradually became clear that Gabi was looking for a source of inspiration for her new erotic novel. It made Jalil the protagonist of her novel without considering his feelings or respecting his cultural and religious boundaries. Jalil, who compromised too much in this relationship and put himself into experiments that contradict his principles, now demands Gabi stop and moderate. As she refuses to compromise, the gap between them deepens.

The film reflects how the character of the immigrant, the "other" stranger, is embodied in an emotional relationship in which a Spanish character exploits him not only emotionally and sexually but also as a means to achieve her literary success. Jalil becomes a victim of exploitation by Gabi, who uses him as inspiration for her novel material. As much as the film succeeds in depicting the exploitation of which the immigrant is a victim, the portrayal of Jalil contributes to stereotypes and the sexualization of the immigrant as an erotic stranger.

Whereas the two previous themes, immigrant characters, and Spaniards, exploit each other for benefit, these two films, *Flores de Otro Mundo* and *Lo Nunca Visto*, depict a dynamic of mutual exploitation or shared interests between the parties involved. These films portray romantic relationships as a space for negotiating shared needs and desires, emphasizing a delicate balance between exploitation and cooperation.

*Flores de Otro Mundo* tells the story of Patricia, a Dominican single mother searching for a man who can provide her with a stable situation with her children that her status as an undocumented immigrant does not allow her to achieve in Madrid. Milady, a twenty-year-old Cuban, fulfills her dream of coming and staying in Europe. Marirosi is a woman from Bilbao who has a home and a job but lives in complete isolation. The film begins with the arrival of a busload of women, most of them immigrants, brought to the town to attend a festival where the men of the town gather. Their goal is to find wives because the town suffers from a shortage of women, and the men are looking for immigrant women who come to improve their situation and obtain a home and security in addition to legal residency. *Lo Nunca Visto* revolves around a small rural village in Spain that is in danger of extinction. Teresa wants to run for mayor but must first save the village. She plans to invite a group of African immigrants fleeing to stay and be part of the community. Although the townspeople initially resist the idea, they eventually accept the immigrants and help them integrate into their community so that they can benefit from them.

In *Flores de Otro Mundo*, Patricia, through her relationship with Damián, obtains a place to be accommodated and her children in exchange for her work in the house and the farm. The relationship improves but is disturbed by Damián's mother, who stands against it. Milady and

Carmelo's relationship is superficial because Carmelo's main motivation for being with Milady is to show her off. Their lack of mutual interests and significant age difference made it difficult to sustain the relationship. Their differing goals also led to problems, ultimately resulting in their breakup. Meanwhile, Damián continued his relationship with Patricia despite the issues and facing his mother's control. In *Lo Nunca Visto*, the integration of immigrants is accepted through negotiations under win-win. The villagers agree to accept them to live among them and become inhabitants of the village, which helps maintain the village's independence in managing its affairs without merging it with another village due to the small population. Moreover, accepting immigrants contributes to solving the problem of underpopulation, including agreeing to establish relationships with the four young immigrants. In return, they benefit from their relationship with the villagers by marriage to grant legal residency. “Integration or death” has become the new slogan of the village, and all of this is reduced to the search for love and emotional relationships that guarantee acceptance of the other and the everyday struggle in pursuit of a common goal of integrating immigrants into society in order to perpetuate local customs and not abandon the villages.



Figure 48: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Lo Nunca Visto*, Seresesky. Lamia Producciones, 2019).
Note: In this screenshot, we see the Closing picture of the film, showing the mixed couples

*Flores de Otro Mundo* addresses the demographic challenges of rural depopulation and proposes women-immigrant "importation" as a solution to revive these villages. Two decades later, Seresesky's *Lo Nunca Visto* touches on this theme, suggesting that welcoming immigrants can be a viable solution to counter depopulation. Both films highlight the potential of immigration through the power of relationships as the key to integration, bringing new life and opportunities to struggling rural communities. Through these two narratives, the two films present a model of fruitful cross-cultural cooperation through romantic relationships, where both parties achieve tangible benefits and contribute to creating a diverse and integrated society. The two films show how understanding and cooperation can improve conditions for all.

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#### 4.2.2.1.2 Depicting the impact of society on romantic relationships

The impact of society on romantic relationships between local Spanish individuals in Spanish cinema is based on many stereotypes. These portrayals frequently involve immigrants reluctantly entering into relationships and crossing multipart dynamics with Spanish partners, influenced by societal pressures and expectations, where promises and conditions shape their interactions and outcomes. Some films portray the negative side of these relationships, where rejection and discrimination are embodied. These narratives often portray the character of the immigrant navigating complex dynamics with the Spaniard, influenced by societal pressures and expectations. Society's resistance to mixed couples can be so strong that it ultimately undermines and destabilizes these relationships, preventing them from succeeding. These films highlight the challenges and injustices faced in pursuing acceptance and stability, indicating how societal barriers and prejudices can prevent natural connections and integration.

Starting from the first immigration films that portrayed these relationships *Las Cartas de Alou* (1990), the story of Alou, a clandestine Senegalese immigrant, arrives on the southern coast of Spain and drifts among temporary jobs that only illegal immigrants can get. Alou makes friends who are mainly other illegal aliens who survive by helping each other out while moving around Spain, like Almeria, Madrid, and Barcelona, seeking the promised better life. His only pleasure is the letters he writes to his family to tell them about his adventure in Spain. First, Alou has to learn to speak Spanish, and then he learns how to survive around the new place without being caught by the police. This experience teaches him how to survive in a different culture and to deal with discrimination. The last destination is Lleida, which offers agriculture jobs for undocumented immigrants. Here, he meets Carmen, a bartender and the owner's daughter, and starts a love story. The same pattern is in *Saïd* (1998), a clandestine Moroccan immigrant who is convinced that life in Europe will be wonderful; he arrives on the shore of southern Spain and continues to reach Barcelona, where his friend lives. He works in different tough jobs and is always running away from the police's eyes. He realizes that an immigrant's life is not as easy as one may think. Only music and good company help him in the struggle against rejection, contempt, difficult work conditions, and the bad attitude given by his friend until he meets Anna, a journalism student who does research about Moroccan immigrants in Barcelona, and they develop a relationship. Another film that portrays mixed relationships through the lens of society is *El Traje* ( 2002), which revolves around Patricio, a young Guinean immigrant living in Sevilla in a decrepit apartment, along with other immigrant friends. Patricio is honest and works hard in a parking lot. One day, a man gives him a nice suit as gratitude for helping to change his flat tire, who is known later as an American basketball star player. The fancy suit improves his self-image; as soon as he wears it, he feels a kind of magical effect that people no longer treat him as scum or invisible but with respect and attention. Furthermore, he gets together with a gorgeous young woman who works in an electronic store. Only when he encounters a swindler called Pan Con Queso (bread with cheese) who steals his money does his life change for the worse.

In these three films, immigrant protagonists in Spain reach a critical point in their journey by meeting Spanish women, forming romantic relationships, and finding love. These relationships serve as a sanctuary and a way to confront the challenges they encounter, mainly because their partners are Spanish, which gives a sense of acceptance by society and a shift from their previous state of invisibility and marginality. Additionally, while the immigrant characters are undocumented, their relationships with Spanish citizens offer them the opportunity to realize their primary goal: regularizing their immigration status, obtaining legal

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residency, and consequently being able to settle down, enjoy full rights, and access better job prospects. However, the realities of these situations are often more complex and less idealistic than expected. Immigrants face significant social hurdles because of societal prejudices that frequently undermine these relationships; the broader society resists and pushes against these mixed relationships, leading to strained them and unfulfilled promises.

On the first day in Lleido city, Alou comes to a place where undocumented immigrants gather, waiting for farm owners to choose workers to pick fruits in exchange for daily pay. Nonetheless, he is not selected. So, he spends time with other immigrants who were also not chosen, waiting for the next day in hopes of being selected for work. Alou meets Moncef, a Moroccan immigrant with whom he had crossed the sea on the same boat. Moncef invites him to play checkers, where Alou shows his skills in the game. Moncef then suggests they go to a nearby bar to play against the owner and his friends for 500 pesetas per game, hoping to earn some money. At the bar, Alou spots Carmen, a beautiful lady working there and is the owner's daughter. They exchanged admiring looks, and then Alou visited the bar frequently to meet Carmen, play checkers, and chat with her. Their relationship develops; he visits her home frequently when her father is absent. However, as their relationship became more serious, people in the bar started to look at them contemptuously, which annoyed Carmen's father. One day, during a game, he confronts Alou and asks him not to approach Carmen again, and this is the conversation:[38]



Figure 49: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Las Cartas de Alou*, Armendáriz. Elías Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas, 1990).
Note: This screenshot shows Carmen's father confronting Alou to leave his daughter in peace.

[38] The original conversation in Spanish:

- Oye, Balthazar... A mi hija déjala en paz, no quiero que tenga problemas
- Yo tampoco
- Muy bien, entonces no aparezcas más por aquí. ¿Esta claro?
- Mira, es muy sencillo. Es lo único que tengo y quiero que sea feliz, así que alejate de ella. ¿Me entiendes ahora?
- Creo que si

- Carmen's father: Hey, Balthazar[39]... Leave my daughter alone. I don't want her to have problems.
- Alou: Me neither.
- Carmen's father: Very good, then do not show up here again. Is it clear?
- Alou: No
- Carmen's father: Look, it is very simple, It is the only thing I have, and I want her to be happy, so stay away from her. Do you understand me now?
- Alou: I think so.

In *Saïd*, Saïd's relationship with Anna becomes a pivotal turning point in his life. Anna dispels his sad days after his setback in Barcelona as an underground immigrant and gives him new happiness. This relationship brings joy to his life and helps him integrate into Spanish society, strengthening his self-confidence and pushing him to face the challenges that stand in his way. Through Anna's support, Saïd can escape his isolation, especially after his relationship with his best friend Hussein becomes strained. The strength of this relationship is evident in how it positively impacts his daily life, as he begins to see the future with more optimistic eyes and gains the strength needed to continue his journey and overcome the difficulties he has faced since arriving in Barcelona.



Figure 50: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Saïd,* Soler. Centre Promotor de la Imatge CPI S.A., 1998). Note: In this screenshot image, Saïd and Anna's romantic moment is interrupted by police harassment due to racial bias.

However, their relationship got challenges and problems caused by societal influence. Society begins to interfere negatively in their relationship, creating significant tensions. This begins with Hussein becoming jealous of this relationship and attacks Saïd and Anna while they are at home, which leads to a violent fight that ends with Saïd being injured, so Anna asks for her father's help to take him to the hospital. Anna's father advises his daughter to stay away from Saïd and others like him, stating that they are illegal immigrants who bring trouble. Social pressures increase when a police patrol harasses Saïd and Anna during a romantic outing. They call Saïd "Moro" and ask him to present his documents for no apparent reason, and the officer

[39] The figure of Balthazar, a Black African king, is one of the biblical magi.

claims that he is teasing them by being with this girl, so he is taken to the police station to spend the night in detention. This incident reinforces the feeling of unacceptance and rejection from society. The pressure continues when Anna attends music rehearsals for Saïd and his friend Ahmed with a musical band made up of immigrants. After training, on the way back, they are violently attacked by a group of neo-Nazi skinheads, which results in Ahmed falling into a coma and being hospitalized. These events radically change the course of Saïd's relationship with Anna. He feels that his presence puts Anna in danger, and he asks her to stop meeting, realizing that her accompanying him would bring her harm and danger.

In *El Traje*, the suit's effect gives Patricio confidence, and he meets and falls in love with Maria, a gorgeous girl who works in an electronics store. Patricio, who was kicked out of the house and currently lives in a dilapidated house with the conman Pan Con Queso trying to get his money back, is initially hesitant to ask her out. One day, he goes to the store and asks María on a date. They go out together and have a good time, and she starts to like him. She wants to get to know him more, so she asks about his work and life. Patricio tries to avoid answering, but her insistence makes him lie and claim to be an export-import businessman making deals in Sevilla and temporarily staying in a luxury hotel. When the taxi stops in front of the hotel, they say goodbye, and Patricio asks her to meet again. She agrees and kisses him. Patricio gets out of the taxi delighted, while Maria remains in the taxi, watching him with admiration. The driver turns around to return from the same street, stops at the traffic light, and suddenly Patricio appears, leaving the hotel and crossing the street to enter an abandoned house. This act left Maria surprised and disappointed.



Figure 51: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*El Traje*, Rodríguez. Tesela Producciones Cinematográficas S.L., 2002).
Note: In this screenshot image, Maria admires Patricio after he claims to be a businessman

The depiction of this relationship between an undocumented African immigrant and a Spanish girl reflects the contradiction between appearances and reality, as the film shows how appearances can bring these mixed relationships together, but the truth ultimately separates them. Patricio created a temporary opportunity with the effect of the suit that made him visible and established a relationship that began with admiration and interest on the part of Maria, who saw in him a handsome, successful, and wealthy person. Still, it dissipated when it became clear that Patricio was not who he claimed to be. The director points out that the relationship could have succeeded and continued despite Patricio being an immigrant of African origin, but the

variable is his financial condition. The relationship happenings are only secondary in the film, which talks about immigrants and locals living on the margins in a world of appearances and materiality.

*A Escondidas* is a story about teenagers and their first love under extreme circumstances and the friendship power to engage with a poignant portrait of racism, social prejudice, and illegal immigration. Ibra, a Moroccan minor immigrant, arrives in a small town on the run from an extradition warrant. He meets another Moroccan immigrant who works as a drug dealer, who helps him adapt and welcomes him into his place, where other immigrants live. After that, Ibra moves to an unaccompanied minors detention center. On the other hand, a Spanish teenager named Rafa lives in the same town. Rafa lives a comfortable life at home and is a rising star on the youth water polo team. He spends time with his best friend, Guille, and hangs out with his buddies, playing water polo, smoking weed, and playing video games. They display typical adolescent behaviors toward girls. Despite this, Rafa avoids staying up with his friends at the nightclub, where everyone tries to force him to have relationships with girls, which causes him extreme stress and discomfort. One evening, Rafa and Ibra lock eyes, and Rafa is instantly drawn to this new interest in his life. Rafa begins to attract the attention of Ibra, who is also attracted to him, making them discover their passions for the first time and experience their first love in a way they never imagined.



Figure 52: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*A Escondidas*, Rueda. Baleuko S.L., 2014).
Note: This screenshot shows Ibra and Rafa escaping societal pressures and discovering their hidden feelings.

The two begin to meet frequently and get to know each other more deeply, and their friendship develops into a secret relationship away from their friends for fear of their reactions. One day, while they are playing intimately, Rafa's friends walk in on them and find out what kind of relationship it is, and worse, with a Moroccan immigrant, which results in Rafa being excluded from the group. Society pressure on their relationship increases as the Spanish authorities issue an order to deport Ibra even though he is underage and has no one to return to. Rafa finds himself trapped between his love and the deportation order that will take his lover away from him, so he decides to help Ibra hide and escape together. However, that is not going to happen.

Ultimately, all the films above depict relationships between immigrant characters and Spanish natives, illustrating their struggles and challenges against rejection and discrimination from society, which results in breakups. Alou leaves the town and never returns to the bar, but

he remains to meet Carmen in Barcelona occasionally, away from her father. The last scene shows them leaving a hotel after spending the evening together, then going to the train station, where Carmen boards the train heading back home. They kiss each other, and Carmen waves from the window while the train moves, patrol police approach Alou and ask him for documentation. Carmen watches Alou being arrested and taken away by the police; this is their last meeting. As for Saïd, hostile threats from the neo-Nazi group increased, Anna became in danger, and his friend Hussein died after a treacherous stab wound. Saïd is forced to choose between continuing the struggle to fulfill the dream that led him to immigrate, and which now seems worthy after all the challenges he faces and has meaning because of his relationship with Anna and her support or acting on his conscience and testifying against the skinheads' racist group, which would highlight his illegal status and lead to his immediate deportation. He chooses to testify against them to guarantee the rights of his two victim friends, Ahmed and Hussein. After the trial, he is shown on a bus with other undocumented immigrants and the police on their way to deportation. Thus, society's rejection, racism, and discrimination are major factors in Saïd's relationship with Anna ending. Patricio never sees Maria again, and the relationship ends in its early stages because Patricio pretends to be someone else and lies in order to date Maria. While she is attracted to the image of a successful young businessman, not Patricio himself. Director Rodriguez highlights the fragile nature of mixed relationships in the modern world, emphasizing that they often rely heavily on appearances and the interests expected to be exchanged rather than real connections. Patricio's deception and Maria's attraction to the ideal image underscore the challenges individuals face in establishing genuine relationships. Rodriguez uses this relationship in his story to critique the focus on discrimination against immigrants and race in mixed relationships. He attributed the main reasons to the interest that exceeds what could be the essence, which is love. The story of Ibra and Rafa is the sweet and heartbreaking story of their first love as they begin to realize their hidden feelings for each other. They face the outside world, and their relationship is threatened by various issues beyond their control. After the decision to deport Ibra from Spain, he escapes from the detention center for fear of being handed over to the authorities. Rafa is terrified and goes out to look for him in his favorite places. He finds him and decides to help him escape the city. They head to the train station, where they meet Ibra's Moroccan friend, who sells drugs, and his disabled brother. They plan to escape after the police raid their place. They try to board the cargo train, but Rafa falls, and Ibra decides to return to help him and bid him farewell. Their tears flow because they know this is the end of their relationship. This film reflects the strength of the love and sacrifice between an undocumented immigrant and a native Spaniard despite the harsh circumstances in a society that still has difficulty accepting differences and diversity. And the impact of policies and social attitudes on mixed relationships. Through this story, the director Rueda depicts how these relationships can be a source of strength and courage. Still, they can also be a source of pain and separation in the face of society and the authorities. Significantly in this case, they have been the object of double discrimination as they suffered for being a mixed race and a homosexual couple.

These films depict the impact of society on romantic relationships. The portrayals show how negative societal influence, and external challenges can lead to failed relationships between immigrants and Spanish citizens, as prejudices and hostile attitudes hinder these relationships and prevent them from flourishing.

In contrast, a positive development emerged depicting mixed relationships between locals and immigrants, promoting diversity and integration in the mid-2000s. Spain witnessed significant events related to immigration during this period. Notably, the terrorist bombings

attributed to immigrants, the economic crisis, and, later, the influx of immigrants. These events shaped public perception and policy, highlighting the complexities of immigration and its impact on Spanish society. Immigration films reflect these relationships through different portrayals, emphasizing the potential for multiculturalism and successful integration despite the challenges.

Starting with *El Próximo Oriente*, the film revolves around Cain, a chubby, shy young man who is invisible to women. He works as a butcher in Madrid's Lavapiés neighborhood, surrounded by immigrant communities such as Moroccan, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Senegalese, Bulgarian, and Peruvian immigrants. On the other hand, his brother Abel is the exact opposite; He is handsome, attractive, and a womanizer, even though he is married to a gorgeous woman and the father of two beautiful twin girls. Events take a turn when Cain discovers that his brother impregnate Aisha, the attractive neighbor and the daughter of an immigrant Muslim family from Bangladesh. She finds herself in a problematic and embarrassing situation, her father is a very conservative and strict person. Cain feels pity for her and tries to help her, so he decides to pretend to be the father, bonds with Aisha and cares for the child.



Figure 53: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*El Próximo Oriente*, Colomo. Fernando Colomo Producciones Cinematográficas, S.L., 2006).
Note: This screenshot image shows Aicha's father blessing Cain for marrying his daughter on the wedding day.

*Retorno a Hansala* deals with a tragic incident when a boat sank while trying to cross the Strait of Gibraltar towards Spain, carrying young people on board attempting clandestine migration, including the brother of Leila, a Moroccan immigrant residing in Cadiz. Martin, a funeral contractor who deals with the police, contacts her after police finds her number in the pocket of the victim's body to tell her about her brother's death. Laila discovers that all the dead are from her village and friends of her brother. She bravely decides to transport their bodies to the village in Morocco. She meets Martin, who accepts her offer and agrees to transport the bodies to Morocco. The two embark on a journey full of challenges and intense moral experiences, spending much time together. The relationship between Laila and Martin transforms from a service to deep friendship and mutual sympathy and then to true admiration. Through this journey, they both begin to rethink their beliefs and values and discover new

aspects of their personalities. The film shows how difficult experiences, and human situations can bring people from different backgrounds and cultures together and contribute to building bridges of mutual understanding and respect. In *Ismael*, an eight-year-old black boy called Isamel lives with his mother, an African immigrant, and her Spanish husband in Madrid. His parents separated a long time ago, and Ismael never knew his father. Despite this, he remains longing to know his father. One day, he decides to search for his father based on the address found in an old letter that was sent to his mother. Ismael runs away from school and takes a train to Barcelona. Upon arriving, he finds the apartment, but instead of his father, he finds an elegant woman in her sixties named Nora, who happens to be Felix's mother, his grandmother. Nora receives him and tries to communicate with Felix, who never told her about the existence of this child, but once he learns about it, he does not deny his paternity. After notifying the child's mother, Alika, Noura decides to take him to meet Felix. Ismael and Nora begin a journey to La Costa Brava, where Felix lives. Meanwhile, Alika and her husband, Louis, travel to the coast searching for the boy. This trip makes Alika confront her past and her feelings towards Felix in their previous relationship. Events develop to reveal the internal conflicts and complex feelings of the characters as Ismael discovers his roots and gets to know his father. The film shows the remnants of the first relationship with Alika, the immigrant who was in a state of instability and resorted to a relationship with a Spaniard to settle her situation. Still, Felix left her after she got pregnant with him.



Figure 54: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Ismael*, Piñeyro. Zeta Studios, S.L., 2013).
Note: This screenshot image shows Felix and Alika discussing the reasons for their breakup, with the shot symbolizing their emotional distance.

The narratives illustrate how these relationships have the potential to promote acceptance in an increasingly diverse society. The people around the Spanish individuals in these relationships are more tolerant and accepting of mixed relationships rather than being obstacles. Cain's relationship with Aicha leads to his deeper immersion in her culture, breaking down barriers of prejudice. His family accepts his decision, but his boss at work initially tries to stop him. Once she meets Cristóbal, a young Spanish man who converted to Islam and is friends with immigrant communities, she learns that he is friendly and changes for the good. They fall in love, and she decides to start selling Halal meats to open up to Muslim immigrant communities. The wedding scene is a celebration of diversity and multicultural Spain where a

mixed marriage is happening between a Bangladeshi lady and a Spanish man, and a Peruvian music band performs and invites from all communities in addition to Spaniards. In *Retorno a Hansala*, Martin's attraction to Leila is evident in scenes that show him in her village in Morocco, where he learns more about her culture. In one scene, Martin is sleeping next to Layla and begins to look at her with admiration. At that moment, we can see the growth of their romantic relationship and the absence of cultural bounders between them. Martin's presence in a Moroccan village and local community where he is welcomed, with hints from her people and questions about his relationship with Leila, indicates his acceptance as a foreigner in Morocco and the acceptance of the probability of a mixed relationship in a conservative society, which reflects an image different from the stereotypical images of the world from which immigrants come. Martin's relationship with Laila develops throughout the film and does not end in failure. At the end of the film, Martin and Leila understand each other. Although they do not end in a clear relationship, every reason is prepared to leave the ending to the viewer's imagination. This meaning can be projected onto accepting immigrants and understanding their situation and the reasons for migration, representing a call for acceptance and integration. The film reflects the idea that mixed relationships with immigrants can bridge understanding and cooperation between different cultures in Spain. In *Ismael*, Felix's meeting with Alika sparks memories of the past, especially with the presence of their son Ismael. They discuss their reasons for the separation, trying to understand what happened between them. Noura delights in the presence of her grandson and accepts her son's ex-relationship with an immigrant and his son from her. She even tries to fix the matter between them, hoping Ismael's relationship with his father and her will last. Alika's relationship with her husband seems strong and reflects her successful integration into Spanish society. She tells Felix about the struggles she faced as a single mother and undocumented immigrant and how she fought to find stability. However, she overcame all obstacles and became a nurse, and she is now happy in her marriage and has a stable life.

It should be noted that the depiction of mixed relationships with immigrants in Spanish films has a clear chronology that reflects the development of Spanish society in its dealings with this matter. In the 1990s, films tended to reject relationships with immigrant men; society and Spanish men intervened as protectors of the dominant sexual order, where a Spanish woman should not be with a foreign man. This interference constitutes an obstacle that hastens the end of the relationship, as in the case of *Las Cartas de Alou* and *Saïd*. In the 2000s, films began to show greater acceptance of relationships in which the men were Spaniards, and the women were immigrants, such as *Flores de Otro Mundo*, *El proximo Oriente, Retorno a Hansala, Un Novio para Yasmina,* and *Ismael*. This shift reflects Spanish society's acceptance of mixed relationships when the Spanish party is a man. In 2019, *Lo Nunca Visto* came with an explicit call for acceptance and inclusion, as it presented different relationships representing men and women on both sides, including homosexual relationships. This represents a comprehensive call for integrating and accepting others with the idea of mutual interest. This chronology indicates a noticeable evolution in portrayals of acceptance of the other in mixed racial relations between Spaniards and immigrants. It reflects the strengthening of the idea of integration and acceptance of cultural and social diversity in Spanish society, which is in line with political and immigration policy changes.

#### 4.2.2.2 Local-Immigrant Friendships: Depictions of shared struggles and mutual support

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The friendship between Spanish locals and immigrants is a recurring theme in Spanish immigration cinema. Many films capture the intricacies of cross-cultural interactions,

portraying immigrants' challenges and highlighting the potential for deep connections with local Spaniards. They offer viewers a profound understanding of immigration and integration through various depictions; some reinforce stereotypes, and some challenge them. This section examines two distinct patterns of local native-immigrant friendships depicted in Spanish cinema. The first one centers on the joint struggles of immigrants and locals, emphasizing their shared hardships and the solidarity that arises in adversity. The second pattern explores the supportive and compassionate relationships where locals befriend immigrants and help to integrate and foster mutual understanding. Through the lens of various films, we gain insight into how Spanish immigration cinema portrays the dynamics of these friendships, offering different perspectives on empathy, solidarity, and cultural integration.

The depictions of friendships in immigration cinema revolve around the shared struggles between immigrants and local Spaniards. Films such as *En La Puta Calle* (Gabriel, 1997), *El Sudor De Los Ruiseñores* (Manuel Cotelo, 1998), *El Traje* (Rodríguez, 2002), *Agua Con Sal* (Pérez Rosado, 2005), and *Princesas* (,León De Aranoa, 2005), showcase how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds come together to confront common challenges and adversities. Through their interactions, these characters form strong bonds, offering insights into the social, economic, and cultural environment they confront. The films in this category exemplify the resilience and solidarity that arise from these shared experiences, presenting a more empathetic portrayal of the immigrant experience in Spain. By sharing the same experiences and struggles as Spanish locals, these films delve into the complexities of their lives and emphasize the unifying power of friendship and mutual understanding, encouraging a sense of connection and empathy in the audience.



Figure 55: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*En La Puta Calle*, Gabriel. Trastorno Films S.L., 1997).
Note: This screenshot image shows Andy helping Juan after a homeless person beats him.

*En La Puta Calle* tells the story of Juan, an unemployed electrician, who makes the difficult decision to leave his home and family in northern Spain to seek employment in Madrid, believing that the capital city will offer better opportunities. While staying at a small hotel, he diligently goes out each day to distribute his resume and makes numerous phone calls to potential employers. Despite his persistent efforts and the depletion of his savings, he finds himself in a distressing situation, having no choice but to spend nights sleeping on the streets. One evening, Juan gets involved in a fight with another homeless man. Andy, a Caribbean

undocumented immigrant, intervenes and invites Juan to stay with him in the shop he cleans at night in exchange for a place to sleep. Accepting Andy's offer is challenging for Juan, who holds negative stereotypes about immigrants. The contrast between the two men is noticeable from Andy's colorful and vibrant appearance, dressed in jeans, a printed t-shirt, a multicolored wool hat, braided hair, and earrings, which starkly contrasts Juan's more traditional and classic. Their differences extend beyond appearance to their attitudes and temperaments. Andy's calm, cheerful, and adaptable nature contrasts sharply with Juan's serious and strict demeanor.

The film portrays the immigrant's journey as the "other," striving for the same aspirations as Juan. Initially met with rejection and disdain from Juan, the immigrant experiences a gradual reconciliation process. However, Juan must confront his stereotypes and transform his sexist, homophobic, and racist behaviors to align with Andy's more accepting, inclusive, and adaptable outlook. As the story unfolds, the two collaborate on various jobs and encounter numerous challenges in the unforgiving urban landscape. Their growing bond evolves into a friendship that transcends initial biases. Juan embraces Andy's differences and culture, exemplified in a scene where he wears Andy's multicolored hat, mimics his accent, dances to Caribbean music, and ultimately defends what he once scorned. This pivotal scene, along with the final one where Juan rushes to and carries Andy's injured body, which was hit by a car as an aggression intended for Juan, cradling him and shedding tears, showcases Juan's shift in perspective towards the immigrant and his willingness to truly embrace the "other."



Figure 56: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*El Sudor de los Ruiseñores*, Manuel Cotelo. ITP S.A., 1998)
Note: This screenshot image shows Tote and Mihai cooperating to entertain crowds for some tips.

*El Sudor De Los Ruiseñores* follows the same pattern and tells the story of a friendship growing between an immigrant and a local Spaniard, both struggling in the big urban city of Madrid. Conversely, the immigrant character is the protagonist, and the Spanish local character plays a supporting role. The film revolves about Mihai, a cellist from Romania who leaves his wife and daughter and decides to immigrate to Spain after an orchestra maestro promised him the opportunity to work with him in Madrid. Nevertheless, when he meets him after many attempts, he realizes that the job offer was just empty encouragement. Mihai faces the difficult reality and begins searching for work, aiming to settle in Spain and bring his family to a better

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life. He stays in a run-down hotel for a small fee after the hotel worker falls in love with him. To earn money, Mihai begins busking in Retiro Park, drawing the applause and support of walkers. One day, he falls victim to a competitor's deceitful ploy to frame him for theft. Enter Tote, a Spanish street artist and puppeteer, who comes to his rescue in the park, diverting the attention of the police and allowing Mihai to slip away. Thus, their friendship blossoms as Tote aids Mihai in adapting to life in Madrid and navigating the challenges new immigrants like himself face. Collaborating as street performers in squares, streets, and metro stations, Mihai entertains while Tote showcases his artistic movements. Together, they encounter a variety of situations that further solidify their bond.

The film depicts the friendship between a local Spaniard who attempts to help an immigrant deal with feelings of alienation. Tote bears the burden of Spanish society in its dealings with foreign immigrants. The two characters are opposite. Despite his inherent kindness, Tote's boisterous personality leads him to disregard societal norms and resort to deceit and theft. He justifies his actions by claiming that he is merely asserting his rights differently. On the other hand, Mihai, the Romanian immigrant, is depicted as a conservative person who embodies honesty, loyalty, and faith and does not ask for much from life. Throughout the film, Mihai is put in situations that test his principles and allegiance. His noble moral code is evident as he resists the seductions of the hotel worker and refuses the stolen teddy bear that Tote offers him to give to his daughter, revealing his unwavering integrity despite facing adversities. The film presents a positive portrayal of the immigrant as opposed to the local Spaniard character. It deals with the immigrant's experience in Spain, facing empty promises and broken dreams, while also emphasizing the significance of friendship with local Spaniards in alleviating the hardships caused by circumstances.



Figure 57: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*El Traje*, Rodríguez. Tesela Producciones Cinematográficas S.L., 2002). Note: In this screenshot image, Patricio and Pan Con Queso spend time together and form a bond

In the same way, *El Traje* portrays a friendship between an immigrant character depicted positively and a local Spanish character portrayed as a deceiver. Nevertheless, both characters are considered equal in the eyes of society due to their shared experience as members of the marginalized class. The narrative revolves around Patricio, who undergoes a transformation after receiving a suit as a gift, becoming visible to society, and experiencing improved

circumstances in Spain. However, his situation takes a turn for the worse when he is compelled to vacate his apartment, which he shares with his African immigrant friends, following a police raid. Subsequently, Patricio is forced to spend the night in social housing, which provides temporary assistance. In this shelter, Patricio is robbed by a middle-aged Spanish man named Pan Con Queso (Bread with cheese) while he is sleeping, and all his money is stolen. Patricio tries to retrieve his money, only to find that Pan has already spent it. Pan suggests a deal that Patricio, who is now homeless, can stay in the abandoned hotel where Pan lives until he can repay him. The two are forced to spend all their time together; Patricio initially despises Pan's deceitful ways of scamming and deception to make a living but eventually finds himself tolerating and even joining them to recover his money. Throughout their journey, their uneasy relationship transforms into a friendship as they face various challenges together. Patricio comes to realize that the suit does not shield him from societal biases, same for Pan, despite being a Spanish citizen and a white person with a different background, shares similar struggles of poverty, unemployment, and exclusion in a society driven by wealth and status. The film depicts the evolution of a friendship between an immigrant and a local Spaniard based on their shared challenges, emphasizing that poverty and exclusion in Spanish society of urban cities know no borders and no distinction between locals and immigrants.

In the mid-2000s, there was a significant development in Spanish immigration cinema, particularly in the depiction of the experiences of immigrant women in Spain. Previously, portrayals were limited to immigrant men, and friendships were limited between men. As Isabel Santaolalla calls it, “Buddy films” are the genre that focuses on the friendship between two men, more or less losers, more or less accompanied by homoerotic, and where women either do not appear or occupy a secondary space. The buddy film is sometimes called "Cine de Colegas" in Spain (2005, p. 126).

In 2005, two films, *Agua con Sal* (Pérez-Rosado) and *Princesas* (León de Aranoa), were produced. Both focus on the immigration of Latina women. These films share common themes, plots, and styles, and both explore the friendships between immigrants and Spaniards, as well as their experiences in challenging work environments and prostitution.



Figure 58: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Agua Con Sal*, Pérez Rosado. Pérez Rosado Producciones S.L., 2005). Note: This screenshot image shows Mari Jo and Olga growing closer and spending time together.

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*Agua con Sal* revolves around Olga, a young Cuban woman who arrives in Spain on a scholarship, believing she is about to change her life for the better. After the end of the period of residence, she decides to remain in Spain and become an undocumented immigrant. She settles in a small town in Valencia and works several jobs simultaneously under challenging circumstances to save and send money to her family. She meets Mary Jo, a Spanish woman suffering from family problems. They work illegally in a furniture factory, where they are mistreated and exploited and work in harsh conditions. Olga is optimistic, strong, and energetic, while Mary Jo is the opposite. A friendship develops between them in the face of miserable working conditions and an employer who sexually exploits Mary Jo.

In *Princesas,* the plot follows two prostitutes in Madrid; Caye is a middle-aged woman who has been working as a prostitute for many years; she spends the day with other prostitutes in a beauty salon, waiting for phone calls from clients, saving money for breast enlargement surgery. Struggling with a strained relationship with her mother and feeling stuck in her current circumstances, she longs for a better future. Zulema is an undocumented immigrant from the Dominican Republic. She is a newcomer to the world of prostitution and eager to make money to send to her family so she can bring her son to Spain. However, she works hard on the streets and faces resentment from her Spanish counterparts, who see her as a competitor and try to get rid of her. The two women's fates intertwine when Caye finds Zulema badly beaten by a client. She is a victim of repeated abuse by a government official. He exploits her by promising to obtain a legal permit to stay in the country. Since she is undocumented, she can neither escape from him nor fight. Caye takes Zulema to the hospital and helps her to recover. They form a profound bond based in shared experiences and a mutual pursuit of a brighter future, spending their leisure time together and fostering a sense of trust in each other. The two films depict the marginalization and the common challenges that undocumented immigrant women, alongside some local Spanish women, face when they are forced to work or to take some difficult paths. The friendship that develops between Olga and Mary Jo in *Agua Con Sal* and Caye and Zulema in *Princesas* reflects the deep connections that form as a result of shared adversity. These friendships are grounded in mutual support and solidarity, highlighting the human capacity to find companionship and strength amidst harsh conditions.



Figure 59: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Princesas*, León de Aranoa. Reposado Producciones S.L., 2005). Note: This screenshot image shows Caye and Zulema developing friendships and spending time together.

It is worth noting that friendships between immigrants and local Spaniards occur more often in large cities with diverse societies. In these cities, Spanish migrants from other regions meet other immigrants from different countries, providing an opportunity to get to know each other and share similar experiences. Films that deal with these friendships often show the relationship between the two parties, which represents the marginalized class, as previous films depicted only undocumented immigrants. The portrayals are generally positive; they showcase the immigrants as good and moral characters compared to certain Spanish characters in the storylines. In some narratives, immigrant characters guide and help the Spanish part, as in the case of *En La Puta Calle* and *Agua con Sal*. Others show the reverse, such as *El Sudor De Los Ruiseñores* and *Princesas*, reflecting the complementary nature of their relationship. However, despite these positive portrayals of the relations between the two parties, it can be concluded that the difficult circumstances facing the Spaniards can be overcome with time and will. At the same time, undocumented immigrants remain in a situation that they cannot easily change, given the lack of livelihood alternatives or horizon for change as long as their legal status does not change. They remain on the margins, threatened with deportation at any moment. Highlighting the shared challenges between undocumented immigrants and Spaniards and portraying them equally while not emphasizing the fundamental differences in the opportunities and capabilities available to each of them creates misleading stereotypes that equate the status of the two groups and that do not accurately represent reality.

The second pattern explores supportive and compassionate relationships in which locals befriend immigrants, help them integrate, and foster mutual understanding. Films such as *Poniente* (Gutiérrez, 2002) and *Vasil* (Prat, 2022) depict these friendships, where local Spaniards actively assist immigrant characters, creating bonds that transcend cultural and social barriers. *Poniente* portrays the story of Lucía, a young woman who inherits her father's tomato farm in southern Spain following his passing. Upon her return to her hometown, Lucía is met with the town's animosity towards immigrants. She forms a romantic relationship with Curro, the farm's accountant, who stands out for his compassionate treatment of immigrants in contrast to other Spanish landowners and workers. Curro's bond with the lead immigrant worker, Abdenbi, blossoms into a strong friendship, and together, they envision opening a "Chiringuito" bar named Poniente as a space for coexistence and social connection. In this small village, it is usual to see Curro dining alongside immigrant workers in a local cafe, unlike in most Spanish bars or restaurants where immigrants are unwelcome. This dream of Curro and Abdenbi symbolizes hope for building bridges between Spaniards and immigrants, aiming to narrow the divide in a society burdened by intolerance towards a rapidly growing immigrant population. In a poignant moment, Abdenbi wants to confirm his friendship with Curro and find common ground between them, so he says:[40]

- Abdenbi: Your roots are my roots. Our ancestors were the same. Spain was a Berber country for many centuries.
  Curro, why do you want to set up the beach bar with me?)
- Curro: Because you are my only friend, besides, we have the same roots.

[40] The original conversation in Spanish:
- Mis raíces son tus raíces, nuestros ancestros fueron los mismos. España fue un país bereber durante muchos siglos. Curro, ¿por qué quieres montar el chiringuito conmigo?
- Porque eres mi único amigo, y además, tenemos las mismas raíces.

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Figure 60: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Poniente*, Gutiérrez. Amboto Audiovisual S.L., 2002).
Note: This screenshot image shows Curro enjoys visiting Abdenbi at the café in the immigrant neighborhood.

Their relationship connects when tensions rise, attempting to alleviate discord. However, at the end of the film, all hopes for prevailing over intolerance and racism are dashed, and their friendship remains a fleeting effort that fails to transcend the profound societal barriers.

*Vasil* is a film named after the protagonist, a middle-aged Bulgarian, educated, intelligent, and talented chess player. He left his family and moved to Spain in search of work and housing to bring his daughter for better opportunities and a brighter future. However, it has been challenging for him, and he has been sleeping on the street since he arrived in Spain. He meets Maureen, an Irish woman who has settled in Spain. She sympathizes with him and asks her friend Alfredo, a retired engineer living alone, to provide temporary housing for Vasil while he arranges his permit and job prospects. Alfredo agrees out of consideration for Maureen, but he remains guarded and hesitant to form a connection with Vasil, as his strict routine keeps him in a normal and isolated state. As time goes by, Vasil proves himself to be a respectable and amiable person. Despite their differences, the two men bond over their shared love of chess. Vasil gradually breaks down Alfredo's barriers through patience and perseverance, forming a deep and meaningful friendship. The film touches on how Spanish society treats immigrants with suspicion and prejudice and their inability to deal with people who have different cultures or come from other parts of the world. It highlights the potential for friendship to transcend cultural and societal barriers and the transformative power of personal connections in challenging stereotypes and encouraging understanding between immigrants and their host societies.

The representation of friendship in previous films between sub-Saharan and North African immigrants and local Spaniards has often depicted a marginalized class sharing difficult situations and living in ruined houses. However, in *Vasil*, the immigrant is from Bulgaria, an Eastern European Union country, and is portrayed positively, unlike stereotypes about immigrants. Vasil is depicted as an educated, elegant, and intelligent person who plays chess. Despite being an immigrant who could raise suspicions, Alfredo welcomes him into his home, even though they are unfamiliar. This contrasting portrayal of immigrant characters may suggest that East European immigrants are perceived differently. They are often viewed as more

educated and sophisticated but suffer from economic. This perception aligns with common stereotypes and sets them apart from other immigrant groups, such as Sub-Saharan and North Africans. They are also considered more acceptable than Latin Americans, who share the same language and religion as Spain but are still seen as backward people. Consequently, East European immigrants seem to face less xenophobia, echoing the experiences of Spaniards when they migrated to more advanced European countries.



Figure 61: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Vasil*, Prat. Distinto Films, 2022).
Note: This screenshot image shows Vasil playing chess with Alfredo after they bond and become friends.

Recently, the differing treatment of Ukrainian refugees compared to those from Syria and Afghanistan has been a topic of discussion, particularly in how European countries and the media portray and handle the situation. While there have been notable disparities in the coverage and political discourse surrounding these refugee groups, Spanish cinema has yet to explore the experiences of Ukrainian refugees. It will be interesting to see whether the depiction of this topic aligns with existing perceptions and stereotypes or offers a fresh perspective.

### 4.2.3 Immigrants Journeys and Fleeting Dreams: Assimilation, Integration, and Social Rejection

This theme is centered around the overview of the personal experiences of immigrants and how cinema portrays their hopes, struggles, and shattered dreams as they embark on the dangerous journey of seeking a better life. Films often depict immigrants' initial optimism and excitement upon arrival, only to contrast with the harsh realities and obstacles they encounter. Some films highlight the resilience and adaptability of immigrants in the face of adversity. In contrast, others follow a different pattern and reveal the failure of the journey and the decision to return. One critical aspect affecting the immigrants' journey is their interaction with the host society, which can lead to acceptance or rejection. The concept of immigrant assimilation and integration is a complex process that involves navigating an expanse from embracing the host culture's norms, language, and customs to avoiding exclusion or marginalization. This process is well depicted in some films, showing the conditional nature of integration. Immigrants often grapple with the paradox of striving for integration while preserving elements of their cultural heritage. In some cases, it creates barriers that hinder integration, leading to feelings of isolation

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and marginalization. We noticed a pattern in Spanish immigration films that portray the immigrant's experience in the integration journey, and it can be divided into two parts.

This first section delves into films that depict immigrants' journey of integrating into a new society, showing their ability to adapt and overcome challenges. These stories often begin with a sense of optimism and hope, highlighting the immigrants' unwavering determination to overcome adversity and integrate into their new environment. Despite their many challenges, these individuals remain committed and resilient toward achieving the goal of a better life and stability in Spain. They sometimes embody this flexibility by compromising their principles or adopting new societal customs, which makes it easier for them to be accepted and integrated into the host society. Examples of such films include *Cosas Que Dejé En La Habana, Flores De Otro Mundo, El Dios De Madera, Un Novio Para Yasmina, Lo Nunca Visto, El Próximo Oriente, El Traje, Pullman, and Seis Días Corrientes.*

The second section explores the harsh realities and struggles that immigrants face in their journey towards integration and achieving the goal of a "better life" and settling in Spain, ultimately leading to decisions to return to their home in submission or involuntarily through deportation. These films highlight the disappointment and challenges of trying to integrate into a new society, often depicting the difficulty of the living situation and the emotional and psychological impact of rejection and marginalization. The stories in this section underscore the complex and usually painful journey of immigrants who, despite their best efforts, find themselves unable to achieve the dreams they once had. These films address social, economic, and cultural issues hindering stability and integration, highlighting immigrants' real challenges in searching for a " better life." Examples of these films include *Las Cartas De Alou, Bwana, En La Puta Calle, Saïd, Pidele Cuentas Al Rey, Poniente, Agua Con Sal, Princesas, El Sudor De Los Ruiseñores, ¡Catalunya Über Alles!, La Venta Del Paraíso, A Escondidas, La Dona Il·Legal, and Vasil.* Most of these narratives finish with the return of immigrants or changing the destination as a declaration of the failure of the Spanish dream.

#### 4.2.3.1 Integration and Assimilation Journeys: Successful Attempts Despite Challenges

In the 1990s, most immigration films focused on male immigrants, with seven of the ten films dealing with the subject addressing the experiences of immigrant men. While the immigrant women's experience was addressed in only two films, *Cosas que Dejé en La Habana* and *Flores de Otro Mundo*. These two films depict the experience of the Caribbean immigrant women in Spain and their journey of integration into Spanish society. Notably, these two films are the only ones in which the story ends with successful integration, with the two protagonists overcoming challenges and achieving integration into the host society. In contrast, seven other films ended in failure and non-integration, with the protagonists deciding to return to their home countries or being subjected to forced deportation. These films highlight the great difficulties immigrants face in their attempts to integrate and the difference between the experiences of men and women in this context, reflecting the diverse and multiple challenges in their quest for a better life in Spain.

*Cosas que Dejé en La Habana* deals with the theme of integration and begins with the three sisters' arrival in Spain and their quest to stay and search for a better life with the help of their aunt, who is also an immigrant who has successfully integrated and represents the previous generation of immigrants. The film depicts the four characters, along with Igor, a young immigrant from Cuba, and their journey in the new society and the challenges they face until

integration, which is fraught with compromises. Among them, one of the sisters marries the son of her aunt's friend to amend the legal permit in exchange for the marriage being formal since the man has a different sexual orientation and his mother wants to improve his image in society. The same applies to the aunt who immigrated a long time ago and succeeded in integrating by adopting the culture of the people of Madrid and abandoning her Cuban culture and traditions. This is clearly shown in a scene during lunch when the sisters cook a Cuban meal, and the aunt says this cooking is unsuitable here because it is uncivilized. At night, she gets up to eat it in hiding, indicating her giving up her culture to facilitate her integration into society. The film reflects the difficulties and sacrifices that immigrants face in their attempts to integrate into Spanish society, highlighting the tension between maintaining their original cultural identity and the demands of adapting to the new culture to achieve social acceptance. The film depicts the integration journey that the aunt succeeds in, as do the sisters. Despite the time difference between the two migrations, the conditions remain the same: abandoning the mother culture and assimilating the culture and norms of the local society.

In *Flores De Otro Mundo*, the goal becomes clear from the beginning of the plot, as the immigrant character, Patricia, seeks to find a man to marry who will provide her and her children with housing and food in exchange for her work in the house and her role as a wife. This is done under the name of a marriage of convenience, which is a social institution that also enables her to facilitate obtaining residency documents to become legal and thus be able to reunite with her children whom she left behind in her country, the Dominican Republic. The initial meeting takes place, and both parties accept the conditions flexibly. Obstacles begin to appear, most notably with her mother-in-law, who faces difficulty accepting foreign intruders in her home, as she wants to maintain her role at home. The conflict extends between the mother-in-law, who represents Spanish nationalism, and Patricia, the immigrant, who makes a great effort to make her relationship with her husband, Damián, successful in securing her new life. The turning point occurs when Patricia invites her immigrant friends to dinner at the house, where the kitchen becomes a stronghold of the Dominican community. They cook meals from their local culture and listen to Dominican music; Damián seems genuinely impressed by the diversity. However, the mother-in-law jumps in to defend her "Land". She does not show any signs of hospitality, to which Patricia responds by addressing her friends: "You are my friends, and this is your home," indicating the climax of the confrontation between the two. Patricia gives up her battle for integration after her husband discovers that she is still married to her ex-husband, Fran, who blackmails her. Damián throws his wife out, announcing the end of the relationship and the integration journey. Still, the mother brings her back this time after getting to know Patricia and showing solidarity with her. The film shows the success of the immigrant's integration experience after the great sacrifices she made and the difficult negotiations for the host society to accept the "Other." The film ends with the scene showing Patricia pregnant and surrounded by her mixed family, a sign of the success of integration between the immigrant and the host society.

*Lo Nunca Visto* deals with the same theme, calling for the integration and acceptance of immigrants into society as a solution to the depopulation of the village. The film depicts the attempt of the new generation of villagers to convince the old generation of the necessity of accepting immigrants for the village to continue its independence. In a long journey of compromises, the film ends with successful integration coronaed by mixed relationships between the two parties through marriage, which grants the immigrants legal residencies and increases the village's population to the required level to prevent its merger with the other village. The film depicts the success of the immigrants' journey in their quest for a better life

and adopting the host society's culture by going for a win-win deal as the villagers need them to achieve their goal, reinforcing the concept of integration and mutual acceptance between immigrants and locals.

In another pattern of portraying the journey of immigrants in the host society, immigrants maintain their culture and customs and close themselves off, especially in metropolitan cities with private spaces for minorities, such as whole neighborhoods that form communities that hardly socialize with the outside society. The concept of integration can be divided into two parts: First is the quest of immigrants for integration into the host society as a means of settling, obtaining legal residency, working, and facilitating their journey. This type of integration requires efforts from immigrants to adapt to the local culture and customs. Secondly, integration is a natural result of contact with the host society, often achieved in the second generation of immigrants whose contact with locals begins at school. Although some of their parents may avoid integration to preserve their culture and traditions, the children are influenced by the surrounding environment and gradually integrate into society. Films that follow this pattern show the complexities of the balance between preserving the original cultural identity and integrating into the host society.

The films *Pullman* and *Seis Días Corrientes* portray immigrants who are reluctant to integrate and the success of their journey and achievement of their goal of living in Spain without the need for full integration. In *Pullman*, we follow the story of Darin and Nadia, two children from immigrant working families; one from a Muslim African country and the other from Eastern Europe. They live in the social housing project Pullman in Mallorca. Darin's father spends the entire day at work while the child stays home with his mother and little sister. The same goes for Nadia, whose mother goes out and leaves her with her sister, who in turn goes out with her boyfriend. With the start of the summer holidays and an atmosphere of boredom, the two children embark on a journey to explore the outside world, wandering around the city and meeting different people. The children's adventure reflects their longing to know the world outside their conservative and closed homes without opening up to society and integration.

In the film *Seis Días Corrientes*, Moha, a legally resident Moroccan Berber immigrant, begins a trial in a workshop with a fanatical Catalan worker, making it difficult for Moha. Moha faces this challenge without giving up because of his need to work. At home, he lives with two Moroccan friends, speaks Berber, and cooks Moroccan food. The house decor shows their attachment to their origins, and there is no sign of integration into society, except that Moha learns Catalan for more job opportunities. In the final scene, the Catalan worker comes to visit Moha at his home in the form of an informal apology after he made him leave his job and could not stand the discrimination and racism. After spending time with Moha and getting to know him closely, the worker decides to deal with him based on this, unlike their first meeting, which was based on stereotypes. The film ends with Moha's successful experience despite the challenges he faced. He now has a job and studies Catalan while preserving his culture at home and community.

*El Próximo Oriente* depicts a conservative Bengali family that runs a restaurant and lives in the multicultural neighborhood of Lavapiés, which contains multiple communities. Once Cain joins the family, he turns it upside down, as the restaurant becomes an oriental restaurant to display their culture and present artistic performances of dancing, singing, and serving alcohol, which was previously forbidden. Still, at the same time, he integrates with them and learns about their culture. This mutual integration resulted from openness to the host society despite many attempts by the father, who fights this openness and eventually hands it over to

the children, the new generation. Through this openness, the family flourished thanks to the restaurant's income, the mother's integration into an education center, and the young daughter's joining a singing club after the father deprived them. The film was produced in 2006 in the context of the terrorist events in Madrid and the rise of the debate about the lack of integration of immigrants, which creates a hostile environment. The film explicitly called for integration and coexistence between host and immigrant societies.

In films such as *El Dios de Madera, Un Novio Para Yasmina,* and *El Traje,* immigrant characters persist in their efforts to integrate with commitment and resilience to achieve the goal of a better life and settlement in Spain despite the many challenges they face in the integration journey.

In *El Traje*, Patricio gets the suit that changes how society treats and looks at him, making him visible. Still, he discovers this fakery is insufficient, especially after Maria realizes his deception and leaves him. He loses the house he lives in with his immigrant friends and spends most of his time with the deceitful Spaniard, Pan Con Queso, to get his money back. He meets different people and goes through many events that increase his frustration and widen the gap between him and Spanish society in his quest to integrate. At the end of the film, the director depicts that despite all the difficulties, Patricio and his immigrant friends continue on the uphill journey of integration and self-affirmation, from the margins to the forefront, in a society that recognizes materialism and appearances. The film reflects the significant challenges immigrants face in their attempt to integrate and have their existence recognized in the host society.

In *Un Novio Para Yasmina*, Yasmina, a university student from Morocco who just graduated, is on the verge of becoming an undocumented immigrant as her residency is about to expire, and she decides to seek the adjusting process by getting married to a Spanish man. Throughout the film, Yasmina is depicted as a character searching for her place in a new society, struggling to fit in with the Moroccan immigrants due to her cultural level and the difficulty of local Spaniards. In a particular scene, Yasmina accompanies a Moroccan immigrant mother and her son for a meeting with the school principal, who has determined to suspend the boy for a week due to lack of commitment. Yasmina endeavors to interpret the mother's words and relay the principal's decision. However, the mother becomes defiant and accuses Yasmina of failing to advocate for her son. She speaks directly to Yasmina in Arabic, saying:

- "You did not stand up for my son Omar; instead, you gave the director the right to decide. I see that you consider yourself one of them. Look at your clothes, your salary. You think you have become Spanish, but you never will be. You have forgotten where you came from".

The director shows the dividing line between the immigrants themselves and their cultural differences. The mother, like most immigrant women, is uneducated and lives within closed-off communities that are reluctant to integrate into the host society. However, their children tend to be the opposite, as school plays a prominent role in their integration and assimilation. Yasmina does not seem to belong to them and fits in with the Spaniards. This also suggests that educated immigrants find it easy to integrate. The film addresses the integration journey and depicts its difficulty in terms of stability, legal status, employment, and financial security, which are commonly portrayed in immigration films. In this film, the director also explores the psychological aspect and isolation experienced by immigrants as they navigate through significant life changes and strive to find their place in a new society. Although Yasmina

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achieves her initial goal of settling in Spain, the film concludes with her ongoing struggle to integrate and find her identity in her new environment.

In *El Dios de Madera*, the story opens with the arrival of two immigrants in a dire state after migrating clandestinely hidden under a truck. Rachid's circumstances improve rapidly when he meets Roberto and integrates into his new environment. In contrast, Yao is assisted by a broker who helps him secure a place to stay in the home of a Spanish woman who rents out space to immigrants for a daily fee. The broker also supplies Yao with goods to sell on the streets alongside other immigrants for daily wages. The director depicts two ways new immigrants experience integration and reception from the host society or their representative community. This highlights the significance of this stage in the immigrant's journey, although, in both scenarios, they are vulnerable to exploitation. Rachid uses Roberto, the young Valencian, for a place to sleep and a temporary job to adapt to the new conditions and make a fresh start. In return, he pretends to be his lover, even though he is straight. Yao struggles under challenging circumstances and is constantly at risk of deportation in exchange for a few euros to afford a place to stay and food. Following Rachid's example, Yao befriends an older woman working in a clothing store who is attracted to him. As it turns out, she is Roberto's mother. Their relationship progresses, and she eventually welcomes him into her home. Here, Yao transitions from relying on support from the local community to the host society, which is a better bet. The film concludes with both characters leaving the house and embarking on a journey to another destination, symbolizing that their relationships were merely a transition step. The film depicts the migrants' journey in the new society, showing that integration in this film is achieved through mutual benefits.

#### 4.2.3.2 Broken Journeys and Shattered Dreams: The Harsh Reality of Immigration and the Bitter Return Home

In this section, all immigrants' journeys and experiences fail and let to leave, either by returning home or moving to an unknown destination. Some immigrants choose to leave voluntarily after disappointment and facing a harsh reality that contradicts their dreams before immigration, where they feel frustrated and unable to continue their struggle for integration and achieving their goals. Others are forced to leave due to deportation. These patterns can be divided as follows.

The films *Las Cartas De Alou, En La Puta Calle, Saïd, Pidele Cuentas Al Rey,* and *La Venta Del Paraíso* all share the common theme of deportation in their conclusion. Each film introduces an immigrant character and then chronicles the various events that unfold in their plots, including the challenges they encounter and their efforts to persevere until ultimately reaching the point where they face deportation. *Las Cartas De Alou* depicts the detailed experience of Alou, who boards a boat clandestinely from the coasts of northern Morocco and begins his journey to Spain. His first stop is the Green Houses farms near Almeria, where he endures harsh working conditions and high temperatures in the agriculture sector for a small sum and resides in a slum intended for undocumented immigrants. After saving some money, he decides to move to his friend in Barcelona but wakes up at the bus station in Madrid only to realize that he has been robbed of his wallet while waiting to catch his connecting bus. With no money or ticket, he decides to stay in Madrid, where he meets a street vendor from his home country who empathizes with him and brings him to a shared living space with other immigrants who work on the streets. Showing flexibility, Alou begins to work with them and learns the basics of the Spanish language at home. After spending a few weeks in Madrid, he decides to continue his journey to Barcelona, where he reunites with a friend who fails to keep his

promises. He then relocates to Lleida, where he works in agriculture daily. Sometimes, he does not get a chance to go to work, so he spends his time with his Moroccan friend in a bar playing checkers to earn some "pecetas". There, he encounters Maria, the proprietor's daughter, and their connection blossoms until her father forbids their interaction. Simultaneously, he argues with the farm owner after he is prevented from eating a piece of fruit and feels mistreated. He returns to Barcelona and starts working in a clandestine garment factory that employs undocumented immigrants for low wages and operates only at night. He shares a poorly equipped residence with other immigrants, using a gas cylinder for warmth in the biting cold. One day, Alou returns to find one of his housemates dead from a gas leak. Despite facing these highly challenging circumstances, Alou demonstrates remarkable adaptability and resilience as he navigates through a series of events marked by discrimination, racism, and hardship. His strength and determination made him endure all the hardship and complete the challenge until he was arrested by a patrol at the train station after saying goodbye to his girlfriend, who was secretly coming to Barcelona to meet him in a hotel. He was deported, and Alou's experience as the first immigrant protagonist in Spanish cinema ended by shedding light on immigrants' challenges and difficulties on their journey toward integration and stability.

*En La Puta Calle*, the film follows the journey of Caribbean immigrant Andy, who plays in supporting role to the Spanish protagonist Juan, who heads to Madrid for work. Andy meets Juan and helps him adjust to the harsh life of the big city. Andy works various difficult jobs, such as selling cigarettes in traffic lights, construction, a pork processing plant, and cleaning a store at night in exchange for sleeping in it. Despite the challenges, Andy's cheerful and easy-going personality makes him resilient and adaptable to adversity. The plot reaches its peak when they get into a conflict with a drug gang and are consequently attacked, leaving Andy in critical condition. However, when the authorities investigate the incident, it is revealed that Andy is an illegal immigrant and is subsequently deported. The film depicts the journey of a Caribbean immigrant in Madrid, showing his resilience and the immense challenges he encounters in achieving integration into the host society. It also compares his experience to that of a local Spaniard who accompanied him, highlighting the different fates as the immigrant got deported while the Spaniard continued his journey.

In the film *Saïd,* the story deals with the journey of a Moroccan immigrant named Saïd Aragón, who leaves northern Morocco clandestinely for Barcelona, carrying great hopes for a new life in Spain. His name means in Arabic "Happy" which ironically contradicts his bitter reality, while his last name refers to his Andalusian roots, as his ancestors migrated from Andalusia to North Africa after the fall of Muslim rule and the dominance of the Church. This historical dimension adds significance to his attempt to return to what was once the land of his ancestors. At the beginning of his journey, Saïd's dreams begin to collapse when he faces the hardships of life as a street vendor, pursued by the police because of his illegal residency, and living in inadequate conditions on the margins. His days improve a little when he meets a Spanish girl and starts a romantic relationship with her, which gives him some happiness amid his loneliness and harsh days. However, this joy is not complete, as the jealousy of his best friend causes a dispute between them, forcing Saïd to leave the house. After that, he is harassed by the police, and at the peak of the plot, he is subjected to a racist attack by a group of neo-Nazi skinheads. That would change his experience and his testimonies in court, resulting in his deportation due to his status as an illegal resident. Thus, Saïd's journey ends tragically, as he finds himself forced to leave, as his ancestors did before, without achieving the happiness he initially sought.

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*Pidele Cuentas Al Rey* tells the story of a Spanish citizen from Asturias named Fidel, who loses his job after a mine closes. He decides to walk to the capital to ask to meet the king and secure a job, as stated in the constitution. On his journey, he meets an undocumented Moroccan immigrant named Jihad, who is hiding in a stable on the road to spend the night and continue heading to the Netherlands in the morning. Fidel treats Jihad coldly and takes his place to sleep, threatening to call the police, so Jihad submits. However, as they talk, it becomes clear that they are both married and fathers of two children. They left their families for the same goal: to secure a job to provide their loved ones with a better life. The director clearly compares their two situations, highlighting the shared goal but differing circumstances. The two head to a bar behind the stable; Jihad is treated differently by the workers and is expelled, and Fidel is treated pleasingly because he is a Spanish citizen. They return to the stable to sleep and wake up to the police presence. They are searched, Jihad is arrested, and his short experience comes to an end with deportation and the failure of his journey. In contrast, Fidel continues his trip to Madrid, meets the king, and secures a job. The director compares the two. This shows the suffering of immigrants, who have to live on the margins in miserable conditions for fear of deportation, while the local Spaniard is able to continue his journey and achieve his goals. The film highlights the significant challenges immigrants face in pursuing their dreams compared to Spaniards in similar situations.

*La Venta Del Paraíso* revolves around the story of Aura Maria, a young Mexican woman who embarks on a journey to Spain with a forged work contract and a nonexistent reservation at a hotel. Her venture begins upon arriving in Spain, where she realizes that the promised employment and lodging are illusions. She becomes an undocumented immigrant facing hard challenges and is confronted with the harsh truth, compelling her to adapt and find ways to survive. With the help of a Spaniard, Aura Maria is taken to Doña Pura's house, an unusual place where stranded immigrants and locals stay in exchange for work on a Hotline. The film addresses the plight of deceived immigrants who arrive in Spain with high hopes, only to endure exploitation and emotional abuse after their dreams are destroyed. It depicts Aura Maria's and others' efforts to reclaim their dignity and extricate themselves from this harsh reality. In a pivotal turn of events, Aura Maria and a group of immigrants purposefully vandalize a store, resulting in their arrest for committing a crime against private property, leading to their deportation. Surprisingly, deportation becomes a ticket for them to return to their homeland. The film underscores the challenges of adapting and integrating into a new society, suggesting that, at times, returning home may be the most viable solution to this tragic situation.

The second pattern consists of films depicting the end of the immigrant journey, the failure of the integration experience, and the decision to return home or leave for another destination voluntarily. This group includes films such as *Agua Con Sal, Princesas, El Sudor De Los Ruiseñores,* and *Vasil.*

*Agua Con Sal* revolves around Olga, a young Cuban woman who arrived in Spain on a scholarship, hoping for a life of success. Instead, she becomes an undocumented immigrant and grapples with the hardships of marginalization. Olga is compelled to work illegally in a furniture factory, enduring exploitation and harsh conditions. She also takes on night shifts in a bar and cares for a bedridden woman on weekends, all to send money to her mother in Cuba, who is looking after Olga's son. She pretends to her mother that she's doing well, claiming to have graduated and sending fake photos. Despite her efforts to adapt to the harsh circumstances, the challenges continue to mount. She clashes with the factory foreman defending her exploited Spanish friend, as well as with the bar owner over his mistreatment of his daughter.

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Overwhelmed by these issues and finding no way out, Olga eventually reaches a breaking point. The film concludes with Olga opening up to her mother over the phone, laying bare the depth of her pain and despair, and the viewer listens to the conversation from one side, which is as follows:[41]

> Mom, it's me. Yeah, how are you? Fine. I'm fine. Hey, look, did you get the photos I sent you? Well, tear them up. Burn them, damn it. They're a lie, mom. It's all a lie. Look, I'm not studying here in Spain, damn. Did you hear that this is shit? And I'm working like a donkey all day. Yes, I've told you lies, yes. The only one eating shit here is me.

Thus, Olga declares the failure of her journey and decides to leave and return home. In a similar plot, *Princesas* depicts the arrival of Zulema, a Dominican in Spain, where she works as a prostitute to send money to her family and the son she left with them. It depicts the harsh conditions of immigrants who work in prostitution, and the insults and aggression that Zulema receives, she and the other immigrants are harassed by local Spanish prostitutes who see them as competition and incite the police against them. At the pick of the plot, Zulema discovers that she is infected with HIV, so she decides to take revenge on the man of authority who assaulted her and then chooses to leave and return home, not only with the failure of the journey experience but also with a disease that changes her life forever.

In *El Sudor De Los Ruiseñores*, a young Romanian named Mihai arrives in Madrid hoping to join an orchestra after a promise made by the maestro during a previous encounter in Romania. Despite his persistent efforts to meet the maestro, he faces continuous disappointment. He launches on a journey to find work but ultimately resorts to making money through street performances to survive after he meets a local Spaniard in Retiro Park who encourages and helps him. Amidst numerous challenges, he navigates the streets and metro stations, encountering deception from a rival musician and a frightening encounter with neo-Nazis. Despite these difficulties, Mihai perseveres, fueled by his determination to achieve his dream and support his family. However, his aspirations are dashed when he finally meets the maestro, only to learn that the promises were to inspire and motivate him rather than offer him a position in the orchestra. This marks the end of the Romanian immigrant's journey, as he decides to return home and gives up his dream of a better life in Spain. The same is the case in the film *Vasil*, which depicts the experience of a Bulgarian immigrant who arrives in Spain and tries to adjust his residency permit so that he can work and settle down, only to be surprised by the complexities of the migration process. Along the way, he forms a bond with Carmen, who offers him support and asks a retired friend who lives alone so he can stay with him until he stands on his feet. Despite Vasil speaks Spanish and being an educated person, he grapples with discrimination and alienation. After many attempts to obtain his permit for good opportunities, Vasil despairs and decides to leave as his integration becomes unattainable.

[41] The original conversation in Spanish:

- Mami, soy yo. Sí, ¿cómo tú estás? Bien. Yo bien. Oye, ven acá. ¿Tú recibiste las fotos que yo te mandé? Bueno, rómpelas. Que las quemes, coño. Que son una mentira, mami. Que todo es una mentira. Mira, yo no estoy estudiando aquí en España ni un carajo. ¿Oíste que esto es una mierda? Y yo lo que estoy trabajando como un burro todo el día. Sí, te he dicho mentiras, sí. Que aquí la única a comer mierda soy yo, chica.

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The last pattern portrays immigrants' challenges, resulting in forced departure due to specific events. The films featuring this theme are *Poniente, ¡Catalunya Über Alles!, A Escondidas,* and *La Dona Il·Legal.*

*Poniente* depicts the violent events that took place in El Ejido, a municipality of Almería province, that attracts undocumented immigrants to work in the challenging conditions of the local greenhouses and reside in marginalized communities. The film revolves around Lucía, the new owner of a farm, and her accountant lover, Curro. Both characters advocate for fair treatment of immigrants and strive to promote equality in an environment that is unwelcoming towards immigrants and denies them their rights. Curro forms a friendship with a representative of immigrant laborers named Abdenbi, who emerges as a beacon of hope for fostering harmony and understanding between the local community and the immigrant population. Together, they plan to establish a bar to serve as a meeting ground for migrants and locals, fostering communication and collaboration. However, these aspirations are shattered when an attack on Lucía's farm leads to its destruction and the wrongful blaming of Moroccan immigrants. This event triggers a violent uprising among the residents, resulting in the assault and vandalism of the immigrants' neighborhood, the burning of houses, and the destruction of their properties. The film concludes with Abdenbi and other immigrants departing the village, carrying their belongings, aiming for an uncertain destination. The film soberly portrays the breakdown of attempts at coexistence and integration, drawing inspiration from real events that occurred in 2000.



Figure 62: Screenshot as shown in the scene from (*Poniente*, Gutiérrez. Amboto Audiovisual S.L., 2002).
Note: This screenshot image shows immigrants leaving El Ejido to escape the xenophobic attacks.

*Catalunya Über Alles!* The film consists of three narratives. The second one tells the story of a Sub-Saharan immigrant and his family's arrival in a Catalan village during a financial crisis. He struggles to find a job until he gets hired as a debt collector. However, the employer exploits his race to humiliate debtors. His initial task involves pursuing an anti-immigrant politician seeking to deport immigrants. His accomplishments prompt him to establish his firm, hiring immigrants and rivaling his previous employer, leading to escalating conflicts. Tensions deepen when the politician prevails in the election, placing more significant strain on the immigrant community. The film ends with the family boarding a bus from the same station they arrived from, but they are forced to leave this time. It sheds light on the challenges of integration during a financial crisis amid competition and intolerance fueled by nationalist political rhetoric.

*A Escondidas* tells the story of Ibra, a young Moroccan immigrant who arrives in a small town and settles in a center for unaccompanied minors. He forms a relationship with a Spanish teenager, and their bond deepens. However, a deportation order forces him to leave, abandoning his love story. The film underscores the challenges of integration for immigrants when their illegal status and sexual orientation intersect. *La Dona Il Legal* deals with undocumented immigrants who receive help from a migration lawyer. He begins investigating the death of a client who was detained in an immigration detention center. Her friend Mercy seeks help from the lawyer to regularize her legal residency, and in return, she testifies against the corrupt police and the abuses of the detention center. The film ends with Maria leaving for another country and thus her experience in Spain over.

*Bwana* can be categorized in this pattern despite the uniqueness of its experience and the harshness of its events. A film produced in the mid-nineties depicts twenty four hours of an undocumented immigrant is exposed to after arriving on a shore in Spain. Ombasi is an African immigrant who barely survives the journey, while his friend did not, so he buries him in the sand. He meets a Spanish family who treats him coldly and with prejudice, especially in terms of not communicating at all since he does speak only his language. This indicates the difficulty of integrating into the host society that awaits him. However, this will not happen, as they will be attacked by a group of neo-Nazis who are hostile to immigrants, and the family will abandon him after escaping by car, leaving him to his inevitable fate. The film ends with a scene of the group attacking Ombasi, and thus, the immigrant's short journey ends quickly with a setback and shattered dreams, none of which are achieved.

The above narratives depict the immigrants' journeys from the beginning until reaching the point of leaving. Films portray immigrants who find themselves forced to work in illegal jobs or under harsh and degrading conditions, such as living on the margins, exploitation at work, racial discrimination, and the internal conflicts that they experience between preserving their dignity and trying to survive. Despite their continuous attempts to adapt and integrate, they are exposed to many shocks and disappointments that lead them to realize that their dreams have not come true and that their lives have become more difficult than before migration. In the end, while some immigrants get deported, others decide to return to their homelands, laden with disappointments and frustrations, or leave for another place in search of new opportunities.

## 4.3 FINDINGS DISCUSSION

### 4.3.1 Findings Discussion in Research Questions Context

The research problem addressed in this thesis focuses on the depiction of immigrant characters in Spanish films and the potential impact of these portrayals on shaping societal perceptions and stereotypes of immigrants. Specifically, the study examines how Spanish cinema forms and reinforces these negative stereotypes. The research is driven by the necessity to understand how major social events, such as financial crises and terrorist acts involving immigrants, influence the narratives and portrayals of these individuals in films. Additionally, the thesis investigates the temporal evolution of immigrant representations in Spanish cinema. It explores whether continuous patterns in these portrayals cultivate stereotypes among audiences and whether these portrayals suggest that immigrants must abandon their cultural identities in favor of assimilation. By addressing these issues, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of Spanish immigration cinema in constructing and reinforcing stereotypes, offering valuable insights into the portrayal of immigrants.

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The discussion section of this thesis will be structured around the main research questions that guided the study. Each research question will be thoroughly examined, with an analysis of the relevant findings and a discussion of their implications. This format will facilitate a systematic exploration of how Spanish cinema represents immigrants, the factors that shape these representations, and their potential impact on societal perceptions. The discussion structure in this way will establish the connections between the research questions, findings, and their broader implications.

**Research Question 1**: How have immigrants been portrayed in Spanish cinema over time, and to what extent have these portrayals contributed to the reinforcement or challenge of stereotypes, particularly in the context of significant sociopolitical events such as economic recessions, acts of terrorism, and xenophobic attacks?

The evolution of Spanish immigration cinema can be divided into three stages representing the three decades, starting with the 1990s, when immigration films began to reflect the reality of immigration in Spain, which had become a destination for immigrants at the time, and the manifestations of new communities started to take shape, as the immigrants became a new component of society. This prompted filmmakers to address the subject by first exploring the immigrant, that “other”. This period was characterized by the portrayal of male immigrants in the majority of 8 out of 10 films and only two films of women. Despite the diversity of immigrant-origin portrayals, the focus is more on African and Moroccan immigrants. This can be considered a reflection of the "strange other" that shapes the concept of immigrant in the imagination of the Spanish individual. This period was also characterized by the portrayal of the experiences of illegal immigrants from their arrival in Spain and facing challenges to meet the ends and adapt until the ending of the story with integration or the failure of the journey and the decision to return. The way the African and Moroccan immigrant characters arrived was depicted by clandestine migration crossing the Strait of Gibraltar, resorting to working in agriculture and living in marginal communities.

Meanwhile, Latin and Eastern European characters arrive legally with a visa and become undocumented after the visa expires. Latin immigrants integrate quickly due to the sharing of language and culture. These differences are reflected in the geographical and cultural characteristics of immigrants.

The period of the 2000s was characterized by the portrayal of immigrants from different perspectives, as some films dealt with immigration and were narrated by Spanish characters, such as *Poniente* and *Salvajes*. The film's narrative style also varied from stories of the journey and the immigrant experience to cover different topics that concern the immigrant. The depiction of immigrant women flourished greatly during this period and was given a large space in the narratives, amounting to half of the films. The portrayals also diversified to include many aspects such as work, prostitutes, relationships, integration, exploitation, and the suffering of resolving the legal status. Moreover, the origin of immigrant characters expanded to a new portrait of the Asian immigrant.

In the last period of 2010s until 2022, Spanish immigration cinema continued to flourish and diversify in portraying immigrants by addressing different topics, reflecting significant events in Spanish society in addition to urgent issues in the experiences of immigrants such as exploitation, working conditions, and human trafficking networks. The films also addressed the quest for acceptance and integration of immigrants. Moreover, immigration cinema develops in

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the depiction of gender as women and male immigrants alternate taking roles besides the homosexual characters that appear in some films in leading roles to disclose their experiences.

The evolution of the portrayal of immigrant characters from the early 1990s, when the immigrant was voiceless and sometimes invisible, over time, the roles became significant. They were voiced in cinema until the last years of the period when the portrayal of the immigrant became comprehensive regarding the diversity of characters, genres, and themes. In general, Spanish immigrant films can be considered to have a positive dimension in depicting their experiences and suffering in the journey of integration into the new society. However, the representations are often limited to a specific category and are reduced to a few basic characteristics, such as poverty, ignorance, or involvement in illegal activities. This reduction strips the immigrant characters of their complexity and individuality, presenting them as a homogeneous group rather than a diverse one. Spanish immigrant filmmakers indirectly reinforce negative stereotypes in their portrayal of immigrants. Paradoxically, immigrants were portrayed positively in films that dealt with major events in society, such as the neo-Nazi attacks in the 1990s, which showed immigrants as victims and reckless in confronting them peacefully. In the midst of the terrorism events that shook the world and Spain in particular, whose perpetrators were linked to immigrants, some cinematic works tried to open up to immigrant communities and depict cultural diversity, aiming to avoid linking terrorists to the immigrant community. During the financial crisis, filmmakers portrayed, through some works, the circumstances of immigrants at this sensitive stage and portrayed them as victims of the difficult economic situation, contrary to what is promoted during times of crises that immigrants take the opportunities of the Spanish. Despite the positivity of the stories, the stereotypical portrayal of immigrants remains negative and contributes to their reinforcement among viewers.

**Research Question 2**: How does Spanish immigration cinema address issues of intolerance, xenophobia, neo-Nazi attacks, and what impact do these portrayals have on the audience's perceptions of immigrants?

Spanish immigration cinema has depicted themes of intolerance, xenophobia, and violence, including neo-Nazi attacks, particularly in response to real-world events, mainly in the 1990s and early 2000s, such as the rise of the neo-Nazi and xenophobia incidents. Films often portray immigrants as victims of hate crimes and discrimination, highlighting the harsh realities they face in workplaces, streets, and police abuses. As well as in times of financial crisis, society became more hostile. These portrayals serve to expose the audience to the consequences of xenophobia and the moral surrounding immigration. However, the emphasis on immigrants as vulnerable individuals also reinforces negative stereotypes, presenting them as helpless and dependent.

The findings suggest that Spanish immigration cinema is both a mirror and a critique of society's attitudes toward immigrants. By focusing on intolerance and xenophobia, these films aim to generate empathy among viewers and provoke reflection on the consequences of such attitudes. The frequent depiction of neo-Nazi violence and other forms of extreme intolerance underscores the persistent threat of far-right ideologies in Spain. However, these portrayals can also lead to a dual effect: while they raise awareness, they might simultaneously reinforce a perception of immigrants as perpetual outsiders who are unable to integrate into Spanish society, thus potentially feeding into the very xenophobic fears they seek to criticize. Nevertheless, some narratives critique and challenge these acts, but using the perspective of the perpetrator and making them in the narrative a "hero" would blast the main purpose, as in the case of *Taxi*.

The implications of these portrayals are significant for both audience perception and societal attitudes. On a theoretical level, these films contribute to the cultivation of perceptions about immigrants, as outlined by Gerbner's Cultivation Theory. Audiences exposed repeatedly to images of immigrants as victims of violence may develop a high sense of the dangers that immigrants face. This can increase empathy but also reinforce a sense of otherness. Practically, these portrayals can influence public opinion and policy discussions, either by encouraging support for immigrant rights or by perpetuating fear-based narratives that hinder integration efforts.

**Research Question 3:** In what ways does Spanish cinema depict the dynamics of local native-immigrant relationships, including romantic and friendships, and how are these relationships influenced by societal factors such as exploitation, shared struggles, and mutual support?

Spanish immigration cinema portrays relationships between local natives and immigrants, focusing on romantic and friendship connections. These relationships are frequently depicted as multifaceted and shaped by societal factors such as different sides' exploitation in exchange for benefits, shared struggles, and acts of mutual support. Romantic relationships between Spanish locals and immigrants are shown as sites of both cultural exchange and tension, often highlighting the challenges faced by societal prejudices and legal barriers. On the other hand, friendships tend to be depicted as bonds formed through shared experiences of marginalization or mutual reliance, reflecting a more profound sense of solidarity.

Film depictions of local Spanish and immigrant relationships serve as a means to delve into more comprehensive social dynamics. Romantic relationships can be based on mutual benefits, and immigrants seek adjustment of status or temporary living. Spaniards seek sexual relationships, and films often portray immigrants as the exotic "other." It also often symbolizes the potential for integration and the breaking down of cultural barriers. Nevertheless, they are also frequently portrayed as fraught with difficulties due to societal pressures, racism, and legal restrictions. The portrayal of these relationships often conveys a sense of being doomed or strained. This suggests that personal connections can transcend cultural differences but remain susceptible to external societal pressures. Another sensitive aspect of the relationship is when the female part is Spanish. Many narratives, especially in the early period, portray female immigrants in relationships that lead to success, such as *Flores de Otro Mundo* and *El Próximo Oriente*. Otherwise, the contrary leads to the failure of relationships, such as in *Las Cartas de Alou, Saïd,* and *Tomándote, due* to the impact of external factors such as society's pressure to prevent Spanish women from being in relationships with the "other". In addition, the narratives depict the concept that Spanish men can provide housing and security for immigrant women while Spanish woman cannot do the same for immigrant men.

Friendships between natives and immigrants are often portrayed as more resilient, built on shared experiences of exploitation or common goals. These friendships tend to emphasize solidarity and mutual support, presenting a counter-narrative to the often divisive rhetoric surrounding immigration. However, even these relationships are not free from challenges, as they are frequently depicted as being formed under the strain of economic hardship or social exclusion, highlighting the structural inequalities that impact both groups. Thus, despite these positive portrayals of the same struggles, it is not reasonable to compare the undocumented immigrants and local Spaniards, as the last thing that happens to the first leads to deportation while the second can always find opportunities and have rights as full citizens despite the miserable situation.

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**Research Question 4:** How does Spanish immigration cinema manage the complications of cultural diversity and integration, particularly in balancing representation with the risk of promoting negative stereotypes, and does it depict the abandonment of immigrants' original cultural identities as a condition for integration?

The main concepts that connect to Spanish immigration cinema are integration and assimilation in the face of exclusion and marginalization. These concepts are related to cultural diversity and identity. Films highlight immigrants' challenges in preserving their cultural identities while seeking integration into Spanish society. They depict a tension between representing cultural diversity and the risk of reinforcing negative stereotypes. In many narratives, integration is portrayed as a process involving significant cultural adaptation, sometimes implying that immigrants must abandon their original cultural identities as a condition to integrate. However, some films also explore preserving cultural identity as resistance against assimilation pressures, resulting in exclusion and creating marginalized communities in society.

The findings indicate that Spanish immigration cinema presents a dual narrative regarding cultural diversity and integration. Most films depict the cultural diversity in which immigrant characters display their cultural elements and traditions like food, clothes, dance, religious rituals, and traditional decorations in their houses. However, the way of depiction is crucial as in some films, it may reinforce stereotypes and lead to cultivation among audiences. For instance, Muslim characters pray in the wrong way in *Las Cartas de Alou* (1990), *El próximo Oriente* (2006), and *Pullman* (2019). In *Bwana* (1996), the immigrant character wakes up at sunrise, climbs a dune nude, and starts practicing some rituals. In *Agua con sal* (2005), the Cuban character has a place in her room where she puts a coconut as a worship ritual for the Syncretic religion to see into the future and get blessed. Every time, she ignites candles and gives candies while talking to it. These depictions reinforce the stereotype of the strange rituals of the "other."

Sub-Saharan African characters in most films are portrayed as stranger aliens with their own worlds. In Bwana, Ombasi buries his friend's body in the sand and starts whispering while the little Spanish kids watch him in amazement. In *Evelyn* (2011), the Nigerian character has a teddy bear and uses it as part of voodoo practices to convey messages to ancestors to protect her daughter. In *Naufragio* (2010), the main character, Robinson, is troubled in his mind by interior voices and spirits that control and confound him. He does not speak a word throughout the film, and his mission in the plot is to free himself from them by killing someone. In *Lo Nunca Visto* (2019), the film starts with African drums soundtrack and a tribal dance, and then four immigrant characters wearing traditional African tribe clothes, covering half of their bodies and putting feathers on their heads.

Latin-American immigrant women are frequently portrayed as intent to integrate easily, but they are often associated with women who seduce Spanish men and sex workers. In one of the first films depicting women immigrants, *Cosas que dejé en La Habana* (1997), the aunt looks for men for her three nieces who have just arrived from Cuba and are willing to stay in Madrid. In the end, one of them will marry a Spanish homosexual man to get a legal permit. In *Flores de otro mundo* (1999), immigrant women are like products to shop in a local festival to save men from rural migration. Patricia has been chosen by Damián and moves to his mother's house, where he lives. She suffers a lot but manages to integrate. Meanwhile, Milady, the young Cuban lady, was brought by Carmelo as a souvenir of his visit to Cuba to show off in his village. At the same time, she uses him to come to Europe in order to move to Italy, where her boyfriend lives. In *La novia de Lázaro* (2002), Dolores, a Cuban woman, comes to Spain to look after her

boyfriend, who is jailed for a rape crime. After a few visits, she gives up, meets a Spanish man, Paco, and moves into his house. They get together and decide to make a family. *Princesas* (2005), Zulema is an undocumented Dominican woman who works as a prostitute in Madrid streets. In *Evelyn* (2011) and *La Venta del P araíso* (2012), Latina women characters are deceived with a promise to go to Spain with a job contract but find themselves trapped in prostitution rings with no way to go back home. In *Lluvia y Ceniza* (2019), Lola, a Cuban woman, comes to Madrid to look for her boyfriend. But she meets Jaime, a Spanish man who is attracted to her. She moves in with him but falls more in love with Blanca, his friend. These immigrants' portrayals mostly tend to be positive in narratives. However, the perpetuation of stereotypes of each immigrant group over time can reinforce the association between immigrants and those specific characteristics.

Immigration Spanish cinema often does not consider the abandonment of immigrants' original cultural identities as a condition for integration. Nevertheless, most narratives display the struggles of immigrants in the integration journey, and most of them do not manage to achieve it. Only a few films show integration as a likely goal and celebrate diversity, like *El próximo Oriente* (2006), which can be interpreted as productions encouraging acceptance of contemporary Spain's cultural diversity. This country's national identity is continuously transformed and redefined due to interaction and dialogue with other cultures and societies. *Retorno a Hansala* (2008), amid clandestine migration tragedy, an invitation to see the "other" in their world could be a way to understand and accept diversity. *Ismael* (2013) depicts the result of the integration of an African immigrant. *Lo nunca visto* (2019) is a win-win formula for integration as society needs immigrants due to depopulation, and immigrants seek better opportunities. The film ends by celebrating diversity in a small village, which can be indicated as Spain. *Seis días corrientes* (2021), the Catalan film shows the transformation from rejection to acceptance of an immigrant in a workplace. The character is depicted as maintaining his culture and customs, aside from being open to the host society.

Notably, the prevalence of Spanish as the primary language used by almost all immigrant characters for communication is a significant indicator of their commitment to assimilation.

**Research Question 5:** What are the temporal and demographic trends in the portrayal of immigrant characters in Spanish cinema, and how do these quantitative trends correlate with the broader narratives of assimilation, integration, social rejection, and the challenge or reinforcement of stereotypes?

The quantitative analysis of Spanish cinema from 1990 to 2022 reveals notable trends in portraying immigrant characters, both temporally and demographically. The study identifies an increase in the number of films featuring immigration topics. There is also a clear evolution in the portrayal of immigrant characters, each decade reflecting narrative changes.

In the 1990s, the limited voice given to immigrant characters and the focus on male immigrants from specific regions highlights a period where immigration was viewed more through the lens of hardship and struggle, with little emphasis on the immigrants' perspectives. The concentration on immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and Morocco reflects the demographic reality of Spain's immigration patterns during this time. Still, the portrayals often reinforced stereotypes of these groups as marginalized and struggling. In the 2000s, there was a shift toward more balanced gender portrayals, with female immigrants gaining more visibility. Diverse origins reflected the broader range of origins, including Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia. This period saw Spanish cinema beginning to explore deeper themes beyond just the

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immigration journey, including human trafficking and exploitation. The 2010s mark a further evolution, with portrayals becoming even more inclusive and comprehensive by the inclusion of homosexual immigrant characters and the focus on integration and diversity, and the challenges immigrants face in maintaining their cultural identity while adapting to Spanish society.

However, throughout the entire period, the continued depiction of immigrants as belonging to the lower socio-economic levels, often undocumented and uneducated, indicates that while the narratives have become more involved, they still frequently reinforce certain stereotypes about the immigrant experience as inherently tied to socio-economic struggle.

Spanish immigration cinema has outlined the portrayal of immigrants in the undocumented model, often addressing their experiences and depicting the struggles and challenges in the new society. Statistics say that 93%[42] of immigrants in Spain are documented and have particular challenges, most notably identity, belonging, and raising children who represent the new generation born in Spain and from immigrant parents. This portrayal reinforces stereotypes in Spanish society that have made 32 years of immigration cinema the same portrayals of the illegal immigrant who lives on the margins and works in miserable conditions. Immigrants who live in communities do not seek to integrate and adopt the culture of Spain, the host country. Stereotypical images of the Latin immigrant who works in prostitution, the closed-off Moroccan who accepts marginalization, immigrants who exploit romantic relationships with Spanish women to obtain legal permits, and the Sub-Saharan African exotic and strange aliens. These stereotypical images of immigrant characters are constantly repeated in films despite the fact that some narratives are positive and address the harsh experiences of immigrants to create awareness among Spanish audiences. Still, at the same time, they reinforce these stereotypes.

Markina identifies the stereotypes as deliberately simplified ideas about socially significant things, individuals, groups, and social relations. They are formed as subjects to think about their everyday world and play a proper adaptive function. One of them can be reduced to the following formula: you cannot conceive of anything by itself. You can only conceive of the idea of this thing. (2019, p. 62) Hence, the representation of immigrants by stereotyping them makes it easier for filmmakers to deliver the concept of the migrant to the audience. Despite the director's good faith and positivity of narrative, the promotion of stereotyping harms the actual immigrant, whose image has been associated with stereotyping about certain experiences.

Stuart Hall points out that representations are, in fact, the connecting links between ideas and the language in our heads, and they refer to real objects, people, and events. (2013, p. 1) We argue that a Spanish individual who used to watch Spanish films and crossed with immigration films, when she/he thinks about an immigrant, does not work with real objects but only with his concepts, meanings, and representations. Some are shaped through TV, news, and immigration cinema. The long-term exposure to stereotyped immigrants in films cultivates these images in the Spanish individual's imagination. The cultivation theory in sociology and communication suggests that excessive exposure to television or narrative media dramatically influences our perception of the real world. The more we see a version of reality portrayed on the screen, the more we believe it accurately reflects society. Gerbner asserts that the more people consume media, the more their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors change. (1987) This shows that films are a powerful medium that can shape people's perceptions of reality,

[42] Claudia Finotelli and Sebastian Rinken, A Pragmatic Bet: The Evolution of Spain's Immigration System, 2023. Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/spain-immigration-system-evolution

especially when they are exposed to it for long periods. However, certain age groups among viewers and culturally vulnerable groups are more likely to be impacted. According to Berger (1995) The magic bullet theory suggests that the media directly and immediately impacts passive recipients of audiences. He implies that media messages, resembling bullets, are fired into the receiver's 'head' from the 'media gun'. Some films are cinematically powerful and may immediately impact the viewer, although this impact is only sustained by the continued consumption of the same stereotypes.

### 4.3.2 The Research Findings in Relation to the Methodological Theories

**Applying Hall's Representation Theory to the Study**

1. Representation in Spanish Cinema

- Media as a Re-Presentation of Real Life:

In the context of Spanish immigration cinema, films re-present the lives of immigrants, creating an imitation of reality filtered through the filmmakers' perspectives and societal-political influences. These cinematic portrayals reflect immigrant experiences and constructed narratives serving specific agendas. For instance, during periods of heghtened neo-Nazi xenophobia and financial crises, films depict immigrants as victims of hate crimes while they are vulnerable individuals seeking a better life and struggling to meet their ends. Hence, it shapes public perception in line with prevailing societal concerns.

- Construction Through Media Language:

The representation of immigrants in Spanish films is framed using specific media languages, such as visual codes, narrative structures, and character tropes. These elements work together to create a particular image of immigrants that can either humanize or dehumanize them. For instance, in the media, frequent images of immigrants in inflatable boats "Pateras" reach the shores of Spain and are received by the Red Cross volunteers as well as in cinema, where the frequent depiction of immigrants in marginalized roles and poor work conditions may reinforce the notion of immigrants as miserable individuals who are inherently different from the local population.

- Influence on Public Opinion:

The way how immigrants are portrayed in Spanish cinema significantly influences public opinion. As audiences consume these representations, their perceptions of real-life immigrants are shaped, often leading to a reinforcement of stereotypes or a wrong understanding of the immigrant experience. This is particularly impactful in contexts where Spaniards' direct interactions with immigrants are limited, making films one of the primary sources of information due to their powerful influence besides other media mediums.

2. Stereotypes in Spanish Immigration Cinema

- Stereotypes for Quick Understanding:

In many Spanish films, immigrants are often depicted using stereotypes, simplifying their characters into easily recognizable traits. These stereotypes serve as a shortcut for the audience, enabling a quick understanding of the immigrant's role in the narrative without requiring a deeper exploration of their individual stories or cultural backgrounds. For instance, the depictions of African immigrants as street vendors often referred to as "manteros," who sell

imitation goods on the streets. Moroccans as illegal workers in low-paying, menial jobs such as construction and agriculture. Latin American immigrants, females as domestic and sex workers, such as housekeepers and prostitutes, and males as criminals or involved in Cartels. These portrayals reduce the complexity of their lives to a single, easily recognizable stereotype that does not need an introduction.

- Reduction to Basic Traits:

The cinematic portrayal of immigrants often reduces them to a few basic characteristics, such as being impoverished, uneducated, or involved in illegal activities. This reduction strips immigrant characters of their complexity and individuality, presenting them as a monolithic group rather than a diverse collection of people with various experiences, goals, and ambitions.

- Focus on Minority Groups:

Stereotyping in Spanish immigration cinema predominantly targets minority immigrant vulnerable groups, particularly those from Sub-Saharan African, Latin American, and Maghreb countries. These groups are often depicted in negative or inferior roles compared to native Spaniards, reinforcing their status as the "other" and perpetuating societal prejudices.

- Reinforcement of Hegemonic Hierarchy:

The use of stereotypes in Spanish films helps to reinforce the existing hegemonic hierarchy, where immigrants are positioned as subordinate to native Spaniards. By consistently portraying immigrants in ways that emphasize their supposed inferiority or incompatibility with Spanish society, these films contribute to maintaining the status quo of social and cultural dominance by the majority group. For instance, Latina-American female immigrants as domestic workers, often serving wealthy, native Spanish families or male workers in agriculture under powerful owners. The immigrant character is typically shown in a subservient role, performing menial tasks and existing on the margins of the household and farms. Wealthy Spanish employers are often depicted as authority figures.

**Applying Gerbner's Cultivation Theory to the Study**

1. Medium: The Role of Cinema in Cultivating Perceptions of Immigrants

- Cinema as a Powerful Medium:

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory primarily focuses on television. However, the underlying principles can be extended to cinema, particularly in a context where films significantly shape societal attitudes. In Spain, cinema is a major cultural force, and the repeated portrayal of immigrants in films serves as a critical medium through which societal perceptions are cultivated. Similar to how television is seen as a unique and pervasive form of media, Spanish cinema uniquely influences public consciousness about immigration issues. Moreover, most cinema movies are displayed on TV After their distribution in theaters.

- Immigration Cinema's Unique Impact:

Spanish immigration cinema, especially films led by immigrant characters, provides audiences with repeated and concentrated narratives about immigrants' lives and experiences in Spanish society. Over time, these narratives contribute to a cultivated understanding of immigrants, potentially reinforcing stereotypes due to the representations we mentioned earlier. Other media mediums, such as social media and news, are also powerful but less impactful as the viewer

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does not get involved with the characters and sees them as just numbers or news while in films, viewers get to know the characters in a storyline with powerful cinematic technique aesthetics and audio-visual qualities.

2. Audience: Impact on Perceptions and Fears

- Cultivating Perceptions of Immigrants:

Cultivation theory posits that continuous exposure to specific types of media content, such as violent television programming, can lead to the development of a "mean world syndrome," where viewers perceive the world as more dangerous than it is. In the context of immigration in Spanish cinema, the frequent depiction of negative stereotypes, such as Latin Americans as criminals, Moroccans as cultural threats, and immigrant women seducing Spanish men. This may lead to a similar effect where audiences develop a distorted view of immigrants as inherently problematic or threatening to Spanish society.

- Development of a "Threatened Society Syndrome":

Just as violent programming can lead to an exaggerated fear of violence, Spanish immigration films that consistently portray immigrants in a negative light might contribute to what Gerbner (1998, p. 183) termed " Mean world syndrome." Audiences might begin to perceive immigrants in real life as a significant threat to their way of life, culture, or economy despite the reality that the immigration phenomenon is more complicated. This cultivated perception can influence public attitudes toward immigration policies and social integration practices and could reach hate crimes.

3. Function and Effect: The Persistent Influence of Cinema within the Sociocultural System

- Continuous Presence of Cinema's Influence:

Gerbner emphasizes that television's effects are part of a broader sociocultural system, meaning that while the impact of media may fluctuate over time, its influence is continuously present. Similarly, Spanish immigration cinema, as part of the broader cultural landscape, consistently contributes to shaping public perceptions of immigrants. The effect of immigrant portrayals in cinema may vary with changing social contexts, like during economic crises, but the underlying influence remains steady. For instance, the depiction of Sub-Saharan African immigrant characters in the 1990s is characterized by the exotic “other”. The same is true in the last films, such as *Lo Nunca Visto* (2019), despite the different contexts of narratives.

- Institutional Messages and Publics:

Spanish immigration films, mainly the commercials, convey institutional messages that reflect and potentially reinforce societal views on immigration. Over time, these messages shape public perception and can either perpetuate existing stereotypes or challenge them. For instance, the majority of films depict immigrants as victims and marginalized indivuduals, this message becomes part of the larger narrative that influences how the public views immigrants as a group.

- Cumulative Impact:

The cumulative effect of these portrayals, as posited by the theory, means that even if separate films might not have a significant impact, the overall pattern of representation across many films over time can profoundly influence societal beliefs and attitudes toward immigrants. This consistent exposure to specific stereotyped portrayals gradually cultivates a comprehensive

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view among the audience, leading to entrenched perceptions that align with the dominant narratives presented in the films.

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory and Hall's Representation Theory together provided a comprehensive framework for analyzing the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema. Through these lenses, this study uncovered how representations are constructed and their role in reinforcing immigrant stereotypes. The study examines the constant impact of cinematic portrayals and offers insights into how Spanish films might shape public perceptions and contribute to the broader discourse on media representation and its impact on immigrant communities in Spain

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# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this study, we have attempted to map the portrayals of immigrant characters in Spanish cinematographic works, focusing on the defining characteristics of the characters and film narratives. We have situated these cinematic portrayals within the broader context of European immigration trends, establishing a link between filmic narratives and real-world migration patterns and challenges. Our research makes a contribution to the academic discourse on migration cinema by offering insights into how Spanish films reflect, reinforce, or challenge societal attitudes toward immigrants. This study could serve as a catalyst for further exploration and discussion in this field, adding a new dimension to the existing literature.

Accordingly, we have relied on George Gerbner's Cultivation theory and Stuart Hall's Representation theory for our theoretical framework. The study seeks to identify and categorize the stereotypes associated with immigrant characters, tracing their evolution and evaluating their potential influence on audience perceptions through the lens of Cultivation Theory. Combining the two theories provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the portrayal of immigrants by evolution and its potential impact on audiences. Cultivation Theory focuses on the long-term effects of film exposure on audience perceptions. Spanish immigration cinema provides audiences with repeated and focused narratives about immigrants' experiences in Spanish society. In the long run, these narratives might contribute to cultivating stereotypes and understanding of immigrants. Representation Theory discloses the content of these perceptions and how meaning is constructed, communicated, and internalized through media representation. Immigrants are often depicted using stereotypes, simplifying their characters into easily recognizable traits and serving as a shortcut for the audience to understand the immigrant's role in the narrative quickly. These cinematic portrayals often reduce immigrant characters to a few basic characteristics, stripping them of their complexity and individuality and presenting them as a monolithic group. These theories guide the analysis, which employs a comprehensive mixed-methods approach to content analysis methodology. The quantitative aspect focused on frequency and quantity, conducting analysis at film and character levels to thoroughly examine various variables and obtain detailed findings. Qualitative content analysis was utilized to dissect the patterns and themes of the narratives and explore character interactions and plot structures. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough understanding of the portrayals of immigrant characters in Spanish cinema.

The theoretical findings reveal a tie between migrant trends and cinema productions in three major analyzed cases of the United States, Europe, and Spain.

The mass migration to America in the late 1800s coincided with the emergence of cinema as a new medium, and many early films focused on the migration phenomenon, reflecting the experiences and challenges of new arrivals. Similarly, the guest worker schemes and wave of migration to Western Europe during the post-World War II economic boom spurred the production of films that addressed the societal changes and challenges faced by immigrant

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communities. In Spain, which became a destination for immigrants in the late 1980s, Spanish cinema began to engage with immigration, portraying the lived experiences of immigrants and their impact on Spanish society.

The cinematic response to immigration trends often follows a familiar pattern: initially, immigrants are portrayed as the "other" alien strangers who are outsiders who threaten the local society culturally and economically. However, as time passes and societal integration heightens, cinematic depictions evolve to present more complex portrayals of immigrants. The representation shifts from superficial depictions of the immigrant as a distant figure to more developed characters, exploring their experiences and struggles in a broader context. Additionally, immigrant characters become increasingly visible within narratives and begin to express themselves, reflecting their growing presence and influence in society. This evolution in immigrant representation moves from alienation to visibility, indicating the maturity of immigration cinema through the shock, the understanding of the phenomenon to acceptance.

In the case of Spanish migration, we reveal the representation of Spanish emigrants in films from the host countries to which they migrated, such as those in Latin America and Western Europe. Historically, Spaniards who emigrated to these regions were often portrayed in stereotypical terms, depicted as the "others," alien to the host societies. These films frequently relied on reductive depictions of Spanish immigrants as outsiders, marginalized and struggling to adapt, like Cándida, the Galician immigrant character in Latin films, and other portrayals in Western European cinema.

Much like the initial portrayals of immigrants in 1990s Spain. The process of depicting Spanish emigrants as the "others" mirrors the same trajectory observed in portraying immigrants in Spain as a host country. However, the Spaniards were less impacted by the negative portrayals due to the stereotypes and perceptions that host societies hold about immigrants, which vary based on cultural, ethnic, and historical factors, which influence the imagination and depiction of these groups. While Latin America was influenced by Spanish civilization, Western Europe still saw Spain as a European nation despite the economic and development differences. In comparison to Spain, as the hosting country, it is crucial to see that immigrants are coming mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Morocco. Which Spanish society has negative existing stereotypes and imagination about them. Most countries are considered backward, besides, the huge differences in culture and religion increases the threat of those "others." As a result, the specific characteristics and prejudices surrounding immigrants in Spain lead to unique challenges and portrayals shaped by contemporary stereotypes.

Through the quantitative analysis at the film level, we examined various aspects, including the distribution of films across genres, the temporal evolution depicted through the number of films by release year, the thematic focus of plots, the diversity of film settings, and the exploration of issues such as xenophobia, integration, and cultural diversity. Additionally, we assessed the presence and frequency of thematic keywords, scrutinizing the depictions of stereotypes and their impacts, the interactions of immigrant characters, the conflicts they encounter, the resolutions presented, and the implicit messages embedded within the narratives. Based on analysis, the results indicate that the genre distribution of films shows drama as the predominant genre at 56.4%, with comedy following closely at 12.8%. Most films addressing the immigration phenomenon adopt a main plot focus, constituting 74.4% (n=29). Male characters represent 62.4% (n=93) of the total, while females represent only 37.6% (n=56) more than the third. The geographical origin of immigrant characters in the analyzed films provides a valuable understanding of the diversity of immigration narratives. The data reveals that at

29.5% (n=44), Sub-Saharan Africa is the largest segment, followed by Moroccan immigrant characters by 26.2% (n=39). This might reflect the image of immigrants in the Spanish individual's imagination. Latin American characters represent 24.8% (n=37), underlining the importance of exploring the narratives of immigrants from this region. Immigrant characters in Spanish cinema are mostly adults by 85.2% (n=127). This emphasis in narratives concentrates on the experiences, challenges, and journeys of the most common age group, reflecting the actual immigration statistics in Spain.

At the character level of quantitative analysis, the study delved into two essential components, characteristics and stereotypes of immigrant portrayals. Firstly, we explored the characters' demographics, investigating gender distribution, age groups, geographical origins, roles within the narratives, and the languages spoken by characters. Then, we analyzed the stereotypes associated with immigrant portrayals regarding socioeconomic factors such as job domains, marital and legal statuses, traits, and social interactions. We also explored the broader scope of overall behavior, acculturation processes, and intellectual representations. The analysis shows that almost half of the sample, 46.2% (n=18), are portrayed positively. Moreover, stereotype impact in films indicates that the majority of films, 43.6% (n=17), challenge negative stereotypes of immigrants. Spoken languages among immigrant characters reveal a diverse linguistic landscape. As the most significant portion, at 42.3% (n=63), showcases characters who converse in mixed languages, combining their native language with Spanish. Following closely, 28% (n=42) speak only Spanish, indicating significant efforts by immigrants to integrate into society and a positive characteristic. However, the findings data also revealed that most immigrant characters are portrayed as Undocumented at a rate of 59.7% (n=89). This indicates a deliberate choice by filmmakers to address this category by exploring the challenges, vulnerabilities, and difficulties that undocumented immigrants face. And the frequent thematic keywords demonstrated a comprehensive exploration within the film sample, shedding light on various dimensions of Spanish immigration cinema. Undoubtedly, the prevalence of the "Undocumented immigrant" theme as the most frequent indicates a significant focus on narratives revolving around the immigrants' challenges who lack legal documentation. The data also shows that characters from low socioeconomic backgrounds are significantly overrepresented, with 87.9% (n=131). Furthermore, most characters are jobless, have illegal jobs, or work in poor conditions. Findings also revealed that immigrants were depicted as uneducated by the largest segment, 43.6%(n=65).

The quantitative findings clearly illustrate through the statistics and frequency of variables, a predominant trend of positive portrayals of immigrants in Spanish immigration cinema. This positivity implies a generally favorable disposition toward depicting immigrants within cinematic narratives. However, it also raises a particular observation within this trend that despite the overall positive portrayals, specific aspects of the chosen immigrant representative categories and the narrative constructions tend to perpetuate negative stereotypes. The dominant representation of this certain category of immigrants indicates a deliberate focus on depicting these portrayals, which offer a narrative focus on the undocumented, low socioeconomic status, jobless and working in low-level jobs, and uneducated immigrants. Hence, this dominance of the roles in this portrayal might imply prevalent societal stereotypes or biases about immigrant communities, enforcing stereotypes of this category of immigrants and generalizing it as mirroring immigrants in Spain.

This implies a scenario where while the overarching narrative tends to be positive, the specific choices made in representing immigrants, whether through certain categories or narratives,

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intentionally or inadvertently represent a particular vision which result in reinforcing negative stereotypes. This paradox arises due to cinematic storytelling, where elements are chosen for representation with pre-existing societal biases or established tropes.

Through the employment of qualitative content analysis, we unraveled the tapestry of each plot and the character dynamics and cultural traces that contribute to the overall narrative of immigration films. Following this analysis, we grouped the film sample based on the emergent themes, providing a comprehensive and insightful framework for understanding the varied dimensions of immigration portrayed in cinema. This qualitative exploration aimed to uncover layers of meaning, facilitating a more profound comprehension of the narratives woven into the cinematic depiction of immigration. The findings are formed in the three general themes that include different topics and related to research questions.

The first one, titled Immigrants confronting intolerance and Violence theme, which explores the struggles of immigrants against discrimination and oppression in cinema, including neo-Nazis attacks and police abuses, as well as the rise of xenophobia and hate crimes. This theme has been addressed in 1990s films as a reaction to the rise of xenophobia in Spain at that time. Immigrant characters are depicted confronting the racism and the xenophobic abuses they face by the neo-Nazis and skinhead extremist groups. We found a pattern in how immigrants are portrayed in these films, and despite different narratives and plots, the results were similar.

The findings indicate that films portray immigrants facing neo-Nazi attacks stereotyped as vulnerable individuals and victims of these aggressions. The attacks turn the lives of immigrants upside down. Despite the sympathy of the Spanish characters surrounding them, they find themselves alone in the face of the attack, which often results in the immigrant's experience in Spain ending. Spanish society is portrayed as unable to help and abandoning immigrants to their faith against racist attacks. Spanish immigration films have often positively addressed the racism, discrimination, and xenophobia that immigrants face daily. In most cases, racism is shown as a reality in the lives of immigrants. Despite the abundance of these situations in most films, the treatment of racism can sometimes reinforce stereotypes, even if the overall context of the plot is positive. We have also addressed the interaction between immigrants and Spaniards in socioeconomic events, such as times of financial crisis and social issues, which led to the emergence of xenophobic violence and racism as reactionary reactions. The films portray these interactions positively by highlighting the issue, revealing the underlying tensions that manifest themselves in discriminatory measures and racially charged incidents. Financial constraints, in particular, appear as a primary trigger, leading to competition for limited resources and blaming immigrants for taking jobs, which leads to anxiety between locals and immigrants.

Findings of this theme also reveal the racism and abuse against immigrant women as they are more vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. Their cinematic representations have undergone a transformational journey, as they were muted in the 1990s and have evolved over time to include profound issues that uniquely affect women, including but not limited to gender-based violence and xenophobia, human trafficking, and sexual assault. In an effort to uncover the complex portrayal of immigrant women in Spanish cinema, the results indicated that the immigrant in Spanish cinema is often represented by the Latin woman, especially in the 1990s

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until the end of 2010s, when the diversity of the portrayal of immigrant women began to open up to the narratives of Moroccan, African, and Asian characters.

The second theme, Intersections of Otherness: Local-immigrant relationships, explored the significance of mixed romantic relationships and friendship amidst cultural differences. It also examined the comparison between parallel migration, internal and external. Findings indicate that the relationships between local Spanish individuals and immigrants are a topic surrounded by many stereotypes, most notably exploitation. Films often show immigrants in irregular positions in vulnerable roles, where they are willing to make relationships that involve obtaining residency permits or certain conditions. The immigrant characters are depicted exploiting the relationship with the Spaniard, or vice versa, as they are exploited with promises to secure what they need. On the other hand, many narratives address the impact of society on mixed romantic relationships. These portrayals frequently involve immigrants reluctantly entering into relationships and crossing multipart challenges with Spanish partners, influenced by societal pressures and expectations, where promises and conditions shape their interactions and outcomes. Some films portray the negative side of these relationships, where rejection and discrimination are embodied. These narratives often portray the immigrant character as a victim of a relationship affected by societal pressures and expectations. Society's resistance to mixed couples can be so strong that it ultimately undermines and destabilizes these relationships, preventing them from succeeding. We analyzed these films to highlight the challenges and injustices faced in pursuing acceptance and stability, indicating how societal barriers and prejudices can prevent natural connections and integration.

Local native-immigrant friendships depicted as shared struggles and mutual support, a recurring theme in Spanish immigration cinema. Many films capture the intricacies of cross-cultural interactions, portraying immigrants' challenges and highlighting the potential for deep connections with local Spaniards. We examined two patterns of local native-immigrant friendships depicted in Spanish cinema. The first centers on the mutual struggles of immigrants and locals, emphasizing their shared hardships and the solidarity that arises in adversity to showcase how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds come together to confront common challenges and adversities. The second pattern explored supportive and compassionate relationships in which locals befriend immigrants, help them integrate, and foster mutual understanding. The findings indicat that films dealing with these friendships often show the relationship between the two parties representing the marginalized class. The portrayals are generally positive, depicting immigrants with goodwill compared to certain Spanish characters in the narratives. In some plots, immigrant characters guide and help the Spaniards. However, despite these positive portrayals of the relations, the difficult circumstances facing the Spaniards can be overcome with time and will. At the same time, undocumented immigrants remain in such situations that they cannot easily change and are constantly subjected to deportation. Hence, films highlight the shared challenges between undocumented immigrants and Spaniards and portray them equally while not emphasizing the fundamental differences in the opportunities and capabilities available to each of them, creating misleading stereotypes that equate the status of the two groups and that do not accurately represent reality. Furthermore, findings revealed that films illustrating friendship between sub-Saharan African, Moroccan immigrants, and local Spaniards have often depicted a marginalized class sharing difficult situations, poor conditions, and living in ruined houses like homeless people. Nevertheless, East

European immigrants are portrayed oppositely as educated, elegant, and intelligent individuals with talent, like Mihai, the Romanian who plays piano, and Vasil, the Bulgarian who plays chess. Findings suggest that this contrasting portrayal of immigrant characters might make East European immigrants perceived differently. They are often viewed as more educated and sophisticated but suffer economically. This perception aligns with common stereotypes and sets them apart from other immigrant groups, such as Sub-Saharan, Moroccans, and Latin Americans. Consequently, East European immigrants seem to face less xenophobia, echoing the experiences of Spaniards when they migrated to more advanced European countries.

The last theme is immigrant journeys and fleeting dreams. Assimilation, integration, and social rejection center around immigrants' personal struggles, hopes, and shattered dreams during their migratory journey experiences in Spain from their arrival to the film's conclusion. The analysis revealed that films often depict immigrants' initial optimism and excitement upon arrival, only to contrast with the harsh realities and obstacles they encounter. Some films highlight the resilience and adaptability of immigrants in the face of adversity. Despite their many challenges, these individuals remain committed and resilient toward achieving the goal of a better life and stability in Spain. They sometimes embody this flexibility by compromising their principles or adopting new societal customs and traditions, which makes it easier for them to be accepted and integrated into the host society. The other pattern highlights the disappointment and challenges of trying to integrate into a new society, often depicting the difficulty of the living situation and the emotional and psychological impact of rejection and marginalization. The narratives in this section underscore the complex and usually painful journey of immigrants who, despite their best efforts, find themselves unable to achieve the dreams they once had. Films address social, economic, and cultural issues hindering stability and integration, highlighting immigrants' real challenges in searching for a " better life." Hence, most of these narratives finish with the return of immigrants or changing the destination as a declaration of the failure of achieving the Spanish dream.

To conclude, the analysis of this study revealed that Spanish cinema from 1990 to 2022 portrayed immigrants in a generally positive light, with representations evolving over time to depict a broader range of immigrant experiences. These portrayals included both male immigrants and women and LGTBI characters, reflecting the diversity of immigrant populations from various geographic origins. Spanish films often advocate for the integration and assimilation of immigrants into society, suggesting an underlying message of acceptance and inclusion. However, despite this positive trend, the study also uncovered a persistent reliance on stereotyped portrayals. Immigrants were frequently depicted as vulnerable, struggling laborers working in poor conditions, often subjected to hate crimes and xenophobia, or, alternatively, as individuals taking advantage of the local population for personal gain. These depictions reinforced a narrative of social and economic marginalization, with many immigrant characters portrayed as undocumented, uneducated, and marginalized. While there is a notable effort to present immigrants sympathetically, their social status within these narratives remains largely negative, emphasizing themes of exclusion and precarity even amid positive portrayals. These portrayals, however, do not accurately reflect the realities of immigrants in Spanish society, where statistics reveal their significant contributions to the economy, labor force, and cultural development. The ongoing positive impact of immigrants on Spain’s economic and

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social fabric is often absent in the Spanish immigration cinema due to reductive stereotypes that fail to capture the complexity of their experiences and achievements.

## Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. A significant one is the restricted access to certain films, particularly those produced in the 1990s. Many of these films are not available through digital platforms or physical DVDs in university and public libraries or commercial stores, and the efforts have been made to contact directors and production companies for access were ineffective. This limited access may result in gaps in the analysis, as certain key films could not be included in the research. Another limitation is the language barrier. The researcher's lack of fluency in Spanish posed challenges in analyzing the films in depth, especially when it came to understanding slang, cultural distinctions, and hidden meanings in dialogues. My tutor provided maximum help to confront this challenge, in addition to dependence on subtitles and translations. This reliance may have led to partial interpretations of certain scenes or themes. Additionally, the language barrier made it difficult to engage comprehensively with Spanish-language academic references and previous studies, potentially limiting the depth of the literature review and contextual analysis.

Future studies may consider expanding research by conducting a comparative analysis of immigrant portrayals across other European or non-European countries to measure variables in the reality of immigration and provide a broader context for understanding how various cinematographies depict immigration and portray stereotypes. It also could be compared to the origin countries of immigrants to examine how immigrant candidates see immigration in local films and how it can impact their migration decision. Furthermore, it could expand the analysis to compare national cinema addressing immigration with diaspora filmmakers' portrayals of immigrants.

Another potential area of study is to explore how international digital and streaming platforms depict and represent immigrants compared to traditional national cinema works. These platforms address diverse international audiences and have specific standards. Spanish films that address immigration produced to be streamed on the platform can vary by the one that mainly addresses the Spanish audience. Analyzing the differences in immigrant portrayals between films produced for international streaming services and those for Spanish national distribution can offer an overview of each presentation and explore the persistence or transformation of stereotypes in different media conditions.

Moreover, while this study focuses on Spanish cinema, future research could broaden its scope to include TV films, documentaries, and series. Expanding the analysis to these other media forms can provide more ideas into how fictional and documentary portrayals of immigrants differ in their narrative structure and their impact on public perceptions. Besides, it might check the long-run exposure of certain portrayals in the series and their contribution to cultivating stereotypes and wrong interpretations of immigrants among the audiences.

Future research could also employ reception studies to explore how audiences interpret and respond to films that depict immigrants, investigating how meaning is constructed through the viewing experience. Researchers might adopt methods such as interviews or questionnaires to engage with audiences directly, understanding their perceptions and the potential impact of these portrayals.

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These suggestions for future research provide more avenues for expanding the scope of analysis and addressing the limitations of the current study. Future studies can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how immigrant representation varies across different media by exploring the portrayal of immigrants in diverse media formats such as TV films, documentaries, series, and streaming platforms. This expanded approach would enrich the academic discourse on each case in European immigration cinema and explore the evolving immigrant portrayals in national and international contexts.

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# CODEBOOK

- The codebook is an elaboration of the author.
- If any variable does not exist, select "Not available (N/A)"

## FILM LEVEL

### Category: General Information (Data collected from www.filmaffinity.es)

**Variable: Name, ID [Code: F00V01]**

- **Data Type**: Text
- **Description**: The name and unique identifier for each film.
- **Coding Instructions**: Provide the name of the film and assign a unique identifier (e.g., F001, F002) for each film in the sample.

**Variable: Year of Release [Code: F00V02]**

- **Data Type**: Numeric
- **Description**: The year the film was released.
- **Coding Instructions**: Enter the year in which the film was officially released.

**Variable: Director [Code: F00V03]**

- **Data Type**: Text
- **Description**: Director of the film.
- **Coding Instructions**: Write down the name of the director of the film.

**Variable: Genre [Code: F00V04]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Drama, Comedy, Action, Romance, Thriller, etc.
- **Description**: Genre of the film.
- **Coding Instructions**: Select or enter the genre of the film.

### - Category: Narrative elements

**Variable: Immigrant Character Count [Code: F00V05]**

- **Data Type**: Numeric + Text
- **Description**: The number of immigrant characters in the film.

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- **Coding Instructions**: Count and enter the number of immigrant characters present in the film. The character should be a part of the narrative despite his small appearance or lack of talk. Add the role types if primary or minor.

- **Variable: Setting [Code: F00V06]**

- **Data Type:** Dropdown + Text
- **Options:** Urban (U), Suburban (SU), Rural (R), (I), Other (O) + mention the name of the city or town
- **Description:** The primary setting(s) where the narrative involving the immigrant character takes place.
- **Coding Instructions:** Choose the setting category that most accurately describes the main locations where the immigrant character's narrative is developed. Use 'Mixed' if more than one setting is prominently featured and 'Other' for settings that do not fit into the provided categories. Additionally, write the name of the city or town.

**Variable: Plot Focus [Code: F00V07]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown

- **Options**: Immigrant-Centric (Cen), Sub-Plot (Sub)

- **Description**: The main plot revolves around the immigrant experience, or immigrant stories are a smaller part of a larger narrative.

- **Coding Instructions**: Select one of the options that represent the plot's primary focus, or the immigrant is a part of the narrative.

**Variable: Conflict [Code: F00V08]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown

- **Description**: Conflicts that immigrant characters face from external forces, such as societal discrimination, legal issues, or confrontations with other characters. Or internal Conflicts such as ethical dilemmas, identity crises, or personal struggles related to their immigrant status.

- **Options**: External Conflict (EX), Internal Conflict (IN)

- **Coding Instructions**: Select one of the options that represents whether the conflict is Internal or External.

**Variable: Sociopolitical Events [Code: F00V09]**

- **Data Type**: Text

- **Description**: Sociopolitical events highlighted or referenced in the film. Or it is an influence on the film.

- **Options**: Terrorism acts, economic crisis, influx of illegal immigrants or refugees, xenophobic attacks…

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- **Coding Instructions**: List or describe any sociopolitical events that are explicitly or implicitly portrayed or referenced from the list or others.

**Variable: Resolution and Implicit Messages [Code: F00V10]**

- **Data Type:** Dropdown
- **Options:** Integration or/and Diversity (ID), Marginalization, rejection or/and Xenophobia (MX), Neutral or Ambiguous (NA)
- **Description:** Describes the resolution of the film in terms of its endorsement or rejection of diversity or xenophobia, either explicitly or implicitly.
- **Coding Instructions:** Code as (ID) if the resolution of the film promotes integration and diversity, either overtly or subtly. Code as (MX) if the resolution advances marginalization, rejection, or xenophobia, either overtly or subtly. Code as (NA) if the film's resolution does not clearly lean towards either diversity or xenophobia or if it is ambiguous in its message.

**Variable: Thematic Keywords [Code: F00V11]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Options**: Detention Centers, Deportation, Racism, Nationalism, Undocumented immigrant, Clandestine migration, Xenophobia, Integration, Cultural Clash, Family Reunion, Discrimination, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Sexualized Objectification, Human trafficking, Prejudices, Stereotypes, Marginalization, Migration policies, Exploitation, Job market, Immigrant Experiences, Other (mention)
- **Description**: This variable captures the salient themes related to immigration that are evident within the film. These could be vocalized through dialogue, manifested in settings, or intrinsic to plot elements or visual cues.
- **Coding Instructions**: During the film screening, identify recurring themes or salient plot elements that specifically concern immigrants or immigration. Select the relevant option(s) from the dropdown list or mention others.

**Variable: Xenophobic presence [Code: F00V12]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Options**: Present Explicit (PE) Clear and overt expressions or instances of xenophobia, Present Implicit (PI) Subtle, not directly stated but implied instances of xenophobia, Absent (A) No observable instances of xenophobia
- **Description**: Presence of xenophobic elements in the film. This could be manifested through dialogue, character interactions, plot elements, or visual cues that may demean, isolate, or discriminate against immigrant characters based on their nationality, ethnicity, or immigration status.
- **Coding Instructions**: Determine whether xenophobic elements are present explicitly, implicitly, or absent in the film.

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**Variable: Integration Presence [Code: F00V13]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Options**: Present (P); + Conditioned (CON) or not conditioned (NOT), Absent (A)
- **Description**: Indicates whether immigrant Integration is present in the film or not.
- **Coding Instructions**: Code as 'Present' if any integration elements are observed, add Con or not depending on whether the integration is conditioned to abandon the immigrant's culture or not. And 'Absent' if none are apparent, based on the narrative, characters, and visual elements.

- Category: Stereotypes

**Variable: Stereotype Presence [Code: F00V14]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown - Text.
- **Options**: Criminal acts, Exotic, Sexualized Objectification, Lazy, Intellectually Inferior, Job Stereotyping, White Savior, Cultural Reductionism, The Outsider, Dependence, Taking advantage of locals, Other (Mention).
- **Description**: Indicates whether stereotypes related to immigrants are present in the film.
- **Coding Instructions**: Code as 'Present' if any stereotypes related to immigrants are observed and 'Absent' if no stereotypes are apparent, based on the characters' datasheet, the narrative, and visual elements.

**Variable: Stereotype Impact [Code: F00V15]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Options**: Reinforced (R), Challenged (C), Mixed (M)
- **Description**: Whether the film reinforces or challenges stereotypes.
- **Coding Instructions**: Code as 'Reinforced' if stereotypes are perpetuated without critique, 'Challenged' if the film critiques or subverts stereotypes, and 'Mixed' if the film does both.

**Variable: Cultural Diversity [Code: F00V16]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Options**: Present (P), Absent (A)
- **Description**: Elements of culture depicted in the film.
- **Coding Instructions**: Determine whether Cultural Diversity is present or absent in the film.

**Variable: Immigrants Representation [Code: F00V17]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Positive (P), Negative (N), Neutral (NEU), Mixed (M)
- **Description**: Overall representation of immigrants in the film.

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- **Coding Instructions**: Code the overall portrayal of immigrants as either positive, negative, neutral, or mixed if the immigrants are represented negatively despite the positive concept of the narrative and based on the characters' datasheet, the narrative, and visual elements.

## Character Level

- Category: Character Characteristics

**Variable: Name, ID [Code: F00V01]**

- **Data Type**: Text
- **Description**: The name and unique identifier for each immigrant character. If the name is not available, describe the character.
- **Coding Instructions**: Provide the name or describe the character and assign a unique identifier (e.g., C001, C002) for each significant immigrant character.

**Variable: Gender [Code: F00V02]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Male (M), Female (F), Other (O)
- **Description**: Gender identity of the immigrant character.
- **Coding Instructions**: Choose the gender identity that best represents the character.

**Variable: Age Group [Code: F00V03]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Child (C), Adolescent (Ado), Adult (A), Elderly (E)
- **Description**: The age group to which the immigrant character belongs.
- **Coding Instructions**: Select the age group based on visual cues, dialogue, or context.

**Variable: Geographical Origin [Code: F00V04]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Sub-Sahara Africa (AF), Morocco (M), Latin America (LA), Asia (AS), East Europe (EE), Middle East (ME), Other.
- **Description**: The geographical origin of the immigrant character.
- **Coding Instructions**: Select the name of the geographical origin.

**Variable: Role [Code: F00V05]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Protagonist (P), Antagonist (A), Supporting (S), Minor role (MR)

- **Description**: Role of the immigrant character within the film's narrative.
- **Coding Instructions**: Choose the role that the character plays in the film's narrative.

- Category: Stereotypes of the Immigrant Portrayal

**Variable: Spoken Language [Code: F00V06]**

- **Data Type**: Text
- **Options**: Spanish (SP), regional Spanish language (R), Native (N), Mix (M).
- **Description**: Language(s) spoken by the immigrant character.
- **Coding Instructions**: Select the language(s) spoken by the character.

**Variable: Socioeconomic Status [Code: F00V07]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Low (L), Middle (M), High (H)
- **Description**: Low: characters who may be unemployed, working in low-wage jobs, or living in impoverished conditions. Middle: Characters who hold mid-level jobs, own a business, or otherwise demonstrate a moderate level of financial stability. High: Characters in high-income professions or who exhibit significant wealth and affluence.
- **Coding Instructions**: Choose the socioeconomic status that can be inferred through context clues such as occupation, lifestyle, dialogue, or other visual or narrative elements in the film.

**Variable: marital status [Code: F00V08]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Single (S), Married (M), Dating local (DL) or dating same nationality (DS). + in Spain (with), left at home (left), Divorced (D).
- **Description**: The marital status of the immigrant character.
- **Coding Instructions**: Select the marital status as presented in the film. If the character is married, select whether the partner is local or from the same country and lives with him/her in Spain or back home.

**Variable: Legal Status [Code: F00V09]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Documented (D), Undocumented (U), Refugee (R).
- **Description**: The immigration status of the character.
- **Coding Instructions**: Select the legal status as presented or implied in the film.

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**Variable: Traits and Social Interactions [Code: F00V10]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Description**: Capture both the intrinsic traits and the quality of social interactions of the immigrant character. To examine how character traits may influence, or be influenced by, the types of social interactions they engage in within the film.
- **Options**: Ambitious (AM), Family-oriented (FO), Resilient (Re), Naïve (NA), Friendly (F), aggressive (AG), Manipulative (MA), Hostile (H), Lazy (LA), Isolated (I), Exploiter (EX), Helpful (HF), Vulnerable (VA), Dignity (DI), Adaptable (AD), Determined (DE), Rational (RA), Nasty (NAS), Fair (FA), Careless (CA), Other (Mention).
- **Coding Instructions**: Select one or more of the traits that are portrayed in the character and his interaction with others.

**Variable: Behavior [Code: F00V11]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Description**: Observable behaviors of the immigrant character.
- **Options**: Positive (P) If an immigrant character displays high moral or ethical standards, Negative (N) If an immigrant character is depicted as inherently criminal, lazy, exploiter. Neutral (Ne) if it is depicted as neutral behavior.
- **Coding Instructions**: Select positive or negative depending on behaviors displayed by the character.

**Variable: Acculturation [Code: F00V13]**

- **Data Type**: Dropdown
- **Description**: The extent to which the character has adopted the culture of the host country and if he needs to abandon his culture to integrate.
- **Options**: Assimilation (ASS), Cultural Clash (CC), Cultural Preservation (CP) + Conditioned (CON), Not conditioned (NOT).
- **Coding Instructions**: Select acculturation based on observable behaviors, dialogues, or settings from the options and add the variable of conditioned integration or not.

**Variable: Intellectual [Code: F00V14]**

- **Data Type**: Text or Dropdown
- **Options**: Uneducated (U), Formally Educated (FE), Intellectual (I), Other (O)
- **Description**: Intellectual characteristics or level of the immigrant character.
- **Coding Instructions**: Choose the intellectual level or characteristics that are either explicitly stated or can be inferred from the film.

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# CODING SHEET FILM AND CHARACTER

| Film level | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # | FILM TITLE | Narratives Elements | | | | | | | | | Stereotypes | | | | | |
| | | Release year | Genre | Immigrant Character Count | Setting | Plot focus | Conflict | Sociopolitical Events | Resolution and Implicit Messages | Thematic Keywords | Xenophobia presence | Integration presence | Stereotype Presence | Stereotype Impact | Cultural Diversity | Immigrants Representation |
| 1 | **Las Carts de Alou** | 1990 | Drama | 5 | U/SUB | CEN | MIX | | ID | Racism, Marginalization, Deportation, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Discrimination, Undocumented immigrant | PI | P + CON | P | C | P | P |
| 2 | **Hola, estas Sola** | 1996 | Comedy, Drama | 1 | U | SUB | N/A | | NE | Integration, Cultural Clash, Sexualized Objectification, stereotypes | A | P | A | R | A | N |
| 3 | **Bwana** | 1996 | Drama | 1 | O | CEN | EXT | Neo-Nazism | MX | Racism, Xenophobia, Undocumented immigrant, Clandestine migration, Nationalism | P | A | P | R | A | MIX |
| 4 | **Taxi** | 1996 | Drama | N/A | U | SUB | N/A | Neo-Nazism | NE | Fascism, Neo-nazis, Nationalism, Racism, xenophobia, | P | A | P | Mix | A | N |
| 5 | **Cosas que dejé en La Habana** | 1997 | Comedy, Drama | 8 | U | CEN | IN | | ID | Integration, Cultural Clash , Immigrant-Local Relationships, Sexualized Objectification , Exploitation. | A | P+CON | P | R | A | MIX |
| 6 | **En la puta calle** | 1997 | Drama | 3 | U | SUB | EX | | NE | Marginalization, Job market, Immigrant-local friendships, Undocumented immigrant | A | A | P | C | A | P |
| 7 | **El sudor de los ruiseñores** | 1998 | Drama | 1 | U | CEN | EX | | MX | Racism, Nationalism, Xenophobia, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Immigrant Experiences | PE | A | P | C | P | P |
| 8 | **Flores de otro mundo** | 1999 | Drama, Romance | 7 | R | CEN | EX | Rural depopulation | ID | Exploitation, Integration, Immigrant-Local Relationship, Sexualized Objectification, Undocumented immigrant | A | P | P | C | A | P |
| 9 | **Saïd** | 1999 | Drama, Thriller | 6 | U | CEN | EX | Neo-Nazism | ID | Racism, Xenophobia, Discrimination, Detention Centres, Deportation, Cultural Clash, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Immigrant-Local Friendship, clandestine migration, Job market, Migration policies, Undocumented immigrant, Nationalism | PE | A | P | C | P | P |
| 10 | **Pidele cuentas al rey** | 1999 | Comedy, Drama | 2 | R | SUB | EX | | ID | Discrimination, Racism, Undocumented immigrant, Nationalism | PE | A | P | C | A | NEU |
| 11 | **Tomándote** | 2000 | Drama | 2 | U | CEN | IN | | MX | Integration, Cultural Clash, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Sexualized Objectification, stereotypes, Immigrant Experiences | A | P+CON | P | R | P | P |
| 12 | **Salvajes** | 2001 | Drama | 2 | U | CEN | EX | Neo-Nazism | ID | Racism, Nationalism, Undocumented immigrants, Xenophobia, Discrimination, Human trafficking, prejudices, stereotypes, marginalization, Nationalism | P | A | A | C | A | P |
| 13 | **El traje** | 2002 | Comedy, Drama | 4 | U | CEN | EX | | ID | Racism, Marginalization, Stereotypes, Prejudices, Undocumented immigrant | A | A | P | Mix | A | MIX |
| 14 | **Poniente** | 2002 | Drama | 5 | SUB | CEN | EX | Xenophobia violence | ID | Racism, Undocumented immigrant, Xenophobia, Integration, Cultural Clash, Discrimination, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Sexualized Objectification, Stereotypes, marginalization, Migration, policies, Exploitation, Job market | P | A | P | C | A | N |
| 15 | **La novia de Lázaro** | 2002 | Drama | 2 | U | CEN | EX | | NE | Undocumented immigrant, Integration, Cultural Clash, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Sexualized Objectification, prejudices, stereotypes, marginalization, Job market, Immigrant Experiences | A | P | P | R | A | N |
| 16 | **Ilegal** | 2003 | Thriller | 4 | U | CEN | EX | | NE | Racism, Undocumented immigrant, clandestine migration, Xenophobia, Discrimination, Human trafficking, Stereotypes, Marginalization, Migration policies, Exploitation, Immigrant Experiences | P | A | P | C | A | P |
| 17 | **Agua con sal** | 2005 | Drama | 5 | SUB | CEN | EX | | ID | Discrimination, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Marginalization, Migration policies, Exploitation, Job market, Immigrant Experiences, Undocumented immigrant | A | A | P | C | P | P |
| 18 | **Malas temporadas** | 2005 | Drama | 7 | U | SUB | EX | - | NE | Refugee, migration policies, Immigrant-Local Relationships, | A | P | P | R | A | NEU |
| 19 | **Princesas** | 2005 | Drama | 1 | U | CEN | EX | | NE | Undocumented immigrant, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Sexualized Objectification, Stereotypes, Marginalization, Exploitation, Job market, Immigrant Experiences | A | P | P | R | A | N |
| 20 | **El próximo Oriente** | 2006 | Comedy | 6 | U | CEN | EX | Terrorism acts, Alliance of Civilizations | ID | Integration, Diversity, Cultural Clash, Immigrant-Local Relationship | A | P+CON | A | C | P | P |
| 21 | **Retorno a Hansala** | 2008 | Drama | 2 | SUB | CEN | EX | | NE | Undocumented immigrant, clandestine migration, Family Reunion, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Human trafficking, Marginalization, | A | A | P | C | P | p |
| 22 | **Un Novio para Yasmina** | 2008 | Drama, Comedy | 11 | SUB | CEN | EX | | ID | Cultural Clash Integration, Job market Immigrant-local relationships, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Migration policies, | A | P | P | MIX | P | MIX |

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| 23 | **Amador** | 2010 | Drama | 2 | U | CEN | EX | | NE | Immigrant-local friendship, stereotypes, Job market, Immigrant Experiences, | A | A | P | C | A | MIX |
| 24 | **Catalunya über alles!** | 2010 | Drama | 10 | SUB | CEN | EX | Financial Crisis 2008 | MX | Racism, Xenophobia, Discrimination, Asylum, Asylum , Sexualized Objectification, Migration policies, Undocumented immigrant | PE | A | P | MIX | P | MIX |
| 25 | **El dios de madera** | 2010 | Drama | 3 | U | CEN | EX | | ID | Deportation, Racism, Undocumented immigrant, clandestine migration, Integration, Immigrant-Local, Relationships, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Sexualized Objectification, prejudices, stereotypes, Migration policies, Exploitation, Job market, Immigrant Experiences | A | P | P | R | P | N |
| 26 | **Naufragio** | 2010 | Drama | 2 | SUB | CEN | IN | | NE | Undocumented immigrant, clandestine migration, Integration, Discrimination, Sexualized Objectification, marginalization, Job market, Immigrant Experiences | A | P | P | MIX | P | MIX |
| 27 | **Evelyn** | 2012 | Thriller, Drama | 3 | SUB | CEN | MIX | | NE | Human trafficking, Exploitation, Sexualized Objectification, Undocumented immigrant | A | A | P | C | A | P |
| 28 | **Five Colors** | 2011 | Comedy | 3 | U | SUB | EX | | NE | Racism, Stereotypes, Undocumented immigrant | A | A | P | R | A | NE |
| 29 | **La venta del paraíso** | 2012 | Drama, Comedy | 4 | U | CEN | EX | Financial Crisis 2008 | ID | Deportation, Undocumented immigrant, Xenophobia, Integration, Cultural Clash, Immigrant-Local Friendship, marginalization, Immigrant Experiences, Sexualized Objectification, Exploitation | P | P | P | Mixed | A | NE |
| 30 | **Ismael** | 2013 | Drama | 2 | U/S | SUB | EX | | ID | Integration, Family Reunion, Immigrant-Local Relationships | A | A | A | C | A | P |
| 31 | **A escondidas** | 2014 | Drama | 3 | U | CEN | MIX | | MX | Detention centre, Unaccompanied minors Deportation, Racism, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Drug dealing, Undocumented immigrant | P | A | P | MIX | A | N |
| 32 | **Rastros de sándalo** | 2014 | Drama | 1 | U | SUB | N/A | | ID | Integration, Family Reunion, Immigrant-Local Relationships | A | P | A | C | P | P |
| 33 | **Lo nunca visto** | 2019 | Comedy | 4 | R | CEN | Ex | Rural depopulation | ID | Racism, Xenophobia, clandestine migration, Integration, Stereotypes, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Sexualized Objectification, Undocumented immigrant | P | P+CON | P | R | P | MIX |
| 34 | **Pullman** | 2019 | Drama | 7 | U | CEN | EX | | NE | Marginalization, Job market, Immigrant Experiences | A | A | P | Mix | P | P |
| 35 | **Lluvia y ceniza** | 2019 | Drama | 2 | U | SUB | IN | | NE | Family Reunion, Immigrant-Local Relationships, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Sexual Objectification, Immigrant Experiences, Undocumented immigrant | A | P | P | R | A | N |
| 36 | **La dona il·legal** | 2020 | Thriller, Drama | 7 | U | CEN | EX | | ID | Racism, Detention centers, Human trafficking, exploitation, prostitution, Migration policy, Asylum, Deportation, Undocumented immigrant | PE | P | A | MIX | A | P |
| 37 | **Seis días corrientes** | 2021 | Comedy | 4 | U | CEN | EX | | ID | Racism, prejudges, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Job market, Discrimination, Integration, Sexual Objectification, | P | P | P | MIX | P | P |
| 38 | **Codigo Emperador** | 2022 | Thriller | 1 | U | SUB | EX | | NE | Deportation, Undocumented immigrants, Immigrant-local relationships, Sexualized Objectification, stereotypes, marginalization, Exploitation, Job market | A | A | P | C | A | NE |
| 39 | **Vasil** | 2022 | Comedy | 2 | U | CEN | EX | | MX | Integration, Cultural Clash, Immigrant-Local Friendship, Migration policies, Job market, Immigrant Experiences, Discrimination | A | P | P | MIX | P | P |

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| CHARACTER LEVEL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # | Film title | Characteristics | | | | | | Stereotypes of the Immigrant Portrayal | | | | | | | |
| | | Name, ID | Gender | Age Group | Geographical origin | Role | Spoken language | Social Economic | Job Domain | Marital status | legal status | Traits and Social Interactions | Behavior | Acculturation | Intellectual |
| 1 | Las Cartas de Alou | Alou #1 | M | A | AF | PRO | MIX | L | Farmworker | DL | U | AM, AG, RE, F | Ne | CC | I |
| | | Mulie #2 | M | A | AF | SUP | MIX | M | Hawker | M, DL | D | MA, EX | N | ASS | I |
| | | Moncef #3 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | Farmworker | M, left | U | FO, F | P | CP | U |
| | | Kacem #4 | M | A | AF | MR | SP | L | Farmworker | S | U | F | P | CP | U |
| | | Ibrahima #5 | M | A | AF | MR | MIX | L | Farmworker | S | U | F | P | CP | I |
| 2 | Hola, estas sola | Olaf #6 | M | A | EE | SUP | NA | L | JOBLESS | DL | N/A | F, LA, CA | NE | ASS | N/A |
| 3 | Bwana | Ombassi #7 | M | A | AF | ANT | N | L | N/A | N/A | U | NA, F | P | CC | U |
| 4 | Taxi | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Cosas que dejé en La Habana | Igor #8 | M | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | Illegal occupations | DL | U | MA, EX | N | ASS | I |
| | | Nena #9 | F | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | sewist | S | U | AM, AD, DE | P | CC | FE |
| | | Rosa #10 | F | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | sewist | S | U | I, F | P | CC | FE |
| | | Ludmila #11 | F | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | sewist | M+DL | U | AM, AD | NE | CC | FE |
| | | Tía María #12 | F | E | LA | SUP | SP | M | sewist | S | D | HF, AD | P | ASS+CON | I |
| | | Bárbaro #13 | M | A | LA | SUP | NA | L | Jobless | M+DS+WITH | U | FO, F | NE | CP | U |
| | | Bárbaro´s wife #14 | F | A | LA | MR | NA | L | Jobless | M+DS+WITH | U | FO | NE | CP | U |
| | | Bárbaro´s daughter #15 | F | C | LA | MR | NA | L | N/A | N/A | U | N/A | NE | N/A | N/A |
| 6 | En La Puta Calle | Andy #16 | M | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | Laborer | S | U | AM, F, HF, AD | P | ASS | U |
| | | The Housemaid #17 | F | A | LA | SUP | MIX | L | Maid | S | D | F, | P | CP | U |
| | | Mohammed #18 | M | A | M | MR | MIX | L | Hostel runner | S | U | F, HF, FA | P | CP | U |
| 7 | El sudor de los ruiseñores | Mihai #19 | M | A | EE | PRO | MIX | L | Street performer | M+LEFT | U | AM, FO, F | P | CC | FE |
| 8 | Flores de Otro Mundo | Patricia #20 | F | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | Housewife | M+DL | U | F, FO | P | ASS | U |
| | | Milady #21 | F | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | Jobless | M+DL | U | F, EX | N | CC | U |
| | | Lorna #22 | F | A | La | MR | MIX | L | Labourer | N/A | D | F, HF | P | ASS | N/A |
| | | Daisy #23 | F | A | La | MR | NA | L | Labourer | S | D | F, | NE | ASS | N/A |
| | | Graciela #24 | F | A | La | MR | NA | L | Labourer | S | D | F, | NE | ASS | N/A |
| | | The Ex-husband #25 | M | A | la | MR | NA | L | Jobless | D | U | MA, EX, | N | N/A | U |
| | | Daughter #26 | F | C | La | MR | MIX | L | N/A | N/A | U | N/A | NE | ASS | N/A |
| 9 | Saïd | Saïd #27 | M | A | M | PRO | MIX | L | Hawker | DL | U | AM, FA, F | P | CP | I |
| | | Husein #28 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | Illegal occupations | S | D | AG, MA, H | N | CC | I |
| | | Ahmad #29 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | Hawker | S | U | F, AD | P | CP | FE |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tayeb #30 | M | A | TUNIS | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | M+DL | D | FO | P | CP | FE |
| | | Fatima #31 | F | A | M | MR | MIX | L | N/A | S | D | FO | NE | CP | FE |
| | | Hasan #32 | M | A | M | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | S | U | F | NE | CP | I |
| 10 | Pídele cuentas al Rey | Jihad #33 | M | A | M | MR | SP | L | N/A | M+LEFT | U | F, FO, F | P | CP | U |
| | | Portuguese protestant #34 | M | A | EU | MR | MIX | L | Jobless | M+WITH | D | F, FO, F, AG | P | N/a | U |
| 11 | Tomándote | Jalil #35 | M | A | AS | PRO | MIX | L | Florist | DL | D | AM, F, DI | P | CC | I |
| | | Tajamal #36 | M | A | AS | MR | MIX | L | Delivery boy | S | D | F, NA | NE | CP | I |
| 12 | Salvajes | Omar #37 | M | A | AF | MR | NA, SP | L | JOBLESS | S | U | F, DI | P | CP | I |
| | | Malik #38 | M | A | AF | MR | NA | L | JOBLESS | S | U | DI | P | CC | U |
| 13 | El Traje | Patricio #39 | M | A | AF | PRO | SP | L | Parking lot attendant | S | U | F, DI | P | ASS+CON | U |
| | | Roland #40 | M | A | AF | SUP | SP | L | Hawker | S | U | F, AM, NA | P | ASS+CON | U |
| | | George #41 | M | A | AF | MR | SP | L | Hawker | S | U | F | P | ASS+CON | U |
| | | Vicente #42 | M | A | AF | MR | SP | L | Hawker | S | U | RA, FA | P | CP | I |
| 14 | Poniente | Abdenbi #43 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | Farmworker | S | U | AM, F, FA | P | ASS | I |
| | | Said #44 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | Farmworker | S | U | AM, AG | N | CC | FE |
| | | Mohammed #45 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | Farmworker | M+LEFT | U | F, DI, RA, FA | P | CP | I |
| | | Chad #46 | M | A | AF | MR | SP | L | Farmworker | S | U | F, FA | P | CP | U |
| | | Ahmad #47 | M | A | M | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | S | U | F | P | CC | U |
| 15 | La novia de Lázaro | Lazaro #48 | M | A | L | SUP | SP | L | Jobless | DS + WITH | D | MA, LA, EX NAS | N | ASS | I |
| | | Dolores #49 | F | A | L | PRO | SP | L | Labourer | DL | U | NA, F, AD | NE | ASS | U |
| 16 | Ilegal | Abdu #50 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | JOBLESS | S | U | AM, FO, F | P | CP | I |
| | | Lamine #51 | M | A | M | MR | MIX | L | JOBLESS | S | U | FO, RA | P | CC | U |
| | | Senegalés 1 #52 | M | A | AF | MR | MIX | L | JOBLESS | S | U | FO, F | P | CC | U |
| | | Senegalés 2 #53 | M | A | AF | MR | MIX | L | JOBLESS | S | U | AM, FO, F | P | CP | U |
| 17 | Agua con Sal | Olga #54 | F | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | Laborer | D+LEFT KIDS | U | AM, FO, F, AD | P | CC | FE |
| | | Paralyzed patient #55 | F | E | LA | SUP | SP | L | N/A | M | D | I | NE | ASS | N/A |
| | | Larisa #56 | F | A | EE | MR | NA | L | Laborer | S | U | F | P | CP | U |
| | | Elena #57 | F | A | EE | MR | NA | L | Laborer | S | U | F | P | CP | U |
| | | Natalia #58 | F | A | EE | MR | NA | L | Laborer | S | U | F | P | CP | U |
| 18 | Malas temporadas | Oscar #59 | M | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | Jobless | DL | R | DI, DE | NE | ASS | FE |
| | | Ibrahim #60 | M | A | M | MR | SP | L | N/A | S | U | AG | N | CC | U |
| | | Leo #61 | M | A | LA | MR | MIX | L | N/A | S | N/A | MA | N | ASS | I |

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| | | Abdul #62 | M | A | M | MR | SP | L | N/A | S | D | F | P | N/A | U |
| | | Olga, mother #63 | F | A | EE | MR | SP | L | Jobless | M+LEFT | R | VA | N | N/A | N/A |
| | | Liuva, Daughter #64 | F | T | EE | MR | SP | L | Student | S | R | VA | NE | N/A | N/A |
| 19 | Princesas | Zulema #65 | F | A | LA | PRO | SP | L | Prostitution | D | U | F, VA | N | ASS | U |
| | | Black prostitute #66 | F | A | AF | MR | SP | L | Prostitution | N/A | U | N/A | N | N/A | N/A |
| 20 | El Próximo Oriente | Aisha #67 | F | A | AS | PRO | MIX | M | Office job | M+DL | D | Re, F | N | ASS+CON | FE |
| | | Shakir #68 | M | E | AS | SUP | MIX | M | Running small business | M+WITH | D | FO, F | P | CP | I |
| | | Samaah #69 | F | E | AS | SUP | MIX | M | Running small business | M+WITH | D | FO, Re, F | P | ASS+CON | I |
| | | Reema #70 | F | A | AS | MR | MIX | M | Student | S | D | Re, F | P | ASS+CON | FE |
| | | Fátima #71 | F | T | AS | MR | MIX | M | Student | S | D | Re, F | P | ASS+CON | FE |
| | | Imam of the Mosque #72 | M | E | AS | MR | NA | N/A | N/A | N/A | D | F | N | CP | I |
| 21 | Retorno A Hansala | Leila #73 | F | A | M | PRO | MIX | L | Laborer | S | D | FO, F | P | CP | U |
| | | Said #74 | M | T | M | SUP | MIX | L | Jobless | N/A | Un | AM, F, HF, DE | P | N/A | I |
| 22 | Un Novio Para Yasmina | Yasmina #75 | F | A | M | PRO | MIX | L | Teacher | DL | U | AM, DE, EX | P | ASS+CON | FE |
| | | Abdel #76 | M | A | M | SUP | NA | L | Farmworker | S | U | | N | CC | U |
| | | Noura #77 | F | A | M | SUP | NA | L | Housewife | M+WITH | D | FO | N | CP | U |
| | | Said #78 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | M | Teacher | N/A | D | F | P | ASS | FE |
| | | Abdelkader #79 | M | A | M | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | S | U | FO | NE | CP | U |
| | | Mohammad #80 | M | A | M | MR | MIX | L | Farmworker | S | D | FO, F | NE | CP | U |
| | | Rashid #81 | M | A | M | MR | MIX | L | Farmworker | S | D | FO | NE | CP | U |
| | | Omar #82 | M | A | M | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | M+WITH | U | F | NE | CP | U |
| | | Ali #83 | M | A | M | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | S | U | F | P | CP | U |
| | | Latifa #84 | F | A | M | MR | MIX | L | Housewife | M+WITH | D | FO, F | NE | CP | U |
| | | Malika #85 | F | A | M | MR | NA | L | Housewife | M+WITH | D | FO, F | NE | CP | U |
| 23 | Amador | Marcela #86 | F | A | LA | PRO | SP | L | Caregiver | M+with | D | FO, HF, VA | N | CP | I |
| | | Nelson #87 | M | A | LA | SUP | SP | L | Retailer | M+with | D | AM, MA,DE | NE | ASS | N/A |
| 24 | Catalunya über alles! | Babou #88 | M | A | AF | PRO | R+NA | L | Service by Commission | M+DS+WITH | U | AM, FO, DE | P | CP | I |
| | | Babou's wife #89 | F | A | AF | MR | NA | L | Housewife | M+DS+WITH | U | FO | P | CP | I |
| | | Babou's daughter #90 | F | C | AF | MR | NA | L | Student | N/A | U | N/A | P | CP | FE |
| | | Babou's son #91 | M | C | AF | MR | NA | L | Student | N/A | U | N/A | P | CP | FE |
| | | Family member 1 #92 | M | A | AF | MR | NA | L | Jobless | S | U | FO, LA | P | CP | U |
| | | Family member 2 #93 | M | A | AF | MR | NA | L | Jobless | S | U | FO, LA | P | CP | U |

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| | | Family member 3 #94 | M | A | AF | MR | NA | L | Jobless | S | U | FO, LA | P | CP | U |
| | | Family member 4 #95 | M | A | AF | MR | NA | L | Jobless | S | U | FO, LA | P | CP | U |
| | | Escort #96 | F | A | EE | SUP | SP | L | Prostitution | S | U | MA, EX | N | ASS | I |
| | | Thief #97 | M | A | EE | MR | N/A | L | Illegal occupations | N/A | R | H | N | N/A | N/A |
| 25 | El dios de madera | Yao #98 | M | A | AF | PRO | MIX | L | Jobless | Left+DL | U | F, LA, EX | N | ASS+CON | U |
| | | Rachid #99 | M | A | M | PRO | MIX | L | Hairdresser | DL | U | F, MA, EX | N | ASS+CON | U |
| | | Prostitute #100 | F | A | AF | MR | MIX | L | Prostitution | N/A | U | LA, I | N | N/A | U |
| 26 | Naufragio | Robinsón #101 | M | A | AF | PRO | NA | L | Farmworker, Laborer | S | U | AG, I | N | CC | U |
| | | Sankum #102 | M | A | AF | SUP | NA | L | Farmworker | N/A | U | F,HF | P | CP | I |
| | | Soundiata #103 | M | C | AF | MR | N/A | L | Farmworker | N/A | U | F, HP | P | CP | U |
| | | Farmworker 1 #104 | M | A | AF | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | S | U | F, RA | NEU | CP | U |
| | | Farmworker 2 #105 | M | A | AF | MR | NA | L | Farmworker | S | U | F, HP | P | CP | U |
| 27 | Evelyn | Evelyn #106 | F | A | LA | PRO | MIX | L | Prostitution | S | U | NA, VA | P | N/A | I |
| | | Evelyn's cousin #107 | F | A | LA | SUP | MIX | L | Prostitution | S | U | MA, Re | N | N/A | N/A |
| | | Elizabeth #108 | F | A | AF | SUP | SP | L | Prostitution | S | U | VA | NE | N/A | N/A |
| 28 | Five Colors | Candela #109 | F | A | LA | PRO | SP | M | N/A | S | D | F, HF | P | ASS | I |
| | | Caregiver #110 | M | A | LA | SUP | MIX | L | Caregiver | N/A | D | F, | P | ASS | I |
| | | Mafia member #111 | M | A | LA | SUP | MIX | L | Illegal occupations | N/A | U | H, MA | N | N/A | U |
| 29 | La venta del paraíso | Aura Maria #112 | F | A | LA | PRO | SP | L | JOBLESS | S | U | NA, F | P | CC | I |
| | | Oswaldo #113 | M | A | LA | SUP | SP | L | JOBLESS | S | U | F, hf | P | CP | U |
| | | El Paisa #114 | M | A | LA | SUP | SP | L | Hawker | N/A | U | F | NE | ASS | I |
| | | Olivetti #115 | M | A | LA | SUP | SP | L | JOBLESS | Widow | D | HF, AD, RA CA | P | ASS | I |
| 30 | Ismael | Ismael #116 | M | C | AF | PRO | SP | M | Student | N/A | D | AM, F, AD, DE | P | ASS | FE |
| | | Aleka #117 | F | A | AF | SUP | SP | M | Nurse | DL | D | FO, FA | NE | ASS+CON | FE |
| 31 | A Escondidas | Ibrahim #118 | M | T | M | PRO | MIX | L | Illegal occupations | Dating a local boy | U | RE, NA, F | N | ASS+CON | FE |
| | | Youssef #119 | M | A | M | SUP | MIX | L | Illegal occupations | S | U | AG, MA, H, FO | N | CC | U |
| | | Said #120 | M | T | M | MR | N | L | Illegal occupations | S | U | F | NA | ASS+CON | FE |
| | | The handicapped kid #121 | M | C | M | MR | N/A | L | N/A | N/A | U | VU | NE | N/A | |
| 32 | Rastros de sándalo | Prakash #122 | M | A | AS | SUP | SP | M | RETAILER | DL | D | AM, F | P | CP | ED |
| 33 | Lo Nunca Visto | Calulu #123 | M | A | AF | ANT | MIX | L | Jobless | DL | U | NA/ RE | P | ASS+CON | I |
| | | Shukra #124 | M | A | AF | ANT | MIX | L | Jobless | DL | U | AG | P | ASS+CON | I |
| | | Latisha #125 | F | A | AF | ANT | MIX | L | Jobless | DL | U | AM/RE | P | ASS+CON | FE |

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| | | Azquil #126 | M | A | AF | ANT | MIX | L | Jobless | DL | U | AM /RE | P | ASS+CON | FE |
| 34 | Pullman | Daren #127 | M | C | AF | PRO | SP | L | Student | N/A | D | AM, F | P | ASS | FE |
| | | Father #128 | M | A | AF | SUP | MIX | L | Farmworker | M+WITH | D | FO | P | CP | I |
| | | Mother #129 | F | A | AF | MR | MIX | L | Housewife | M+WITH | D | FO | P | CP | U |
| | | Sister #130 | F | C | AF | MR | NA | L | Student | N/A | D | N/A | NE | N/A | N/A |
| | | Nadia #131 | F | C | EE | PRO | SP | L | Student | N/A | D | AM, F | P | ASS | FE |
| | | Mother #132 | F | A | EE | SUP | SP | L | Prostitute | D | D | FO | P | ASS | U |
| | | Sister #133 | F | T | EE | SUP | SP | L | N/A | DL | D | NAS | N | ASS | FE |
| 35 | Lluvia y ceniza | Lola #134 | F | A | LA | PRO | SP | L | Prostitute | DL | U | EX, VA | N | ASS | U |
| | | Lazaro #135 | M | A | LA | MR | SP | L | Jobless | S | D | AG, I | N | ASS | U |
| 36 | La dona illegal | Juliet Okoro #136 | F | A | AF | SUP | SP | L | Prostitute | S | U | Re, F | P | ASS+CON | U |
| | | Fàtima Jamed #137 | F | A | M | SUP | SP/R | M | Activist | N/A | D | AM, F | P | ASS | FE |
| | | Zita Krasniqi #138 | F | A | EE | MR | N | L | Prostitute | M+LEFT | U | NA | P | N/A | U |
| | | Mercy #139 | F | A | AF | SUP | SP | M | Illegal occupations | DL | D | F, EX | N | ASS+CON | U |
| | | Hussein #140 | M | S | M | MR | SP | L | Jobless | M+WITH | U | FO, F | N | CP | U |
| | | Samir #141 | M | A | ME | MR | SP | L | Jobless | N/A | R | AM, F | P | CC | FE |
| | | Helen #142 | F | A | AF | MR | SP | M | Nurse | N/A | D | F | P | N/A | FE |
| 37 | Seis días Corrientes | Moha #143 | M | A | M | Pro | Mix | L | odd jobs | S | D | AM, RE, F | P | ASS | I |
| | | Moha's cousin 1 #144 | M | A | M | MR | N | L | Jobless | S | N/A | L, I | N | CP | U |
| | | Moha's cousin 2 #145 | M | A | M | MR | N | L | Jobless | S | N/A | L, I | N | CP | U |
| | | Teacher #146 | M | A | AS | MR | R | N/A | N/A | NA | N/A | NA | P | ASS | E |
| 38 | Código Emperador | Wendy #147 | M | A | AS | SUP | SP | L | MAID | S | U | F, AD | NE | CP | U |
| 39 | Vasil | Vasil #148 | M | A | EE | PRO | MIX | L | Restaurant worker | M+LEFT | D | AM, F, HF DI, FA | P | CC | I |
| | | Yorgos #149 | M | A | EE | MR | SP | M | Restaurant worker | N/A | D | F, FA | P | ASS | I |

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This dissertation examines the portrayal of immigrants in Spanish cinema within the broader European context and assesses whether these depictions reinforce or challenge existing stereotypes. Focusing on films produced between 1990 and 2022, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of how immigration is represented over time, tracing the shifts and continuities in immigrant portrayals. By exploring the diverse characteristics of immigrant characters, the study seeks to understand how Spanish cinema reflects, reinforces, or challenges societal perceptions of immigrants, particularly through the lens of Representation and Cultivation Theories.