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# **SPANISH MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE OLD AGE DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS**

Tampere University  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Maria de la O Ribas Closa: Spanish media representation of the old age during the COVID-19 crisis  
Master's Thesis  
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It is widely known that the global population is ageing in an increased pace compared to previous decades. However, there is still not a consensual understanding of what old age and aging means. Aging is a socially constructed concept. Therefore, there is a need for studies to explore the popular understanding regarding this concept within different scenarios. More research on the topic is essential in order to learn the abilities necessary to adapt for the future that the ageing of the global population implies.

This study aims to analyse the response media has had regarding old people and old age during the COVID-19 crisis in Spain. The method used to analyse the data provided by the headlines and sub-headlines of the articles published during the first wave in the newspaper El País, has been the thematic analysis.

The results suggest that during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, old age and old people were generalized and represented as a fragile and vulnerable risk group underlining their need for assistance due to the loneliness most experience. Additionally, through the data analysed it was observed that articles that had some relation to technology were more positive compared to those that did not include this subject. Technology was closely related to the adaptation old people had to experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, death and elderly homes, are the two subjects most present when analysing the data.

These results underline the need to portray a more heterogeneous image of the old age and old people. Changing the narrative of old age to one that is more inclusive and understanding of the characteristics of this life stage will directly affect the self-definition of society, which has a rapidly aging population. This might help the health outcomes of the future aging population, increasing the possibilities of a more productive and healthier society promoting age integration among all age groups.

**Keywords:** Old age, COVID-19, Representation, Media, Newspaper

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	5
<b>2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	7
2.1 Old age	7
2.1.1 COVID-19 and old age	9
2.2 Mass Media	11
2.3 Media and old age	11
2.3.1 Spanish media and old age	13
2.3.2 Media and COVID-19	14
<b>3. AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b>	16
3.1 Research aims	16
3.2 Research Questions	16
<b>4. MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	18
4.1 Study Design	18
4.2 Study Subject	18
4.3 Ethics	19
4.4 Procedures of Data Collection	19
4.5 Procedures of Data Analysis	22
4.6 Analysis Process	23
<b>5. RESULTS</b>	26
5.1 Theme Clouds	26
5.1.1 Systems	26
5.1.2 Adaptation and support	30
5.1.3 Particularity of old age	32
5.1.4 Other relations	36

**6. DISCUSSION..... 38**

6.1 Study design delimitation and limitations ..... 39

6.2 Comparison with other studies..... 39

6.3 Suggestions for further research..... 41

**7. CONCLUSIONS ..... 43**

**8. ACNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... 45**

**9. REFERENCES ..... 46**

**10. APPENDICES ..... 51**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It has been exposed through various researchers that the global population is aging. Globally, it is estimated that in the next 30 years the proportion of people over 60 years will almost double from 12% to 22% (Maestas, Mullen & Powell, 2016). In Europe the share of people aged over 80 years old is projected to have an increase of 8.6%, from 6% to 14.6% ("Population structure and ageing - Statistics Explained", 2022). The rate in which the population is ageing, has increased comparing past trends. The population over 60 overcomes the percentage of the population under 5 years old. (WHO, 2018) These forecasts will shape the way we understand life, and the outcomes ahead of us are unknown. Countries' economies will be affected by these trends in relation to the workforce and pensions (Maestas, Mullen & Powell, 2016).

A lot of wonders relating to the aging societies lie before us, to face these challenges, there is a need to understand what the present concept of the old age is. There does not seem to be a clear general understanding of what the situation regarding old age is and what does it mean (Díaz Aledo, 2013). There are numerous perspectives regarding ageing (biological, social, and psychological), these concepts combine different approaches to the same term that might be hard to connect. The complexity of the term old age and the history behind it has created a wide framework in where there is no universal definition of what old age is. The specifics of the concept such as what does old age constitute and when does it start have not yet being answered. (Victor, 2005) This creates opportunities for misconceptions and wrongful judgments that affect the image of old age.

Considering the predictions of ageing populations, it is primordial to fill in the gap of what is the popular concept regarding the old age and how is it portrayed to be able to improve the quality of life of the old population and move forward to a society for all ages. This has been identified as a challenge in The Madrid International Plan of Action of Aging and the Political Declaration of 2002. This plan of action identifies 3 priority areas, older persons, and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. (UN, 2002) This challenge, echoes with

a recent study that highlights the chance of ageism increasing its prevalence and impact along the phenomenon of ageing population (Wilson, Errasti-Ibarrondo, & Low, 2019).

Through the COVID-19 where information has been flowing in high speed thanks to technology. Identifying how the media represents the old age is of great importance, more in a crisis where old people has had such a major roll being the age group with higher needs and risks in front of the pandemic, making them a primary group when dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, affecting policies, political decisions, and public health measures.

There is a need to research what old age is and what does society understand from it to be able to adapt to the challenges we will face during the next decades. Consequently, the aim of this study using thematic analysis, is to analyse the response media has had regarding old people through the main Spanish newspaper (El País) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This review of literature explores the different concepts that are a part of the object of this thesis to provide context and introduce the justification for this study.

To do so, it explores the following three main concepts: old age, mass media and media and old age.

### **2.1 Old age**

A Dictionary of Public health defines old age as “an ill-defined age epoch for which euphemisms include retired persons, senior citizens, third age, and golden age.” When defining the old age group, it then mentions four different sub-groups: old, 65 to 70 that are active, mentally alert and recently retired or still in the work force, an intermediate group, from 65 to 74 years, which include people with some impairments and/or disabilities that often require of medication and continuous medical care; an older group from 75 to 84 years and a final category; the older old which include people that are above 85 years. (Porta & Last, 2018) This definition, is one of many that define old age. There is not a consensus regarding what old age is and how do we identify it.

The mere concept of old age is by itself constructed by society. There is no specific time and place where a person begins to consider themselves as old, and the same happens with the conception of others. This understanding of old age is socially constructed through the various experience's humans live. Ageing by itself is the way we process how live goes on and how do we progress. (Vincent, 2003)

Ageing, being socially constructed has different interpretation depending on different factors, one of them is the time perspective. It has been proven the existence of a systematic relationship between time perspective and age, having a subsequent impact to the ageing process and the concept of old age. (Laureiro-Martinez, Trujillo & Unda, 2017). Depending on the individuals and what they have lived, their understanding of

what ageing is might vary as it has been continuously constructed throughout their own years lived.

Biologically, ageing is associated with the changes our body goes through during our lives. These are continuous changes that affect the basic biological processes of our body such as the cellular metabolism. Research suggests, that with age, these essential processes become less efficient with age, causing different outcomes that influence the ageing process. The key factors that are linked with ageing include DNA mutations, chromosome shortening, factors binding to DNA and misfolded proteins. These key factors, consequently, generate problems associated with energy production, the decline of cellular metabolism, cell division and tissue regeneration decline and disrupted cell communication. (Worsley & Border, 2018)

These processes, although having been linked to old age, are not linear nor consequential. Therefore, different people might experience these processes differently even if they are the same age. For instance, one person may require assistance in order to meet their basic needs while another person with the same age might not have any issues and is independent when meeting their basic needs. (WHO, 2015)

The process of ageing, it is considered continuous and a long one. The implied changes that come along ageing, universally, are experienced as a loss. (Vincent, 2003)

This loss is not only experienced through biology. Although there is no direct association of the biological “loss” with the social allocation one may have in a community. (WHO, 2015) Sociologically, this perception of loss, may affect the perception of oneself by putting the label of old age before all other identities. (Pickard, 2014)

The changes and processes that ageing introduces to oneself, create some shifts in one’s roles and social positions that consequently affect people’s daily life. The adaptation to the “loss” that one is experiencing is often portrayed through the selection of fewer and more meaningful goals, along with the search for adaptation tools that may help to the



changes that are unfolding in one's life through technology or the learning of new methods in order to compensate for some of the lost abilities. (WHO, 2015)

Although, old age introduces a new reality which people need to adapt to, there is a lack of new established roles for the old age group. Because of this gap in societies roles, there is a need to reinvent and promote the cultural experience of ageing highlighting a period of personal growth and development. (Vincent, 2003)

### 2.1.1 COVID-19 and old age

COVID-19, a pandemic of respiratory illness, was identified in 2019. This pandemic was caused by a coronavirus, a type of virus. The first case of COVID-19 was reported on December 2019. The virus may have originated in an animal and mutated so it could host on humans. There is still ongoing research on how and why the coronavirus evolved to cause a pandemic. This virus affects in different forms to each individual, some might have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all and in some cases, this illness can cause respiratory failure, lasting lung and muscle damage, nervous system problems, kidney failure and death. (What Is Coronavirus?, 2022)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, old age has been one of the protagonists in many different sectors as the risk of hospitalizations and death is higher for old people. The CDC reported that “8 out of 10 COVID-19 deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults that are 65 years old or older”. (CDC, 2020) These have made the old age a big topic within the COVID-19 pandemic, portraying the image of the old age in different manners during a crisis.

By May 23rd, 2020, with 28,628 cases, Spain, with a 19.3% of population over 60 years old, was one of the most affected countries in the world by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, some media outlets reassured that the coronavirus was a disease that would only affect the elderly. Furthermore, the mortality for old people residing in nursing homes was higher compared to other environments where old people lived. (Mateos et al., 2020)

As a response for the crisis, preventive measures such as physical distancing came into place. These, although effective in decreasing the spread of the pandemic, had some consequences such as increased loneliness. As older adults were associated with a higher risk, the restrictions were greater compared to other people of different age groups. Some adaptation tools were implemented in order to ease these new situations such as new technologies, however these distancing social contacts do not have the same effect as physical contacts. (Dahlberg, 2021)

At the beginning of this pandemic, there was little information on how old people coped with this new situation. The experience of previous pandemics predicted an emerging threat of ageism by various authors, and these, later on were tested by data from different international contexts. (Fernández-Ballesteros & Sánchez-Izquierdo, 2021)

With the knowledge of the risks old age represent, there has been cases of generalization of older adults as a homogeneous group and not recognise the diverse conditions and situations people from this demographic have. One of the factors for this generalization is ageism. At the beginning of the pandemic, someone's age was included as a consideration when allocating medical treatments. (APA Committee on Aging, 2020) Additionally, Fernández Ballesteros and Sánchez-Izquierdo in a recent study concluded that ageism seems to currently have a growing tendency in Spain as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed. (2021)

This disease, although fitting a bio-medical model requires other health perspectives when taking action as studies have shown a significant psychological impact, anxiety, loneliness and stress in the general population. (Fernández-Ballesteros & Sánchez-Izquierdo, 2021)

## **2.2 Mass Media**

Mass Media is a term used to include all modes of mass communication. Traditionally this has been defined by eight industries, Books, Newspapers, Magazines, Recordings, Radio, Movies, Television, and the Internet. Nowadays, this term is no longer only associated with these classic industries but has taken a more flexible and inclusive term as digital communication technology has grown over the years. (Khan, 2010)

The objectives of mass media include advocacy for different parties such as business and social concerns, better educations, recreation, journalism, and announcements for all. Although mass media can be used to achieve such objectives, the methodology in which it might achieve them could include some negative aspects, such as the inability to convey tacit knowledge, the manipulation of large groups of people via media outlets and bias regarding the information given through the source of information. (Khan, 2010)

The role that has mass media is of the main channel of communication within our modern society. The population base many of their opinions and voting decisions through these channels of information. (Khan, 2010)

W. James Potter defined the mass media effect as, “a change in an outcome within a person or social entity that is due to a mass media influence following exposure to a mass media message or series of messages” (2011). Through this idea, it can be understood that mass media can shape the concepts in society.

## **2.3 Media and old age**

Following the objectives and the effects that mass media has in the population, the understanding of language used when referring old age, a concept that will be part of many challenges that we will face in the next decades, is essential. The information regarding this concept will be broadcasted through many channels, one of them being mass media.

It is necessary to remember that the opinions and expressions mass-media uses do not necessarily need to be new, but they are a collection of what the society express daily, being in public or private. Therefore mass-media does not only shape concepts to the public mind, but the interaction is retroactive, and public opinions are represented through mass-media as well. (Hernandez Rodrigo, 2007) These might include age stereotypes that in some form may affect in a positive or negative way the old population affecting on a variety of cognitive and physical outcomes (Levy, 2009).

Considering the complexity of the meaning of ageing, language is a key factor when establishing a social understanding. Nowadays with globalization and the improvement on the accessibility to information, communication has become a major role in everyday society. Media can promote learning, knowledge development, meaning making and mind changing, promoting an idea. (Schrader, 2015)

Considering the theory of stereotype embodiment, assimilations from surrounding culture might affect the self-definition influencing health and functioning. Following this assumption, and the research supporting it, the aging process can be considered as a social construct. (Levy, 2009)

As the consequences about the structural demographic changes that we will face in the near future have been brought more to the public. Media has hampered and covered the issue “edged with hysteria”. This response from the media might have been partly because of misunderstanding when considering health in old age. Although the risk for ill health and disease increases with age, ageing itself does not cause disease. (McMurdo, 2000) As mentioned above, with the portray of a wrongful image of the process of ageing and the misunderstanding being broadcasted stereotypes are portrayed. These can impact the self-perception of someone’s own ageing affecting their own health (Levy, 2009).

Self-esteem is considered one of the main factors associated with the mental aspect of the elderly, although this aspect of someone’s lives seems to decrease in old age. In 2007 a

study conducted in Poland concluded that although the attitudes varied, there was a predominate tendency for negative attitudes in most communities. One of the reasons was concluded to be the stereotypical perceptions of old age. (Wysokiński et al., 2020)

Receiving a wrongful perspective of what old age is affects the general population including the old age. It is a perception that affects old peoples' self-esteem and the global contextualised knowledge of the concept affecting societies in all aspects, including the health of the old age population. (Levy, 2009)

### 2.3.1 Spanish media and old age

In Spain, during the past few years, the inclusion of the old population through the media has increased, most likely because of the increasing in population. The exposure of this group, however, has been of extremes. On the one hand, the old population is represented as a nuisance, not productive for the country. On the other hand, there has been a boost of the concept of “golden maturity” where the perks of being retired are exploited and the reality is rarely portrayed through any of these two extremes, creating a social construct that does not represent old age. (Díaz Aledo, 2013). This generalization of the old age includes a vast number of years as the understanding of old age is not standardized, in some cases when referring to older adults, media does creates a generalization that may challenge societal roles.

A study conducted in Spain, observed that although there were many articles published related to the old age or that had old age as a subject, these rarely has references. Additionally, the use of images and videos was not common, compared to other articles with different subjects. With these, the authors concluded that the relevance of the old population in Castilla y León did not correspond to the level of relevance that media exposes compared to other subjects. (Antón Crespo & Fernández Ramos, 2018)

Another study conducted in Jaen, Spain, exposed the importance of media language when older adults are the receivers of information. It was observed, that when asking questions of subjects that had appeared in media, if they were to use modern words or technical terms the conversation did not move forward, however when the conversation included words, they were familiar they realized they had some knowledge of what was being spoken. (Hidalgo & Pérez, 2016)

To tackle disparities of concepts some organizations have created material to incorporate appropriate and clear concepts when referring old age. One example is “*Guía de recomendaciones para comunicar con responsabilidad sobre las personas mayores*” (Guide of recommendations to communicate with responsibility about old people) a guide created by the Argentinian Ministry of Social Development, where they focus on media for them to have the tools to be able to represent this collective in the most optimal way. (Egitto, & De Michele, 2014). These measures nonetheless are not globalised and are recommendations that media can decide whether use them or not.

### 2.3.2 Media and COVID-19

Through the literature it is observed the importance of the management of media through a crisis. Media can have two reactions in front of a crisis, either practice the viewpoint of silence or the viewpoint of dynamicity, the last one referring to the believe that disasters are part of the social dialectic necessary for the improvement and growth of society. (Ghassabi,& Zare-Farashbandi, 2015).

More studies exploring the reporting of the pandemic by the media have been published since the COVID-19 Pandemic. It has been observed that media uses metaphors to support the public. (Giritli Nygren et al., 2021) Additionally, it has been reported that media sources, have had a tendency on describing older adults as vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Jen et all., 2021).

A recent article from Sweden, reported that mass media, during the COVID-19 pandemic, portrayed the elderly as an at-risk group while visitors, personnel and elderly homes were a threat to the elderly. (Giritli Nygren et al., 2021)

Another study, from Spain, that analyzed the representation of old age in different Spanish radio stations during the COVID-19 pandemic, concluded that the information shared through this media focused on the dependency, vulnerability, fragility, illness, and death as main subjects. These subjects, where also followed by an increase on the representation time within the different radio stations compared to previous times. (Guarinos & Martin-Pena, 2022)

The representation of the old age in different media channels seem to have a focus on portraying the old population as frail, dependent and vulnerable. One of the main prevention measures during the COVID-19 pandemic was social distancing. This meant that many people may have as their only source of information media channels such as radio, television, newspapers... Understanding these, can be directly associated to the theory of stereotype embodiment, as perceiving constantly an increased influx of information from surrounding culture may affect the self-definition influencing health and functioning. (Levy, 2009)

### **3. AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **3.1 Research aims**

The main purpose of this research is to analyse the response media has had regarding old people through Spanish newspapers during the COVID-19 crisis. Throughout this analysis, I expect to be able to understand the trends of language the media has been using during the pandemic. Identifying the language that is being used through media in a crisis, will promote the study of the implications of language use and its relationship with the perception Spanish society has concerning the image of old age. Receiving a wrongful perspective of what old age is affects the general population as the old age group of it. It is a perception that affects old peoples' self-esteem as the global contextualised knowledge of the concept affecting societies in all aspects, including the health of the old age population (Levy, 2009).

Consequently, the secondary aim of this research is to understand what the role of the old people is represented as by the Spanish newspaper El País in a global crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying signs of age segregation or age integration. Depending on the results, and considering the predictions regarding the aging population, the image trend in Spain can be underlined and there can be a recommendation for discussion and further debate about the media and the implications for the population.

#### **3.2 Research Questions**

Following the literature above, the main research question that has been formulated for the purpose of this research is: How is the old age during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis represented in the articles of the most popular Spanish newspaper? Following, there would be a sub-question: Do these representations have a positive or negative connotation regarding the old age?

Additionally, another question aiming to give insight in one of the objectives of this research is to identify if there are any signs of age segregation and/or age integration?



The question mentioned above will help prove if the Spanish newspaper represents old people in a heterogeneous manner. Following the trend of other countries' newspaper's, the most prominent discourse would be understanding ageing and the older population as a problem. (Lumme-sandt, 2011) The sub-question, will help understand the relation of the articles with the context of the timeline regarding the pandemic crisis.

## **4. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **4.1 Study Design**

For this study, the method that has been chosen to analyse the data and answer the questions proposed for this study is the qualitative analysis based on thematic analysis.

The qualitative analysis will respond to the question: How does the most popular Spanish newspaper use their articles to represent the old age during the pandemic crisis COVID-19?

Within the qualitative analysis the methodology used will be a thematic analysis (TA), as the goal is to identify patterns within the text which themes. Through these themes the essence of the data will be captured unifying different texts written by different authors that otherwise could see disparate. The themes allow us to capture implicit and explicit ideas of the data explaining the set of the data set. (Liamputtong, 2019)

### **4.2 Study Subject**

The targeted group for this research is the Spanish media. Focusing on mass media, the Spanish newspaper El País has been decided after researching the popularity of different newspapers in Spain. El País is the most popular newspaper with 1 013 000 readers (figure 1) (Orús, 2019). For this research, Sports newspapers such as “Marca” and specialised newspapers have been excluded, as our subject for the research is a newspaper that includes the general topics and has as audience the general population.

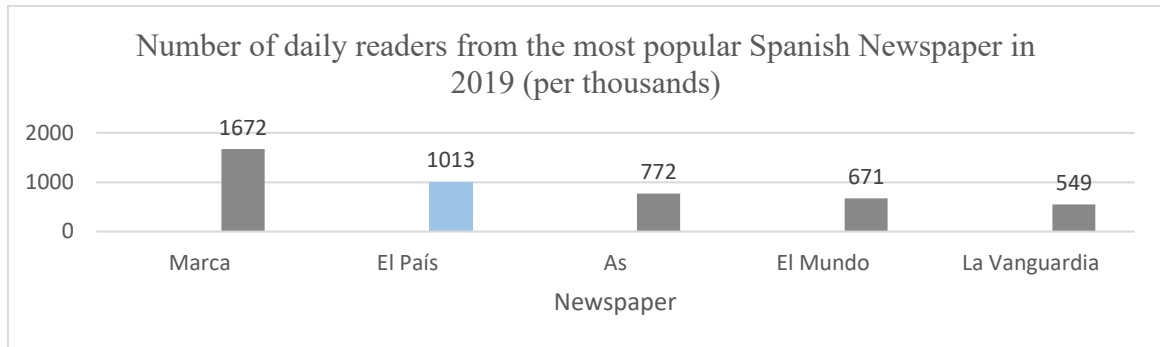


Figure 1. Number of daily readers from the most popular Spanish Newspaper in 2019.

From <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/476795/periodicos-diarios-mas-leidos-en-espana/> by Orús, A. ,2020.

Regarding the materials, for the purpose of the data recollection a subscription with the object of the study was necessary to be able to acquire the data. This included a subscription for 3 months in the newspaper El País.

### 4.3 Ethics

To ensure the research meets ethical standards, the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity guidelines will be used. Through this guideline, the premises for a responsible conduct of research will be applied. The principles such as integrity, meticulousness, and accuracy throughout the process of the research will be applied. When applying methodologies and data collection, the results exposed will be communicated openly. The respect to other researchers will be exposed through proper referencing. (TENK, 2012)

Furthermore, the principles from the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity will also be adhered throughout the research process. These principles are reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability. (ALLEA, 2017)

### 4.4 Procedures of Data Collection

This research has adopted different methods to collect the data. As mentioned above, the type of data used is a mix of qualitative and quantitative. This has been retrieved from online public sources through advanced research, where there has been a selection of filters in order to collect the data needed featuring key words in the headlines and sub-headlines of the articles found (Table 1).

#### ADVANCED ONLINE SEARCH:

	Translation of filters	Search 1	Search 2
<b>Period:</b>	15/02/2020 – 31/05/2020	X	X
<b>Allintext:</b>	Coronavirus	X	
	COVID-19		X
	Mayor/Mayores	Old people	X
	Tercera edad	Third age	X
	Ancianos	elderly	X
	Jubilados	Retired	X
	Nonagenarios	Nonagenarian	X
	Abuelos	Grandparents	X
	Cuarta edad	Fourth age	X
<b>Site:</b>	elpais.com	X	X

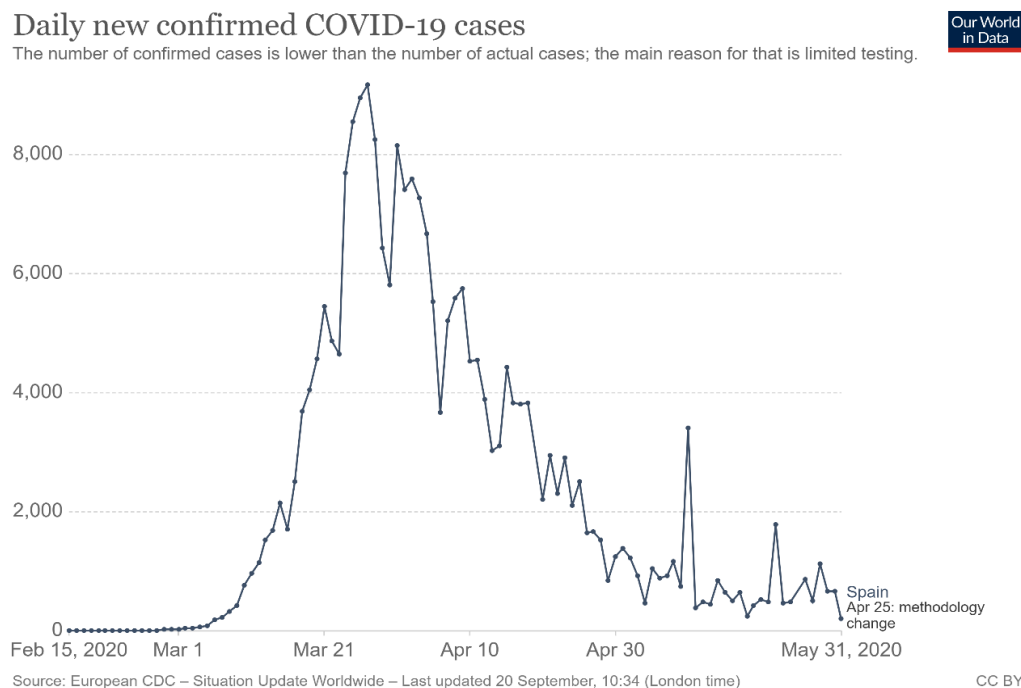
Table 1. Searches done to gather the articles used for the analysis.

As the language used to describe the old population has not been determined, there are a lot of terms that mass-media uses to refer the same age group. This have been extracted from the *Guía para Periodistas Envejecimiento y Vejez*, a guide made for reported to promote the correct use of language when describing this age group. Because this guide is from Colombia, some changes and additions have been made to include a more Peninsular vocabulary, these modifications were made through a study based on definitions by the Spanish Royal Academy (RAE) (Mingorance et al., 2018). A note must

be taken on the fact that all the plural concepts for the terms in Spanish are translated to the male form as this is the general form to use when referring to these groups.

The articles collected, which were found following the advance searched mentioned above were included in the analysis except of headlines and sub-headlines that were part of opinion based articles, as these are considered to not represent the newspaper El País directly, but are an arbitrary opinion from a third party with no direct relation to the newspaper.

The period decided for the recollection of the data has been from the 15<sup>th</sup> of February to the 31<sup>st</sup> of May as during that period Spain had the first wave of cases and it includes the period when the cases were increasing as the period where the restrictions were established, and the new cases started to diminish. (Figure 2)



Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases. Retrieved from: [ourworldindata.org](https://ourworldindata.org) (Figure 2)

#### **4.5 Procedures of Data Analysis**

After gathering the data, this was compiled in one set which has the object of the study, the headlines, and sub-headlines of the articles.

##### Qualitative analysis:

The method used to analyse this data is thematic analysis (TA). This method has many different approaches, however this study, has a direct influence from Brown and Clark's version. This version of TA is developed primarily for qualitative research as highlights the importance of the researcher role for an organic development to the coding and theme process. This method also incorporates flexibility as a part of the process. This consideration is essential considering the nature of the study sample (Clark & Brown, 2017). As the data set is from one newspaper, the authors vary from article to article, because of this the data sets are essentially different as they are written from different sources. This version of TA allows me to combine this despair data set and unify it to achieve my study aims and answer the questions exposed above. (Liamputtong, 2019)

Considering the sample for this study, the origin of the articles, and the different characteristics that make each headline and sub-headline unique, this approach allows us to combine this data to make a unified sample and helps us identify the similarities and relations between the themes within the uniqueness of each headline and sub-headline.

The data to be analysed is based on the headlines and sub-headlines found through the advanced search stated above. The reason as why choose headlines and sub headlines to analyse, is because the purpose of these two-article body part has the purpose to optimize the relevance of their text for their readers. It is also documented that newspaper readers spend most of their reading time scanning the headlines instead of reading the stories (Dor, 2003). This fact increases the importance of headlines when exposing concepts and ideas, as it is the first impression of the idea exposed.

Under the thematic analysis the data analysis will be based on the reflexive school as to answer the questions the role of the researcher needs to be acknowledge and takes a big part in identifying the themes and interpreting them. This involves the role of an active engaged researcher which is key in promoting the organic development of the themes. (Liamputtong, 2019)

#### **4.6 Analysis Process**

The steps for the analysis have been as follows. First, all the data extracted was compiled into an excel in which each entry was composed by each article's headline, sub-headline, summary, codes, themes, date, section, and section. This primary information then was used to exclude articles that were outside the period stablished or were opinion based as mentioned above.

Next, a total of 128 headlines and sub-headlines of the articles that passed the inclusion criteria were added into another sheet with 5 different columns. These columns were the following: headline, sub-headline, summary, initial codes, themes, and connotation.

At the beginning of the analysis, through the reading of headlines and sub-headlines, a summary of these two was formed. These steps were necessary in order to create a cohesion between the headline and sub-headline and move forward with the process of creating the initial codes. Once the summary was in the file, through the summary, initial codes were identified. As many headlines and sub-headlines had similar subjects, the initial codes passed through 3 rounds. This was mainly due to the fact that these would initially change depending on the language that each article had introduced in their headlines and sub-headlines. Once the initial codes were re-created, this became a more generalized version which later were converted into themes. This process was not linear, as the process of reading the data was re-visited multiple times in order to improve the understanding of the data.

It was decided to determine the connotation of each article. The headlines and sub-headlines after being analysed and reached their themes, depending on these, were identified to be positive or negative. The importance of the connotations of each article relies on its own definition. Cambridge dictionary defines connotation as “A feeling or idea that is suggested by a particular word although it need not be a part of the word's meaning, or something suggested by an object or situation” ("connotation", 2022). As newspaper readers spend most of their reading time scanning the headlines instead of reading the stories (Dor, 2003). The connotation that a headline and sub-headline have can directly affect the reaction to the whole article.

Once the final themes had been identified, relations between these were analysed to identify the hierarchy of each theme and its subthemes. Once these were grouped, a scheme was created to visualise the links and relations between each theme creating theme clouds that allowed to explore in more depth the relations between each theme. (Appendix 1 & Figure 3)

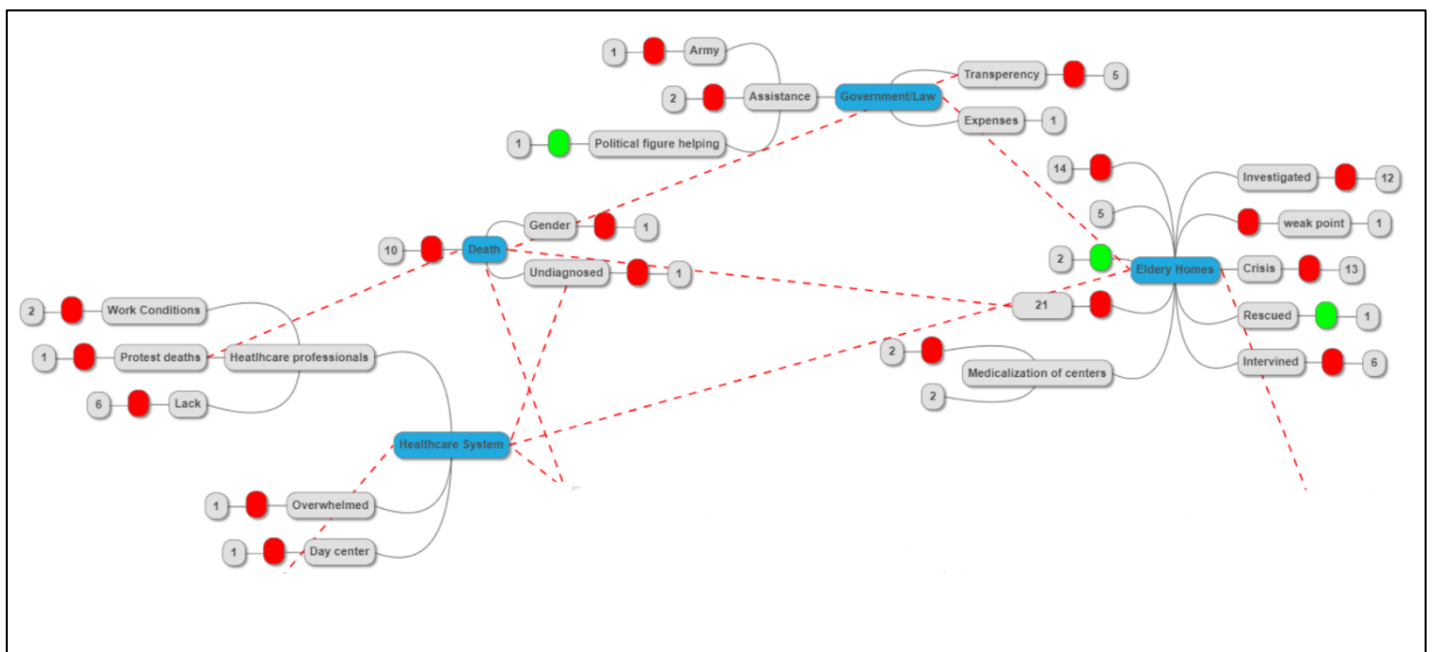


Figure 3.1 Thematic Analysis Scheme (Systems Cloud)



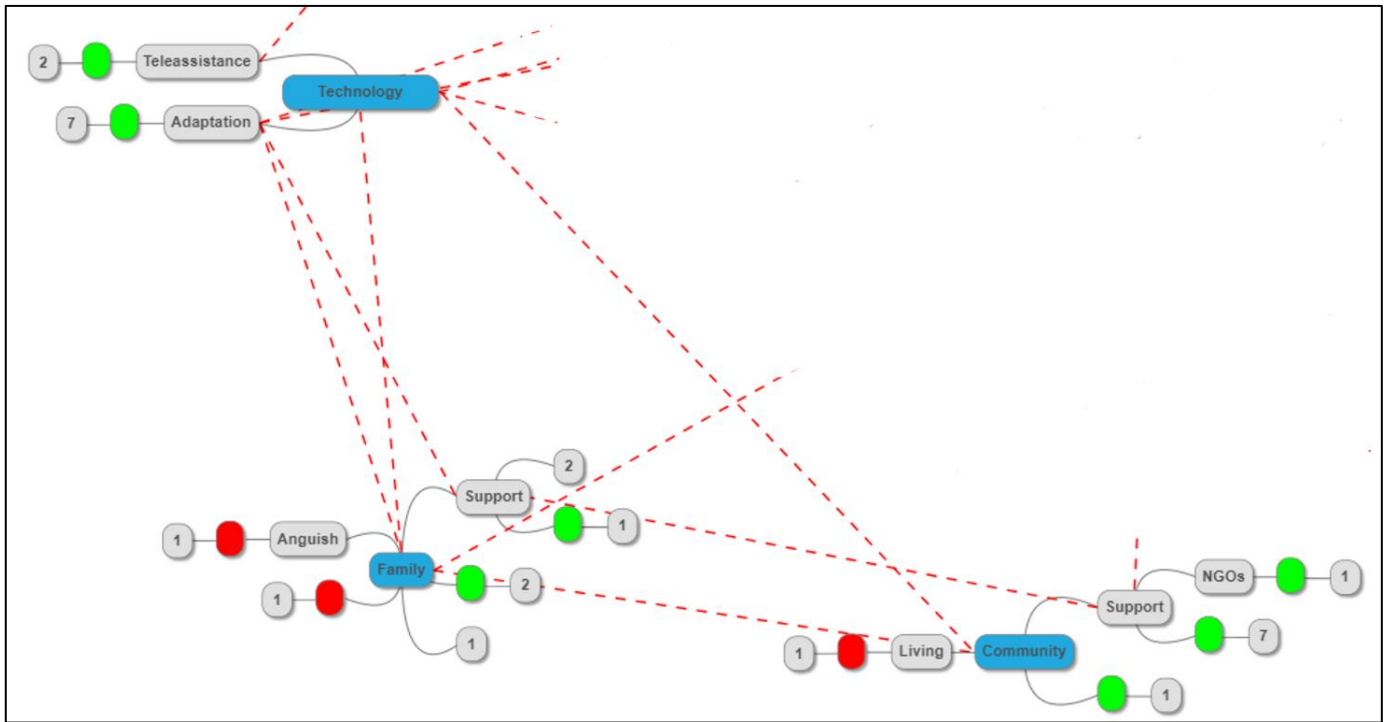


Figure 3.2 Thematic Analysis Scheme (Adaptation and support Cloud)

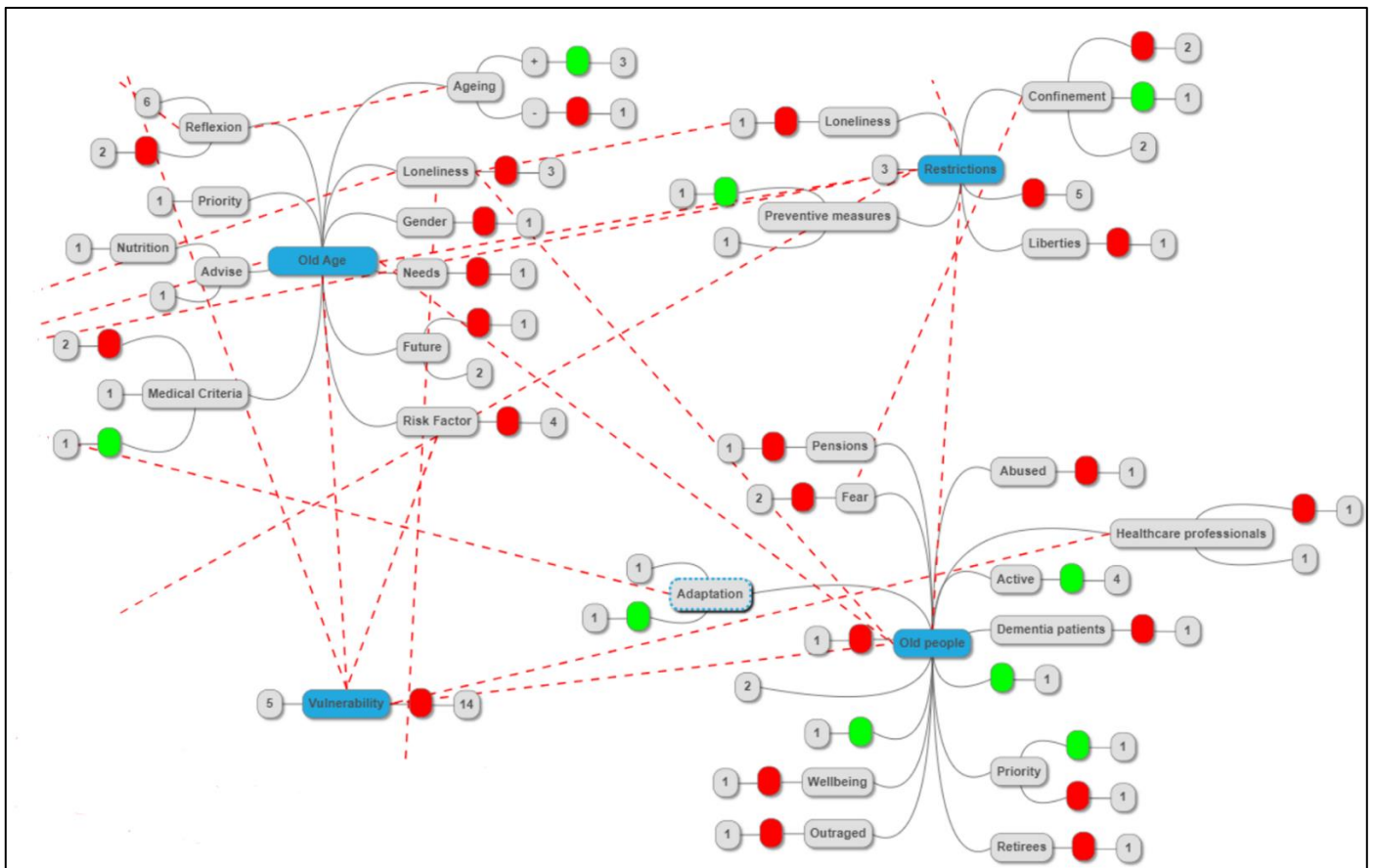


Figure 3.3 Thematic Analysis Scheme (Particularity of old age Cloud)

## 5. RESULTS

As a result, from the thematic analysis, 11 themes were identified: systems, death, government/law, elderly homes, restrictions, old people, old age, vulnerability, community, family, and technology. This have been grouped into theme clouds where their relations with other themes have been more predominant.

### 5.1 Theme Clouds

#### 5.1.1 Systems

The Systems theme cloud, mentioned a total of 100 times in the articles analysed, is composed by 4 themes. Death, with 3 subthemes; death and gender, undiagnosed death and death. Government/law, with 3 other subthemes, transparency, expenses and assistance. Elderly homes with 8 subthemes; elderly homes investigated, in crisis, as weak points, rescued, intervened, and medicalization and death. Finally, the last theme to compose this cloud, healthcare systems, has 3 themes; overwhelmed, day center and health care professionals. Structures that have been used as a tool to determine the status of the old people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theme cloud	Themes	Subthemes	Number mentioned & connotacions
Systems	Death	Death and gender	1 - Negative
		Undiagnosed death	1 - Negative
		Death	10 - Positive
	Government/law	Transparency	5 – Negative
		Expenses	1 – Neutral
		Assistance	1 – Positive
	Elderly Homes		3 – Negative
		Investigated	12 – Negative

	Crisis	13 - Negative
	Weak Point	1 - Negative
	Rescued	1 - Positive
	Intervened	6 – Negative
	Death	21 – Negative
	Medicalization	2 – Negative
		2 – Neutral
	Elderly Homes	14 – Negative
		2 – Positive
		5 – Neutral
Healthcare Systems	Overwhelmed	1 - Negative
	Day Centre	1 - Negative
	Health Care	9 - Negative
	Professionals	
<b>Total</b>		100 Mentions

*Table 2. Structure of Systems Cloud.*

This cloud identifies the structures that have been used during the COVID-19 pandemic to convey the status of the old people during the COVID-19 pandemic. This cloud is composed by death, government/law, elderly homes, and healthcare systems. These four themes have been used by the media to express the current situation that old people experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although death is not necessary part of any system on its own, this theme has been included in this cloud as its data has been used as a tool to express the status of old people. The data used to inform the general population of the deaths related by the COVID-19 pandemic, in some cases, might have not included the required information for people to comprehend and therefore could have led to the possibility of misleading information.

*“Madrid attributes to the virus the death of 4,260 residents in centers for the elderly and people with disabilities”*

*“Spain registers 462 deaths in just 24 hours in the worst day since the beginning of the epidemic”*

*“Ayuso says about 3,000 elderly people died in Madrid residences in March, triple the usual”*

*“At least 352 deaths and 2,444 coronavirus infections in nursing homes”*

The death theme has one of the least number of subthemes, death and gender, undiagnosed and death. A distinction was made to the first as it was observed that there was an explicit distinction regarding death for both genders' male and female in one of the articles. This theme is mentioned in 11 articles; however, this number is affected when combining the times that elderly homes and death have been mentioned in the same article increasing the mentions of death to up to 32 articles.

*“Coronavirus kills men more than women (like almost everything else)”*

Although elderly homes are directly related to healthcare systems, it was decided that elderly homes were going to be its own theme as it is a more predominant theme when analysing the articles. This theme appears the most in the articles analysed, appearing in a total of 79 articles. Out of these 79 articles only 3 have a positive connotation. 21 of these articles as mentioned above are directly related to the death theme.

*“Open Arms, to the rescue of nursing homes in Catalonia”*

*“The residences that saw the virus coming and stopped it at the door”*

*“Bizkaia allows visits in residences to inmates without COVID-19”*

The representation of elderly homes, one of the main institutions that take care of old people in Spain, although being the most popular theme among all the articles analyzed, only is represented with a positive connotation in 3 articles. This representation generates questions regarding the State of these institution in general and not only during a crisis. If most of the news regarding elderly homes are negative, we should question the reason behind and investigate the context through a brought scope. The results might identify issues that might have been unknown or dismissed before the crisis.

The government/law theme is represented by 3 subthemes, transparency, expenses, and assistance. Transparency has been mentioned in 5 articles with a negative connotation. The articles reference a lack of transparency from the government.

*“The figure includes those who died in centers for the elderly and people with disabilities. The Government still does not offer the global data”*

Furthermore, expenses have been mentioned in one article exposing the decline of government expenses for pensions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Assistance has been mentioned in 4 articles, one with a positive connotation and 3 with negative connotation. The positive connotation mentioned a political figure assisting in an elderly home because of lack of health professionals. One of the negative connotations for assistance is related to the acceptance of assistance from the army after 511 deaths in Catalan elderly homes.

*“The figure includes deaths in centers for the elderly and people with disabilities. The Government still does not offer the global data.”*

Finally, the healthcare systems theme is composed by the subthemes of health care professionals, being represented in 9 articles, day center, identified in 1 article, and units overwhelmed, also identified in 1 article; all with a negative connotation. The articles expose a lack of healthcare professionals and protests regarding the working conditions.

*“The Generalitat intervenes an elderly home in Sant Adrià del Besòs due to lack of staff”*

*“All residences complain about lack of material, personnel and solutions”*

*“The units, already overwhelmed, receive almost 500 new patients.”*

Theme cloud	Themes	Definition
Systems	Death	This theme is defined by the mention of death as one of the main objects of the headline and/or sub-headline

	Government/law	Identified in articles that refer as the Government or Law as a direct party that affected the old age during the COVID-19 Pandemic
	Elderly Homes	Identified when referencing the elderly homes as the main object of the headline and/or sub-headline
	Healthcare Systems	Identified when observed a direct relation with the situation old people experience during the COVID-19 pandemic
<b>Definition of systems:</b>	Structures that have been used as a tool to determine the status of the old people during the COVID-19 pandemic.	

*Table 3. Definition of Systems theme cloud.*

### 5.1.2 Adaptation and support

Adaptation and support are composed by 3 themes, these were mentioned a total of 25 times among all the headlines and sub-headlines analysed. The themes are technology, which includes adaptation and teleassistance, family, that is divided in anguish, family and support and finally community, which is made out of living, support and community. This theme cloud includes all the themes that explore adaptation methods for the elderly during the COVID-19 Crisis.

Theme cloud	Themes	Subthemes	Number mentioned & connotations
<b>Adaptation and Support</b>	Technology	Adaptation	7 - Positive
		Teleassistance	2 - Positive
	Family	Anguish	1 - Negative
		Family	1 – Negative
			1 – Neutral

	Support	1 – Positive
		2 – Neutral
	Community	1 - Positive
	Support	8 - Positive
	Living	1 - Negative
<b>Total</b>		25 mentions

*Table 4. Structure of Systems Cloud.*

This theme cloud is composed by Technology, Family and Community. These three themes form a cloud as they are closely related to each other in the headlines and sub-headlines analysed and refer to adaptation methods for the old age during the COVID-19 pandemic. The links between these three themes is also very close as they have been mentioned together in some of the articles. Technology being a tool to help connect the old people with their community and family as pillars to support this demographic.

Community has been shown in the articles as support from organizations such as NGOs. The support in this theme has been identified in 9 articles all having a positive connotation. The only negative connotation community has had in any articles is when this was exposing the conditions of community living for the old age during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

*“Betis [a football team] telephones its members over 70 years of age”*

*“A 99-year-old war veteran raises 28 million euros with his walker”*

Family also has a positive connotation in most of the articles where it has been represented, being the main angle support to old people. This could show that support to the old age is well received and acknowledge that the idea of introducing technology to old people is being promoted through media. However, another angle showing the anguish and feelings family has had regarding their old relative during the Coronavirus pandemic has a negative connotation, showing the duality of this theme. On the one hand, family is a big support or old people during a time of crisis however, yet on the other hand

the family itself needs a support system to help them cope with the crisis and the consequences that this might have within their family dynamics.

Technology is the only theme that has been identified with only a positive connotation. These themes divided in Teleassistance being mentioned in 2 articles and adaptations being mentioned in 7 articles is closely related to family and community as a method to help the support and the adaptation in their daily dynamics that had to be modified in a short period of time.

Theme cloud	Themes	Definition
<b>Adaptation and Support</b>	Technology	This theme includes all articles in where technology is one of the main objects.
	Family	The object of the article's headline and sub/headline is Family
	Community	The object of the article's headline and sub/headline is Community
<b>Definition of Adaptation and Support:</b>		This theme cloud includes all the themes that explore adaptation methods for the elderly during the COVID-19 Crisis

*Table 5. Structure of Systems Cloud.*

### 5.1.3 Particularity of old age

The peculiarity of old age cloud is composed of 4 subthemes; vulnerability, being present in 19 articles; restrictions, being present in 17 articles which only 2 have a positive connotation; old age being present in 31 articles which only have 4 articles with a positive connotation; and old people being present in 23 articles which 7 have a positive connotation. This theme cloud includes all the themes that express the representation of old people in a direct manner.



Theme cloud	Themes	Subthemes	Number mentioned & connotations
Old age in crisis	Old people	Abused	1-Negative
		Healthcare professionals	1 -Negative 1 - Neutral
		Active	4 - Positive
		Dementia patients	1 - Negative
		Priority	1 – Negative 1 - Positive
		Retirees	1 - Negative
		Outraged	1 - Negative
		Wellbeing	1 - Negative
		Adaptation	1 -Positive 1 - Neutral
		Fear	2 - Negative
		Pensions	1 - Negative
		Old people	1 – Negative 2 – Neutral 2 - Positive
	Old Age	Ageing	3 – Positive 1 - Negative
		Loneliness	3 - Negative
		Gender	1 - Negative
		Needs	1 - Negative
		Future	1 – Negative 2 - Neutral
		Risk factor	4 - Negative
		Reflexion	6 – Neutral

		2 - Negative
	Priority	1 - Neutral
	Advise	2 - Neutral
	Medical Criteria	2 – Negative
		1 – Neutral
		1 - Positive
	Vulnerability	14 - Negative
Restrictions	Confinement	2 – Negative
		2 – Neutral
		1 - Positive
	Liberties	1 - Negative
	Loneliness	1 - Negative
	Preventive measures	1 – Neutral
		1 - Positive
	Restrictions	5 – Negative
		3 - Neutral
<b>Total</b>		90 Mentions

*Table 6. Structure of Systems Cloud.*

The Old people theme portrays old people through different lenses. Identifies this demographic as outraged, scared and abused. But at the same time there identifies them as active and adaptable. The other subthemes, relate more to outer aspects of old people and not characteristics. These other subthemes have mainly a negative connotation.

*“The court of A Fonsagrada takes a statement from those investigated from the community housing for the elderly closed last week by the Xunta for alleged case of abuse.”*

*“Quarantine kills the joy of the elderly”*

*“Grandparents to the rescue: the generation of the war against the coronavirus”*

Old age as a theme, works with the meaning of old age in a broad manner and what do the articles understand when writing about this topic. This theme is directly related to loneliness, the process of ageing, old age as a risk factor, the future, the needs that imply old age, the difference in gender, etc. This theme has only 4 articles with a positive connotation, these explore the meaning of ageing and the use of old age as a medical criteria. All the other sub-themes that are discussed about and that related directly to old age and the process of ageing are negative. It should be noticed that ageing, when being the object of the article is perceived as positive b if the object is an aspect of ageing alone without the broad understanding of ageing the article carries a negative connotation.

*“The 88-year-old couple who overcame the virus together”*

*“Seniors and confinement: age is not the important thing”*

The theme vulnerability is mentioned in 14 headlines and sub-headlines analysed and in all the articles it has carried a negative connotation. These articles report a frail state of the old population. Comparing the 4 mentions for the Active sub-theme at the old age theme with the 14 articles in which vulnerability is part of; the representation of the old age should make us reflect on how we want to portray and what is it that we understand of old people and their vulnerability. Another aspect to mention is the fact that the articles that include the vulnerability theme are mainly describing old people in third person without having a direct input from an old person.

*“Isolated, alone and afraid”*

*“These are the effects that confinement will leave on our elders”*

*“The virus that destroys the illusion of being (still) young at sixty”*

Finally, the theme of restrictions describes the restrictions old people had to face during the first wave of the crisis and it's first effects on this old demographic. Preventive measures included confinement, and this brought a wave of loneliness and constraints on old people's liberties that had not been seen until then. As seen before, some old people were able to adapt, other did not have the time or tools available and because of this they suffered from loneliness. The restrictions also arose many deficiencies that the current

care model has, as it made it clear that in case of a crisis, the old population might not be covered well enough.

*“Being confined and alone. What this crisis reveals of the great hidden evil of our age”*

Theme cloud	Themes	Definition
<b>Old Age in crisis</b>	Old People	This theme includes all articles in where old people are the main subject.
	Old Age	This theme identifies the mentions for old age without this being identified to a specific group of people.
	Vulnerability	The object of the article’s headline represents old people as frail and/or vulnerable.
	Restrictions	This theme includes all articles in where Restrictions that affect old people are one of the main objects.
<b>Definition of Old Age in Crisis:</b>		This theme cloud includes all the themes that express the representation of old people in a direct manner.

*Table 7. Structure of Systems Cloud.*

#### 5.1.4 Other relations

Other relations between the theme clouds have been identified. These have been highlighted as although not being part of the same theme cloud that have been identified, their relation and linkage should be considered to be able to answer the questions that this study wishes to answer. These other relations are; vulnerability and death, restrictions, healthcare systems, community and technology, and finally, old people as healthcare workforce.

Vulnerability and death, these two themes have been identified in multiple articles where death is reported as a consequence of being old. This connection between these two themes, understands the idea of old age as a risk factor, portraying particularly old people vulnerable against COVID-19. Although it is true that old people were identified to have higher risk of contracting the disease and also of having a worse outcome, the number of times this relation is highlighted is very high comparing with other positive ideas of the old age. This perception of vulnerability for old people can be extrapolated to other areas of life in which old age is not a factor. Not only, this can affect the general population into thinking about the elders, but also the individuals that are living as what is considered old can have their self-esteem affected (Levy, 2009). (Appendix 1)

*“Radiography by ages of the coronavirus in Spain: 95% of the dead are over 60 years old”*

Restrictions, Healthcare systems, Community & Technology. Restrictions have been noticed to be directly related to the boost of the technology adaptation for old people. These have created a need for new tools and the promotion required for these to be used. Being isolated by law, has increased the demand of technology and knowledge to be able to keep in contact with the community and therefore old people. Also, this event has driven new ways to treat and keep track of people in need of assistance such as old people. Teleassistance has increased in use during the COVID-19 pandemic and because of it many old people have adapted to these new processes. (Appendix 1)

There has also been represented old people being a healthcare workforce during the pandemic. This representation has two sides. On the one hand it is positive as the thought of old people being active during the pandemic is a good thing. On the other hand, this situation also expressed the bad situation the country was in and the inability to protect the old population.

*“Grandparents to the rescue: the generation of the war against the coronavirus”*

## 6. DISCUSSION

Going back to the research question: How is the old age during the pandemic crises COVID-19 represented in the articles of the most popular Spanish newspaper? We can observe there is a generalization when representing old age and old people. These are represented as a fragile risk group, exalting their vulnerabilities, and underlining their need for assistance as they are majorly lonely.

Another subject to highlight is the proximity of the subject of death along with old people during the pandemic. There seems to be a continuous need of underlining the statistics of deaths for this demographic as it has been shown that death is the theme that appears the most in the headlines and sub-headlines analyzed.

Additionally, the systems that should be part of the support net for this demographic are exposed with having unrepairable flaws and demonstrating a lack of resources to attend the needs of this part of the population, creating higher deficiencies in their care model and their outcomes when facing a pandemic.

As per other support systems, family and community are portrayed in a more positive way compared to the institutions dedicated solely in taking care of the older people such as elderly homes.

Furthermore, the results regarding the positive and negative connotations found expose the disparity when representing the old age. Most of the headlines and sub-headlines had a negative connotation. Knowing that this two-article body, is the part of an article that most newspaper readers spend most of their reading time and that these have a majorly negative connotation of the old age, can affect directly the concept of old age in the general population (Dor, 2003).

Finally, there has been more observations of age segregation than age integration. Most of the headlines and sub-headlines, exposed the situation for old people as if this group was not part of an active society. The social rolls given by this newspaper representation do not match those of a person that is productive, instead the rolls that are given to the

old population are those of fragile and vulnerable. The small amount of headlines and sub-headlines that represented an active old ageing had an exceptional background as they were not activities that are common to the old people. Adding to this, there is a lack of diverse representation within the old age.

### **6.1 Study design delimitation and limitations**

The inclusion criteria are based on the keywords referring to the old population and COVID-19 inside the text of the articles. The exclusion criteria include articles promoted as commercials or articles written by people that do not have any affiliation with the newspaper, as the object of the study is the newspaper. After considering the inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria of for the articles, a total of 143 articles were recollected for the analysis.

Some of the limitations that have been identified with these methodologies are the consideration that some headlines through the advanced search can be missed. Another limitation is the source of data itself, nowadays there are different types of channels that inform live, and newspapers even though considered a mass media do not represent the readers population. With media, there are a lot of other channels that report the same situations giving different perspectives. This could affect the generalisation of the findings. As for the last limitation identified, as there is no global accepted concept to refer to the old age, the translation of the words used in the Spanish setting might not have the same significance after the translation to English, therefore there has been included a section explaining the meaning of the word in the Spanish setting in order to contextualise the data.

### **6.2 Comparison with other studies**

The research for studies in other countries has been limited, as there has not been found a great number that met the same general characteristics as this thesis, being headlines

and sub-headlines the main object of the analysis. However, some studies that have been found are able to give an inside of other countries findings regarding this subject.

A study from Finland has been identifies in where they analysed different age groups represented by images in the two most popular newspapers of the country. The results from both studies align. Representing the older people as frail and lonely. (Martikainen & Sakki, 2021)

Another study from Chile, although not using newspapers, studies the news posted by the Chilean Health Ministry in their website. In this study, the results also aligned with the ones found in this thesis. Through their analysis, they identify that old people were presented as a risk or frail group. This fragility is directly related to the prioritization of this demographic in front some of the responses to the pandemic, such as vaccination. Also, it is identified the importance of social solidarity and the need of community to assist to old people, having as a premise that most old people, although being autonomous, need some type of assistance. This article suggests that the current resources are not enough, therefore there is a structural organization that requires younger generations to take care of older generations. Finally, this article emphasizes a lack of gender differentiation when describing old people, generalizing, and avoiding the fact that one characteristic of old age is the variety of experiences. (Salazar-Norambuena, 2021) Another article from New Zealand also found that older people were referred as a homogeneous group framed as being at risk and passive. (Morgan et al., 2021)

Through our analysis it has also being observed a lack of distinction between genders, as it has only been included in one article, having as the subject of the article the differentiation of death rates between men and women. It is necessary to represent old age with all its characteristics and not generalize a demographic that has so many varieties in experiences. Old age and old people vary in many aspects, such as age, gender, health status, social roll... Considering the theory of stereotype embodiment, by only representing a small section of this characteristics and generalizing them, people that might not necessarily identify as what they are being portrayed, learn to acknowledge those characteristics as their own.



Another study from the US, analyzing the first month of the pandemic, reported an implicit ageist bias in articles concerning older adults and COVID-19 in 4 major U.S based newspapers. Their results do not differ from our analysis, as their results show a limited portrait of ageing during the pandemic, with a frequent use of “elderly” and the portrayal of older adults as “vulnerable”. (Jen et al., 2021)

The portrayal of a positive aging has also been found as a minority within the representation of these articles analysis, exposing positive alternatives for older people as an exception (Jen et al., 2021). For instance, only a third of the articles analyzed from a New Zealand article exposed old people as active, exposing an under-representation of older people’s ability to navigate their well-being (Morgan et al., 2021)

A Swedish study, that investigated the experiences of old people in front of a sudden change of policy in the form of age restriction as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that the age-based recommendations directly affected their level of autonomy (Nilsson et al., 2020). This study brings the importance of the acknowledgement of the experience old people have had when addressing the exceptional situation, the pandemic created.

Finally, a study in that analyzed tweets regarding older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic identified potential offensive or ageist content. (Jimenez-Sotomayor et al., 2020) This study, observed that these were mostly personal opinions. Compared the the data analyzed in this thesis, we can notice that as a newspaper is a more controlled environment the offensive language has not been identified, however, indications of age segregation have been found.

### **6.3 Suggestions for further research**

The results of this Master thesis do not differ from other similar studies that have been found. There is a highlight importance regarding the roll of community and old age which at the same time is partly due to a consensus of seeing old people as fragile and vulnerable. Positive ageing is under-represented and although being a very vast demographic with

many different characteristics, these are represented as a homogenous group which barely has the means to express themselves directly. There is a lack of articles representing this demographic from the first person, the ones that do are portrayed as exceptions and are celebrated as extraordinary.

The homogenous representation of old age and old people seem to be general not only in one country, but in many. This should make us question the global understanding of ageing and old people and the societal role we see them to have, and we want them to have. With the current trend of ageing populations, the understanding and representation that we have of old people and old age does not match the needs that we will face in the future. There has been talk of extending the work-life and delay retirement, however, if we understand that old people are vulnerable and fragile, the idea of delaying retirement and increase their work-life does not match the expectation's, us as a society, have of this demographic.

Most of the studies found, expose the implication of how we portray old people and old age. We have the information that was used during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we know the importance of language and representation from a theoretical perspective. However, we do not have many studies that explore the experience of old people during the pandemic. The pace the pandemic has carried, gives us an opportunity to directly study the experiences the old people have had and how they have lived reading about themselves in the newspapers during the crisis.

This information can give us further insights in the theories and understanding that we have regarding language and representation, and it could also highlight the importance of how does one's societal role being represented affect one's health.

We should use this opportunity to research the short term and long-term consequences of this representation and identify if there are aspects that differ or are missing from the theories. Also, as the COVID-19 pandemic has been a global crisis we can explore a similar ground to compare results between different countries and study the differences regarding the responses of different societies.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

After taking into consideration the literature review and the results obtained by the thematic analysis of these study, we can conclude that this subject although being essential for the development of future societies lacks recognition and action to implement outside the theory.

The theory of stereotype embodiment has the premise that assimilations from surrounding culture might affect the self-definition influencing health and functioning (Levy, 2009). This premise, along with the results found in the analysis of this thesis, would suggest that there might be a culture assimilation of the old age that highlight vulnerability, fragility, loneliness, and other characteristics with a negative connotation. This general understanding that is being portrayed to society, is received by old people and this can directly affect their self-definition having possible consequences on their health outcomes.

It is imperative to project a more heterogeneous image of the old age and old people as the current is not an accurate representation. This not only affects those who are currently old, but to all the individuals as it is a part of life and how we understand it as a society might affect our future health outcomes and therefore the future health outcomes of a whole population.

As it has been mentioned before, countries' economies will be affected by the population ageing in relation to the workforce and pensions (Maestas, Mullen & Powell, 2016). Changing the narrative of old age to one that is more inclusive and understanding of the characteristics of this life stage will directly affect the self-definition of society, which has a rapidly aging population. This might help the health outcomes of the future aging population, increasing the possibilities of a more productive and healthier society promoting age integration among all age groups.

This idea of age integration may also promote a more individualised understanding of the needs of people of all ages, not only old people. The distinction between old age and other age groups it is very well defined, and it can be identified easily, however there are other

age groups that do not have this distinction so predominant. This characteristic, of not being able to define someone by their age may help us understand the context and take into account a holistic representation of each individual identifying personal aspects that affect a particular person.

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## Appendix 1: Thematic Analysis Scheme

