

Changing news consumption habits among young migrants: How does the migration process affect them?

Cambio de hábitos de consumo informativo de jóvenes migrantes: ¿Cómo afecta el proceso migratorio?



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ISSN: 1696-019X / e-ISSN: 2386-3978

How to cite this article:

Martori Muntsant, A. and Saavedra Domínguez, A. (2026). Changing news consumption habits among young migrants: How does the migration process affect them? *Doxa Comunicación*, 43, pp. 375-396.

<https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.3091>



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Abstract:

Migration is a complex process that involves changes in information consumption, a crucial element for integration and adaptation to a new environment. This article analyses how the migration process influences and generates changes in information consumption habits. Specifically, it studies how young Peruvians migrating from Lima (Peru) to Barcelona (Spain) change how they access the media and news. A qualitative methodology was used, consisting of semi-structured interviews to explore the experiences of young migrants. The results show that the migration process entails significant changes in the way information is consumed, with a tendency to avoid news –without consuming information from either the country of origin or the receiving country– in the first period after migration. Interest in news from the place of residence grows gradually, as migrants perceive it as beneficial for social integration, and access to information takes place mainly through social media. Political news becomes more important in information consumption after migration, taking on a more international dimension.

Keywords:

Migration, information consumption, news consumption, news avoidance, identity.

Resumen:

La migración es un proceso complejo que comporta variaciones en el consumo informativo de las personas, un elemento crucial para la integración y adaptación a un nuevo entorno. Este artículo analiza cómo el proceso migratorio influye y genera cambios en los hábitos de consumir noticias. En concreto, se estudia cómo los jóvenes peruanos que migran desde Lima (Perú) hacia Barcelona (España) modifican su acceso a los medios de comunicación y a la información. Se ha utilizado una metodología cualitativa, consistente en entrevistas semiestructuradas para explorar las experiencias de los jóvenes migrantes. Los resultados muestran que el proceso migratorio implica cambios significativos en la forma de consumir información, con una tendencia a la evitación de noticias, sin consumo de información ni del país de origen ni del de recepción, en el primer periodo después de migrar. El interés por noticias del lugar de residencia va creciendo de forma gradual, para favorecer la integración social, y el acceso a información tiene lugar sobre todo a través de redes sociales. Las noticias de política cobran más importancia en el consumo informativo después de la migración, con un enfoque más internacional.

Palabras clave:

Migración, consumo informativo, consumo de noticias, evitación de noticias, identidad.

1. Introduction

Migration is a complex process that entails adjustments and modifications across various aspects of individuals' lives. One of these is information consumption, a crucial element for integration and adaptation to a new environment.

“Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation on the part of all migrants and residents of the Member States. This process requires efforts both from migrants and from receiving societies, and is fundamental to harnessing the potential of migration and strengthening social cohesion.” (Council of the European Union, 2014, p. 2).

This study focuses on how young Peruvian adults from Lima (Peru) who emigrate to Barcelona (Spain) experience changes in their news consumption habits, through an analysis of their first two years of residence. The aim of this research is to discover how the migration process can influence such changes and to explore the reasons behind this transformation.

International migration has become an increasingly complex and dynamic phenomenon, having grown notably in recent decades. As Muñoz (2002: 26) notes, one of the effects of globalisation is that “the volume of emigrants has multiplied over recent decades and has continued to grow in almost all regions over the past 20 years.”

To understand the relevance of migrants' information consumption, Carcelén García et al. (2009) argue that migrants integrate into a society through two main channels: first, by acquiring rights, and also by becoming part of the consumer economy, a process that occurs more rapidly than acquiring rights. This integration takes place, among other means, through the media that migrants consume daily to meet needs such as information and knowledge (Carcelén García et al., 2009)

The present work is therefore all the more significant, as migrants' integration is tied to information consumption and to awareness of what is happening in the society in which they live.

Another aspect considered in this research is the trend towards news avoidance, given that overall consumption of and interest in news has declined, according to Newman et al. (2023). In this context, this article investigates whether the news avoidance phenomenon is exacerbated by the migration process, and whether individuals stop consuming news from their country of origin or choose not to consume news from their receiving country.

The intersection between migration and communication studies has often focused on analysing media discourse in relation to migration. There is, however, little literature on how the migration process affects and modifies people's information habits. Some research has examined immigrants' news consumption in various European contexts (Cuartero et al., 2020; Morales, 2017; Villagra García et al., 2009; Adolph, 2022; Metykova, 2010), but this study offers a novel perspective by exploring the specific changes experienced by Peruvian migrants in Barcelona, with a focus on news avoidance and identity perception — aspects less explored in the existing literature. An interdisciplinary analysis is considered valuable for studying how migrants' consumption habits may change, and for exploring the existing patterns as well as the causes behind them.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To discover how information consumption habits change among young Peruvians from Lima, Peru, who emigrate to Barcelona, Spain, during their first two years of residence.
- To determine the reasons why changes in news consumption habits arise in these young migrants.
- To assess how the consumption of local news affects migrants' social integration in Barcelona, their sense of belonging and identity, and whether language barriers may hinder information consumption.
- To analyse whether changes in information consumption as a result of migration have entailed news avoidance.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this article encompasses the state of the art on the phenomenon of migration –and specifically Peruvian migration in Barcelona (Spain)– drawing on postulates particularly related to access to information and ICTs, and to information consumption. It also details contributions from communication studies on information habits and their connection to identity and cultural proximity, as well as a section on news avoidance. This literature review serves as the basis for the methodological design and the empirical component of this research.

2.1. *The phenomenon of migration*

The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union define emigration as the act of leaving the state in which one lives with the intention of residing in another for a period of more than one year (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2007). All countries in the world have experienced some degree of international migration, and the available evidence suggests that the number of countries that are either the origin or destination of significant migratory flows –both inward and outward– has been increasing (International Organisation for Migration, 2019). According to Tizón (1989), migration is understood as a psychosocial conflict, involving both the individuals who decide to emigrate and the points of departure and reception.

In their theory of migration networks, Massey et al. (2000) set out how migration, once it begins, expands as migratory networks grow. This assists individuals in their migration process, since costs and risks decrease over time, and reduces the influence of economic factors –such as wages and employment opportunities– on the decision to migrate. This process presents challenges for governments, as the network formation process can be difficult to control, and certain immigration policies, such as those promoting family reunification, may further strengthen these networks.

This theory helps us understand that, when deciding where to migrate, people take into account far broader considerations than economic ones or the pursuit of a better future. Cultural and linguistic factors are of vital importance for successful integration. Thus, having a linguistic affinity with informational content may allow people to feel, in some way, closer to home.

Ravenstein's "Laws of Migration" is a work of broad empirical scope which, theorised during the nineteenth century, constitutes the starting point of any review of the theoretical literature on migration (Arango Vila-Belda, 1985). These laws hold that migration tends to increase with economic development and with advances in technology and transport. Technological progress and ease of access to information are therefore factors contributing to the intensification of international migratory flows, which is why it is important to study whether migrants' consumption habits remain focused on their place of origin or shift towards their receiving country.

2.2. *Peruvian migration in Barcelona*

Peru has become an emigrant-sending country, supported primarily by the more than three million Peruvians living abroad –a figure representing approximately 10% of the total population, who for several years have represented a significant source of economic support for their families (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2022b).

International emigration from Peru has been a constant phenomenon in recent decades. The exodus of people from Peru intensified from 1990 onwards, driven by the search for better employment opportunities abroad (Maguiña Salinas, 2021), with a significant increase in the period 2000–2019. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily interrupted this trend, but it has reversed in recent years (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2022a).

According to Domínguez Torrejón and Atao Espinoza (2009), Peruvian migration is primarily driven by economic motivation, reflected in the search for employment or the establishment of new businesses. Similarly, other important drivers have included economic crises, recession, unemployment, inflation and political instability. Finally, another factor taken into

account by Peruvian migrants is that Spain shares a similar language and culture, making it an attractive destination for many people who have already established networks in the country.

The Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (2022a) analyses the distribution of Peruvian emigrants by country of residence, establishing that 15.4% live in Spain –the second most important destination for Peruvians abroad. Within Spain, 3.9% of Peruvian emigrants live in Barcelona, placing it among the most preferred cities for migration. These figures highlight the relevance of Spain, and Barcelona in particular, as key destinations for Peruvian emigrants.

2.3. Migration and information consumption

Melella (2014) notes that migrants have adopted technologies to reduce distances and establish new connections with their communities of origin and destination. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have facilitated the maintenance of closer affective ties and have helped to mitigate the impact of the separation caused by distance.

Likewise, Villagra García et al. (2009) note that Latin American immigrants in Spain consume media of different types, though significant differences can be found according to age and sex. Radio is a common medium, whilst the internet is linked primarily to young audiences, regardless of sex. Latin American women consume more television, associating it with company and escapism. Men consume a variety of media, with free newspapers being particularly notable as a source of information of interest to them. Finally, as Latin American immigrants spend more time in Spain, their preferences tend to become more similar to those of the Spanish public.

In Adolph's (2022) audience study exploring changes in news consumption among young millennial immigrants from diverse backgrounds living in Stockholm (Sweden), the findings demonstrated that individuals tended to change their news consumption behaviour. The reasons are varied, including the desire to establish their own news routines, the influence of people close to them, and the motivation and interest in learning more about the new country. This work, conducted using a qualitative method through semi-structured interviews, serves as a precedent for the present research, being one of the few existing studies on this subject.

2.4. Information consumption and digitalisation

López and Gómez (2021) note that individuals belonging to the centennial (or Generation Z) and post-millennial age groups are modifying their consumption habits, moving away from those associated with previous generations such as millennials. Members of these generations are described as “heavy users of new technologies,” more individualistic and multitasking in nature, and consume information through social media and mobile applications (López and Gómez, 2021: 544). This gives rise, according to the authors, to a digital divide and a shift in the communicative ecosystem.

With regard to millennials, Martínez-Costa et al. (2019) note that a qualitative study of young people aged between 25 and 34 found that information consumption took place through social media, news websites, television programmes and, lastly, printed newspapers. Furthermore, according to a study by Mujika-Alberdi et al. (2020), millennials may show less interest in topics related to economics, politics, society and current affairs, and greater interest in sports and international news, compared with other age groups.

More recent research (Córdoba-Cabús et al., 2025) points in the same direction, corroborating the consolidation of social media as the primary means of accessing news content. By contrast, the age groups comprising the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers and Generation X have a greater familiarity with printed content and content broadcast via television or linear radio, which formed part of their upbringing (Schulz et al., 2019).

This study focuses on analysing changes in information consumption among young migrants from the centennial and millennial generations, as will be detailed in the methodology section.

2.5. Cultural proximity and identity

The theory of cultural proximity holds that people tend to be drawn to cultural products that are similar to their own culture, and to consume local or national content (Straubhaar, 2021). For example, audience preferences tend to lean towards content that reflects their language, appearance, dress, humour, history and shared knowledge.

Furthermore, Straubhaar (2021) highlights the persistence of local and regional identities in an increasingly globalised world, whilst noting that it is important to consider multiple levels of cultural belonging when analysing human identity. The relationship between information consumption choices and identity is positioned as a crucial analytical element for understanding changes in migrants' interest in and access to news.

Identities are represented through cultural codes (Du Gay et al., 2000) and are understood as points of temporary attachment related to representations and discursive practices (Hall, 1996). Current research linking place and identity takes into account that identity is not exclusively territorial, and considers it unstable and in a continuous process of transformation (Román-Velázquez and Retis, 2020).

The literature on the subject has opened up to “rethinking places and identities as unstable, hybrid and open to transformation” (Román-Velázquez and Retis, 2020), as a result of processes entailing significant modifications, such as migration.

2.6. News avoidance

News avoidance is an increasingly widespread phenomenon internationally (Newman et al., 2023), consisting of a behaviour of resistance or active rejection of news on a regular basis (Blekesaune, Elvestad and Aalberg, 2012; Skovsgaard and Andersen, 2020; Woodstock, 2014).

The phenomenon can be classified into two types of avoidance: intentional and unintentional. On the one hand, intentional avoidance arises when people stop consuming news for various reasons: that it is too negative, that it cannot be trusted, and that there is an excessive amount of it (Skovsgaard and Andersen, 2020). People who avoid news perceive that information is presented in a pessimistic manner and that this can negatively affect their mood (Boukes and Vliegthart, 2017; Newman and Fletcher, 2017; Zerba, 2011).

On the other hand, unintentional avoidance is a result of the characteristics of the current media environment. In this context, people choose to avoid consuming news (Skovsgaard and Andersen, 2020) because they have a preference for other types of content, such as entertainment (Karlsen, Beyer and Steen-Johnsen, 2020).

Damstra et al. (2023) highlight the negative consequences of this phenomenon: people being less well informed may have adverse effects on society, such as political polarisation and misinformation-driven decision-making. At the same time, other literature has analysed the causes of news avoidance, which is compounded by the perception of negativity in the media and low political trust (Goyanes and Bene, 2024).

A lack of available literature and research regarding news avoidance among people who have migrated has been identified, and focusing on this aspect will therefore help to address a gap in the field.

3. Methodology

A qualitative methodology was used, consisting of semi-structured interviews to explore experiences related to changes in information consumption habits among young adult migrants aged 20 to 34, from Lima (Peru), residing in Barcelona (Spain) at different stages of the migration process. The age range of 20 to 34 years was considered appropriate, encompassing Generation Z and Millennials. This approach is grounded in the conclusions of López and Gómez (2021), who note that these generations are currently changing their information consumption habits.

The interviews included questions to explore the motivations, patterns and experiences related to changes in information consumption habits. The interview framework was structured around questions covering three stages: before migrating, during migration and after migrating.

The research universe consisted of Peruvians residing in Barcelona. According to municipal data, 38,821 Peruvians live in the city (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2024a). The foreign population living in Barcelona “is fundamentally a young-adult population, with high percentages of people aged between 25 and 45” (p. 24).

Taking this information into account, it was decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with a sample of twenty participants in total. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Participants aged 20 to 34 (young adults).
- Migrants from Lima, Peru.
- Residence in Barcelona, Spain.
- Peruvian nationality.

A sample with balanced gender participation was achieved (eight men and twelve women). In terms of age distribution, six participants were aged 20–24, four were aged 25–29 and ten were aged 30–34.

Participants were also sought at various stages of their migration process: three were recent arrivals (0–6 months), five had been residing in Barcelona for less than a year (7–12 months), nine had been living in the city for between one and two years (13–24 months) and three had been resident in Barcelona for more than two years (over 24 months). This approach was adopted to achieve representativeness within the sample.

In addition, the snowball method was used via social media in order to identify different profiles, thereby allowing for a diversity of perspectives and experiences in the study.

Table 1. Distribution of participants by age group

Name	Gender	Age	Time in Barcelona
Age range: 20 to 23 years old			
Participant 1	M	20	20 months
Participant 2	F	21	20 months
Participant 3	F	21	16 months
Participant 4	F	22	4 months
Participant 5	M	22	18 months
Participant 6	F	23	8 months
Age range: 24 to 29 years old			
Participant 7	F	25	8 months
Participant 8	M	26	8 months
Participant 9	F	27	24 months
Participant 10	F	28	20 months
Age range: 30 to 34 years old			
Participant 11	F	30	21 months
Participant 12	M	31	5 months
Participant 13	M	32	9 months
Participant 14	F	32	2 months

Participant 15	M	32	16 months
Participant 16	F	32	24 months
Participant 17	F	32	48 months
Participant 18	M	32	8 months
Participant 19	M	34	42 months
Participant 20	F	34	48 months

Source: Authors

This research adopts a qualitative design based on 20 semi-structured interviews, a technique that allows for the capture of phenomenological richness and the discursive nuances of social actors (Valles, 2002), bearing in mind that “qualitative sampling does not seek statistical representativeness, but rather the typological and sociostructural representativeness corresponding to the objectives of the study” (Valles, 2002, p. 68). Whilst interviews as an analytical methodology have limitations, they also constitute one of the most widely used methods of data collection in communication studies (Croucher and Cronn-Mills, 2014; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015), and allow qualitative data to be drawn out in pursuit of the research objectives.

The sample selected ensures that the complexity of the phenomenon can be addressed rigorously, in order to understand the dynamics and cultural practices of the subjects (Lindlof and Taylor, 2017). This is therefore a sample limited in number, but representative of the reality and diversity of situations faced by young migrants from Lima arriving in Barcelona, both in terms of participants’ ages and their stage in the migration process (length of time spent in Barcelona).

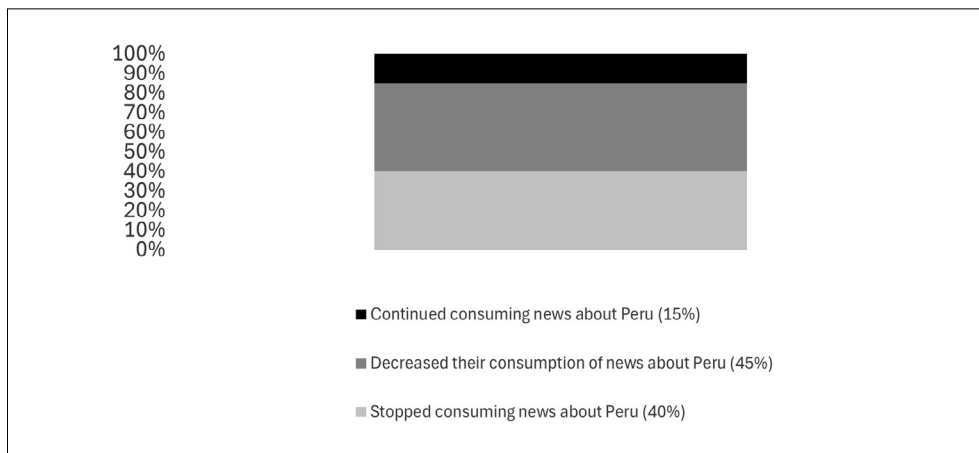
4. Results

The results section is organised around themes aligned with the research objectives, including interview extracts that support the ideas presented.

4.1. Variation in consumption habits as a result of the migration process

Based on the fieldwork conducted, this research has identified that the majority of interviewees showed a significant variation in their news consumption habits as a result of their migration from Lima (Peru) to Barcelona (Spain). Of the twenty interviewees, eight stated that they had stopped consuming Peruvian news entirely, whilst nine indicated that the frequency of their consumption had decreased considerably compared with when they lived in Peru. Consequently, 85% of interviewees stopped consuming or reduced their access to news about their country of origin as a result of the migration process, compared with 15% who continued to consume Peruvian news, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Information consumption habits after migration



Source: Authors

Furthermore, all interviewees noted that they had stopped using traditional channels such as television and other conventional media to stay informed, opting instead for social media as their main source of news after migrating. The majority of participants reported consuming news from Peruvian media less frequently and accessing information through social media such as Instagram, TikTok or X with greater regularity. This reinforced a trend towards consuming information via social media that had already begun before migration, given that young adults from Lima already tended to use these channels as a news source, ahead of traditional media such as television or the press.

“During the first six months, I kept watching Peruvian TV programmes on YouTube, mostly out of habit, but the frequency gradually declined as I settled into life here in Barcelona. Then I started consuming news on social media like TikTok and Instagram, where some Spanish news pages started appearing and I began following them.” (Participant 10, 2024, personal interview)

“I no longer open any portal like La República or El Comercio to see the news –I find out about things through the people I follow on Instagram or TikTok.” (Participant 13, 2024, personal interview).

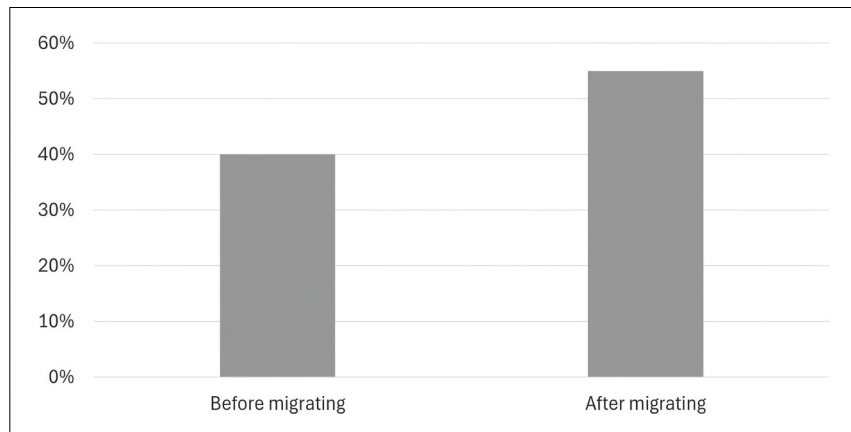
“I’ve changed the way I consume information from news outlets a great deal. For example, I used to watch television and now I only use social media, mainly because of the demands of adapting to a new country and way of life.” (Participant 7, 2024, personal interview).

“I’ve never been one for watching television, so I find out about things mainly through social media, and if something specific interests me, I read about it. I check social media every day.” (Participant 8, 2024, personal interview).

“In Peru it was very common to have the news on during breakfast and also on social media. I received a lot of news through those channels.” (Participant 2, 2024, personal interview).

With regard to news consumption about the host city during the first months after migrating, more than half of the interviewees –eleven people– mentioned that their news focus was more closely tied to politics, which was the topic generating the most interest, as had been the case when they were in Peru. Interest in politics increased compared with when they were living in Lima: before migrating, 40% of participants identified it as their main topic of interest –15 percentage points fewer than after changing country– as shown in Figure 2. In addition, 70% of interviewees began to consume more international news or news about Spain in general.

Figure 2. Percentage of people interested in politics, before and after migrating



Source: Authors

Adaptation to a new environment and social and academic integration were expressed as important factors in the transformation of migrants' information habits, with a tendency to consume more information through digital media and social media, and to access local news from the receiving country on a gradually increasing basis. Indeed, 65% of participants changed their information consumption habits gradually, particularly during the first months of residence in the new city.

4.2. News avoidance

During their migration process, half of the interviewees stopped consuming news because they were devoting their time to other matters and became disconnected from news from both Peru and Spain, partly because they were unfamiliar with the context of much local news. The other half reported that they did not experience a significant change in the volume of news they consumed. Although they reduced their access to news from Peru, they began to consume news from Spain, which allowed them to remain informed about various aspects relevant to their daily lives. Additionally, one participant stated that she had not consumed news either before or after migration.

The testimonies indicate that the migration process brings about significant changes in news consumption habits. These range from reduced consumption owing to new priorities and responsibilities, to an increase in the diversity of sources and access

to international news. The interviewees emphasise the importance of adapting to the new environment whilst balancing the need to stay informed about their country of origin and their new place of residence.

“I arrived in October and for the first two or three months I wasn’t consuming news from either side. From the third or fourth month onwards I started taking more of an interest in local news.” (Participant 13, 2024, personal interview)

“In general, I would say yes –at some point I’ve felt less informed about what’s happening, mainly because my mind is on other things, and that makes it harder, to some extent, to pay attention to certain news stories. Since I haven’t been following things closely for a long time now, I don’t understand the context of what’s happening, and I lose interest.” (Participant 2, 2024, personal interview)

“I think I now consume less news overall, but from more places. Before, I only consumed news from Peru and perhaps from too many outlets. Now, by contrast, I consume fewer outlets, but from both Peru and Europe.” (Participant 16, 2024, personal interview)

The interview with the only participant who reported not consuming news –already before the migration process– reveals key findings about the impact of news consumption on mental health and identity perception. She cited stress as a reason, particularly during a period of crisis in Peru, which led her to choose to eliminate news from her life in order to protect her mental wellbeing, despite acknowledging the importance of staying informed. The interviewee expressed a sense of responsibility and guilt about remaining uninformed but prioritised her mental health.

Her experience also highlights how an excess of negative information can affect one’s perception of a country, as the constant exposure to negative news shaped her pessimistic view of Peru; she proposed a more balanced exposure that would include news with a more optimistic perspective.

4.3. Reasons for the change in consumption habits

With regard to determining the reasons why changes in news consumption habits arise, 60% of interviewees cited, as the main reasons for having changed their habits, a focus on other activities such as studying or work, which led them to disconnect from Peruvian news.

Furthermore, 40% indicated that content from their country of origin had stopped appearing on their social media owing to geolocation. Changes in social circle also played a role, as their new social environment showed little interest in shared news topics.

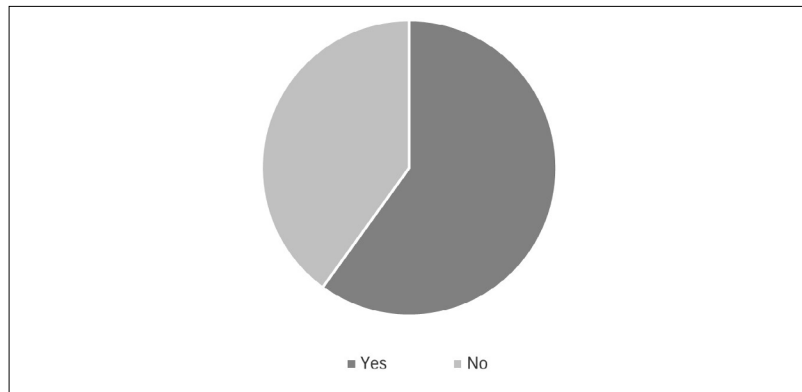
“I think my interest in seeking out and reading news has declined somewhat because in Spain the topic doesn’t come up as much, and among my friends we don’t discuss much of what’s happening in Peru either. So my interest in looking for news has dropped a little.” (Participant 15, 2024, personal interview)

The testimonies presented suggest that migration not only alters the media through which news is consumed, but also information priorities, with a progressive shift of interest towards local news as a means of facilitating integration into society.

4.4. Strategies for continuing to consume news from the country of origin

The participants showed a degree of divergence in their intention to remain informed about events in Peru. 60% of interviewees reported following strategies such as monitoring news published by Peruvian media on social media, asking family members and staying connected to WhatsApp groups of which they were members; compared with 40% who said they did not follow any specific strategies to keep up with Peruvian current affairs (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of participants who actively seek out and consume news from Peru after migrating, versus those who do not



Source: Authors

Technology and social media thus play a crucial role in how migrants stay informed about their country of origin from abroad. Among the interviewees' most notable comments was the view that maintaining connections with family and friends was one of the main reasons they continued to consume Peruvian news, and that in any case they did not wish to lose their ties to their country entirely.

These testimonies show how Peruvian migrants in Barcelona adapt their news consumption habits to the new context, without losing sight of their thematic interests and personal connections, using a combination of local and international media alongside social media to stay informed. The frequency of news consumption among participants varied considerably, with no clear or dominant trend.

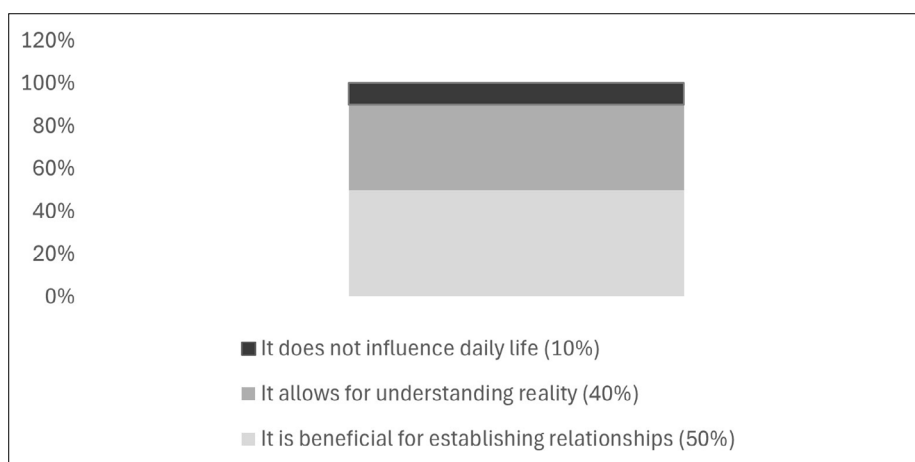
"I still have certain WhatsApp groups that were informative about news, for example." (Participant 2, 2024, personal interview)

"I keep following the outlets I already knew, such as El Comercio and La República, and I also sometimes access other platforms like YouTube. I try to tune in a little more to local channels, such as El Comercio's channel or Latina Noticias, which offers news reports, to stay informed." (Participant 1, 2024, personal interview)

4.5. News consumption and identity

The consumption of local news from the host city generates varied perceptions regarding the sense of belonging and identity among Peruvian migrants in Barcelona. Half of the interviewees stated that they considered consuming local news to be beneficial for building relationships with local residents or people living in Barcelona. Eight of the twenty interviewees, meanwhile, noted that whilst they considered it important to stay well informed through the news, they did so primarily to understand the reality of the place where they live. Finally, two people mentioned that they did not notice any significant influence on their daily lives as a result of news consumption (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Perceptions of how consuming local news from the host city affects migrants after migration



Source: Authors

The majority of participants agreed that staying informed about local news helps them to integrate better into the society of the receiving country. It is worth noting that several interviewees mentioned that consuming local news from Barcelona or international news made them feel more intercultural and gave them a greater awareness of what was happening in various parts of the world.

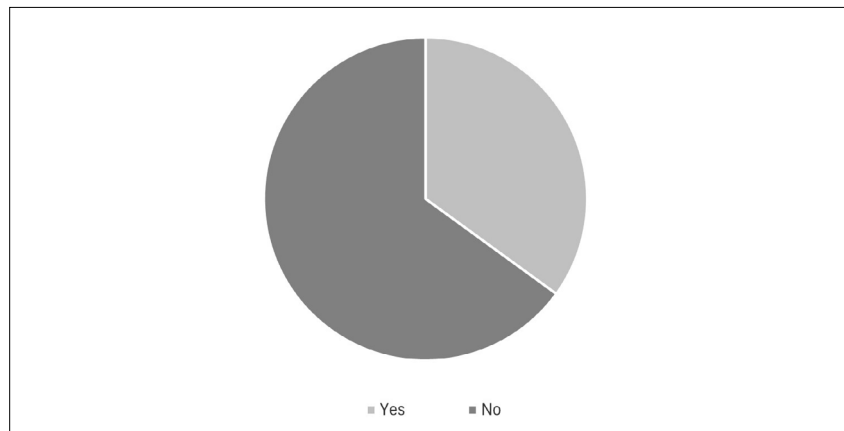
“Being better informed about what’s happening in Barcelona has, I think, helped me to connect more with the people around me –to have something to talk about, to know what to discuss. In other words, to feel included in the group and to know what’s going on where I’m living now, rather than still being in my Peruvian bubble.” (Participant 4, 2024, personal interview)

“When I’m in a group where most people are Spanish or have been living here for a long time and they bring up some relevant topic about what’s happening, at least I’m already a little bit informed about what’s going on in this country and I can contribute ideas to the conversation.” (Participant 5, 2024, personal interview)

“I think that being informed about what’s happening in the country where I’m now living, and specifically in Catalonia, helps me to have a better understanding of what’s going on around me. That helps me to get on better with my friends at university.” (Participant 3, 2024, personal interview)

The majority of Peruvian migrants in Barcelona have not felt disconnected from Peru. Specifically, thirteen of the twenty interviewees said they still felt connected to the country, primarily because they could easily find information and news from Peru, especially through social media such as WhatsApp groups and conversations with family members. It is worth noting, however, that seven people did experience a sense of disconnection from what was happening in the country, mainly due to their low consumption of Peruvian news, which led them to stop understanding current aspects of their country of origin (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percentage of participants who feel disconnected from their country of origin, Peru, versus those who do not



Source: Authors

The interviewees’ testimonies reveal a range of experiences among Peruvian migrants in relation to their connection with Peru and their sense of identity. Some have a strong emotional bond and are affected by news from Peru, whilst others experience a sense of disconnection from their country, although this does not necessarily influence their sense of identity. This suggests that national identity can remain stable and strongly linked to the country of origin despite the migration process and the fact of no longer residing there, and that the process of becoming disconnected from current affairs in the country does not necessarily affect one’s sense of identity.

“Although I’m far away, I feel that my connection with my country of origin is still strong. Although perhaps I don’t experience as intense a sense of loss in relation to my Peruvian identity whilst living in another country for a long time, I still care about what happens there and it affects me emotionally when I hear impactful news. I have many ties to my country and, because of family traditions, I developed a sense of national pride from a young age.” (Participant 2, 2024, personal interview)

“Maybe I miss some cultural references or in-jokes from Peru, but it doesn’t affect my identity. It’s more like not being in on the gossip –it doesn’t affect my sense of identity.” (Participant 11, 2024, personal interview)

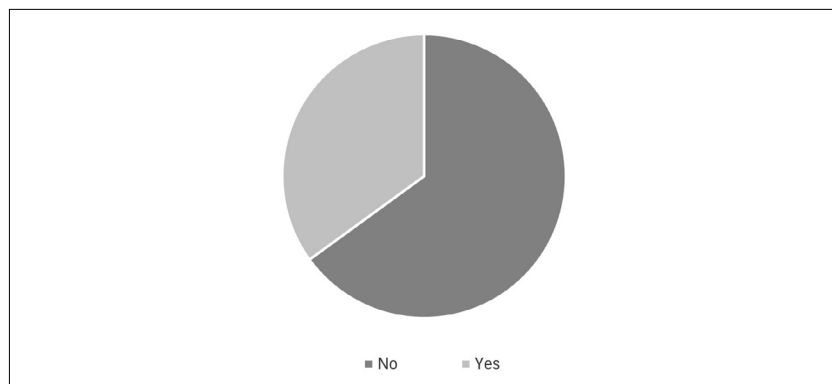
Despite some migrants feeling more connected and consuming more content from their country of origin than others, their sense of identity generally remains rooted in their country of origin.

4.6. News consumption and language barriers

For 65% of the interviewees, the presence of news in Catalan –a co-official language in Catalonia– did not represent an obstacle to accessing local news (Figure 6). The main reasons cited included the possibility of translating news viewed on social media using artificial intelligence or Google Translate, as well as the availability of television news programmes broadcast in Spanish rather than exclusively in Catalan.

On the other hand, as shown in Figure 6, 35% of interviewees reported having had difficulties accessing news in Catalan because they did not understand what was being said on television when they turned it on, or the content on social media or in newspapers.

Figure 6. Proportion of interviewees for whom Catalan did not represent a barrier to accessing local news, versus those for whom it did



Source: Authors

These experiences indicate that the language barrier can be a significant challenge for migrants but also demonstrate the various strategies and tools that help to mitigate this obstacle. A willingness to learn the local language, the use of translation technologies and immersion in the everyday environment are key factors that facilitate integration and access to information in a new country.

“There are some news items in Catalan that I can’t read because I don’t know the language. But social media helps a lot. On Instagram, for example, you can turn on the option to translate into Spanish. The same goes for Google Chrome, which can translate a news item or an entire portal. That makes things much easier for me.” (Participant 15, 2024, personal interview)

“At the start I could say I didn’t understand anything. I signed up for Catalan classes for a month, but then I stopped and little by little I got used to it, and now I understand it very well. Also because I live with people who speak Catalan. So I’ve got quite familiar with it.” (Participant 9, 2024, personal interview)

Consuming news in Catalan is also seen by some interviewees as a way of learning the language.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This research concludes that the migration process leads young migrants to modify their news consumption habits. 85% of interviewees stopped consuming Peruvian news or reduced their consumption as a result of the migration process. In addition, the use of social media to access news intensified –in line with previous studies such as that of Metykova (2010)– and interest in political topics increased, taking on a more international dimension. Migrants also experienced a reduction in content from their country of origin appearing on social media platforms owing to geolocation.

With regard to news avoidance, it is observed that half of the participants exhibited intentional news avoidance, consistent with the classification of Skovsgaard and Andersen (2020), particularly during the first months after migration. It can therefore be concluded that the migration process contributes to news avoidance in relation to both the receiving country and the country of origin, especially during the first period after migration.

However, as migrants integrated into Spanish society, they increased their interest in local news and perceived the consumption of such information as improving their integration and knowledge of the place where they live. This shift is interpreted as a process of adaptation and cultural approximation to the new environment, highlighting the influence of cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 2021) on their media choices. Despite these connections with the receiving country, migrants’ sense of identity remained rooted in their country of origin.

The research findings are consistent with the work of Adolph (2022) and Morales (2017), demonstrating that migrants change their information habits as a result of their desire to establish new study or work routines, their intention to learn more about their place of residence and their wish to participate in conversations within their social circle. Adaptation to a new environment and social integration are relevant drivers of changes in migrants’ information habits, with a tendency to gradually consume more local news from the receiving country.

During the migration process, staying up to date with information about the place of residence is perceived as positive by 90% of interviewees for building social relationships and for understanding the reality of the place where they live.

This article contributes meaningfully to understanding how the migration process changes information consumption habits in young people and exacerbates the tendency towards news avoidance. It contributes, from an interdisciplinary perspective, to understanding the changes brought about by international migration –a process that substantially influences the media and information consumption of young people. The research offers insight into how access to local news from the host city

contributes positively to cultural approximation and the strengthening of social relationships, and is –in short– an element of integration. The work makes an original contribution to the limited existing literature on the consequences of the migratory phenomenon for information consumption, and connects it to contemporary dynamics and challenges, such as news consumption via social media and the tendency towards intentional news avoidance.

Future research could extend the study to other geographical areas and expand the empirical scope. Further investigation is also needed into how linguistic diversity shapes migrants' access to news; other variables worth exploring include occupation and educational level, to assess whether these significantly influence information consumption habits.

6. Acknowledgements

This article was translated by Gorka Hodson, whom we thank for his work.

7. Specific contributions by each author

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Conception & design of the study	Aida Martori Muntsant and Alejandro Saavedra
Methodology	Aida Martori Muntsant and Alejandro Saavedra
Data collection & analysis	Alejandro Saavedra
Discussion & conclusions	Aida Martori Muntsant and Alejandro Saavedra
Writing, formatting, revision & approval of versions	Aida Martori Muntsant

8. Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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