

**For Whom the Bell Tolls:
Competition for Audiences in Spain's Election Campaigns**

Juan Díez-Nicolas and Holli A. Semetko

The development of political attitudes during the transition to democracy in Spain has been the subject of considerable research on elections in that country since the late 1970s (Penniman & Majul-Leon, 1985; Barnes, McDonough & Lopez Pina, 1986, 1988; Lancaster & Lewis-Beck, 1986; Heywood, 1987; Hunter & Pollack, 1987; Gunther, Sani & Shabad, 1988). These studies paid little attention to the information environment in Spain and were hardly concerned with the potential effects of news and information on the formation of political opinions. To some extent, this lack of scholarly interest in the media can be explained by the country's comparatively low levels of press readership, as well as the unique broadcasting structure inherited by post-Franco Spain. The state-owned and operated public service broadcaster, RTVE (Radio y Television Espanola, hereafter referred to as TVE), funded by a unique combination of both public funds and advertising, held a monopoly position in television and for many years after Franco's death, it was the sole provider of television and radio news (Lopez-Escobar & Faus, 1985; Lopez-Escobar, 1992, see also Preston, 1996). It came in the form of two national channels (TVE 1 and TVE2, as well as national radio, RNE). TVE was revered and respected, but also understood to be closely linked to the State which, in practice, meant the Government (Rospir, 1996).

The situation in the 1990s could not be more different. The term "Americanization" has been used to describe the developments in the campaign environments in many countries, and Spain is no exception (Swanson & Mancini, 1996). In established democracies as well as societies in transition, there are more television channels available to citizens than ever before, and there is evidence from many countries to support the influence of the media on public perceptions of political leaders and parties, candidates, and the importance of issues (Semetko, 1995, 1996). The two most recent elections in Spain (1993 and 1996) were fought on a mediated battleground, against a backdrop of unique developments in the press and broadcasting.

Spain is one of the few western countries to experience increases, in recent years, in newspaper readership. One of the most successful newspapers launched in the late 1980s, *El Mundo*, increased its circulation not by fronting bingo and babes, but by giving considerable space to serious investigative reporting on corruption and a clear anti-government editorial line. Pedro J. Ramirez, the editor, was inspired by his visit as a young intern to the *Washington Post* in 1974, at the end of the Watergate affair, and *El Mundo's* hardhitting news and editorials made him known as the "nightmare of Felipe Gonzalez" (Interview, 2 June 1993). One of the most important scandals to be followed closely by this popular newspaper is know as the GAL affair, about the secret anti-terrorist squad of undercover police, paid illegally by the Ministry of Interior, who murdered more than twenty Basque (ETA) terrorists ten years ago.

The emphasis on corruption in the press was not ignored by television news in Spain. Since 1989, there have been both public service and new private television channels, though public service news professionals acknowledged that news on the private television channels paid more attention to this running story than TVE (Semetko and Canel, in press). News and current affairs on the private channels were often reported with a political slant that did not please the government of the day. Writing in 1992, one observer even suggested that this change in the balance of television resources available to citizens was related to declines in support for the ruling party: "(I)t is far from impossible that the relative decline in PSOE's position at the last local elections may be connected with this... The ruling party's losses were proportionally greater in cities with access to commercial channels, while the differences were smaller in areas without access to private television" (Lopez-Escobar, 1992:251).

In this paper, we discuss the changes in Spain's television landscape in recent years and the implications of this for the study of political communication and elections. We describe the shifts in audiences from public to private television channels, and the characteristics of audiences for news bulletins on the main channels, based on cross-sectional survey data from the 1993 and 1996 elections. The data suggest that in 1993 and 1996 there was a relationship between the news program one watched regularly and one's political views. "Selective exposure" may therefore be an important hypothesis for research on media effects in Spanish elections. In conclusion, we argue that an understanding of political developments in Spain in the 1990s and beyond needs to be informed by developments in the media, by audience's exposure to news sources, and by the real and perceived political sympathies reflected in the news.

We begin with some background on the organization and structure of television in Spain. We then discuss some of the key differences in approach taken by the news on the two most important television channels in the March 1996 election. We then discuss competition for television audiences.

Spanish Television in Transition

While RTVE (Radio y Television Espanola) may be compared with Britain's BBC in terms of their mission statement, in practice the Spanish broadcaster had far less autonomy from political control than the BBC (Schlesinger, 1978). In theory (by statute), Spain's public service broadcaster operates by the following principles: (a) objectivity, accuracy and impartiality of information; (b) clear distinction between information and opinion: in the later case, indication should be made as to who is the holder of the particular opinion, and the freedom of expression should be respected, within the limits set by Article 20, para. 4 of the Constitution; (c) political, religious, social, cultural and linguistic pluralism should be respected; (d) the good name, reputation and private life of the individual, and all his rights and liberties recognized by the Constitution; (e) the protection of young people and children; (f) respect for the values of equality summed up in Article 14 of the Constitution" (cf. Article 4 of the RTVE Statue, 10 January 1980, as quoted in Lopez-Escobar 1992:257 ff. 7).

Under Franco, the content of Spanish news programs was controlled by means of "(1) the prohibition of any independently made radio news programs (the various stations had to link up with the official information service several times a day); and (2) the

appointment of appropriate people to key positions in the public broadcasting media, both radio and television," (Lopez-Escobar, 1992: 242). This began to change in the late 1970s and over the course of the 1980s with new broadcasting regulations. Nevertheless, public service television in Spain by tradition "was not so much *state* television as television controlled by the *government of the day*," first Francoist during the dictatorship, then UCD in the late 1970s, and then Socialist beginning with the victory PSOE in the election of 1982 (Lopez-Escobar, 1992:251).

Like Germany, there is commercial advertising on Spanish public service television and it operates with restrictions, such a limit to the amount of time each day that can be devoted to advertising (Schoenbach, 1987). But in Spain, public money represents only 20% of the total income for public broadcasting, and the rest is supplied by advertising and sales of its own products. There is a problem because public broadcasting in Spain operates on a very large deficit, and the deficit is funded by the State. There is no income for the public service system generated by a license fee paid by households with a TV set, unlike Britain. Once private television channels were introduced in 1989, TVE's monopoly position as a provider of news and entertainment, and as an outlet for commercial advertising, came to an end. But the political power structure in TVE remained intact (see Semetko and Canel, in press).

The chief post of *Director General* (DG), was appointed by the government for a four-year mandate which expired with the election of a new government. The Governing Council (*Consejo de Administracion*) was composed by 12 people elected, half elected by the upper, and half elected by the lower, Chambers of the national Parliament. Hiring policy was highly linked to the DG, who appointed the four key personnel for the news programs and the heads of various news desks (national, economic, culture, for example). A change in the government could therefore mean changes in the key posts in the newsroom. This indeed happened when the Socialists came to power in 1982 and replaced all those in key positions at TVE.

The Governing Council represented the main political parties in proportion to their weight in Parliament. At the time of the 1993 election there were six PSOE, four PP, one centrist (CDS) and one Catalan (CiU). The Council's role was to ensure that there is a balance in the news about the different political parties and their leaders, based on their representation in Parliament. A monthly tally was kept outside of election periods, and an almost daily tally is kept during official election campaign periods. Similar boards with similar functions existed for all the other public regional channels. There were no such boards or legal regulations for the new private channels, though they were expected to provide "balanced" and "impartial" coverage of the parties in the news.

The introduction of private television in Spain was completed in late 1989, and the 1993 general election represented the first time new private channels (Antena 3, Tele5, and Canal Plus a scrambled, subscription only, channel) competed with the main public service channel TVE, to provide coverage of the campaign. Spanish culture makes the viewing of television news at lunchtime and evening news a family affair and an important ritual (Barnhurst, 1997). Lunchtime news programs are broadcast at about 3pm, usually for a half an hour. Lunchtime in Spain is from 2-4pm. The main evening news programs are aired during prime time, and during the campaign these began at 8.30 on Antena 3 and at 9pm on TVE.

TVE 1 and Antena 3: Ideological Newsrooms?

The public service channel was reputed to be pro-government and, between 1982 and the 1996 election, was perceived by the public to be a mouthpiece for the PSOE government (Rospir, 1996). Prior to the 1996 election, news on the main competitor, the private channel Antena 3, was perceived to be anti-government (or pro-opposition) by the public. Interviews with news professionals in the two news organizations revealed that they in fact did not contest these pro- or anti-government stereotypes, but reporters and editors in each organization firmly believed they fulfilled their obligations and duties as broadcasters appropriately (Semetko and Canel, in press).

The observation and interviews conducted during the 1996 election campaign found that the news programs on the two channels were not only different in terms of the perceived biases in their political coverage, they were also distinctly different organizations, bound by different rules, regulations, and internal definitions of journalists' roles. For example, there was an unnatural absence of journalistic instinct in the TVE newsroom during the final fourteen days before the election. This was the "official" campaign when strict "stopwatch" rules of balance were applied to the campaign news at the public service channel. When asked about how TVE 1 determined what to include in the "electoral block" as campaign news during the two week "official" campaign, the TVE 1 Deputy Head said:

"The campaign coverage is agreed beforehand. We have some time allotted for every party. We allocate to each party a time which is proportional to the representation they have in Parliament. This time distribution is approved by the administrative council (board of directors) of TVE. We tend to reduce the time of the large parties and give some time to minority parties, so that every party has some representation. This time is not exactly adhered to, sometimes there are differences because of events. Every day there is rally where the party leaders speak. If there is no leader rally, then we call the party and we ask "What is the most important event of the day?"

The newsroom observation study revealed profound differences in attitude and approach taken by the two main competing news organizations. TVE 1 saw its aim as sending the agendas of the parties forward to the electors for consideration. Antena 3, its main competitor, saw its aim as setting an agenda for the news, based on the interests of its audience and the expertise of its reporters. News on TVE 1 during the official campaign was in a rigid format in strict adherence to "stopwatch" rules of balance, whereas news on Antena 3 included changing and innovative formats, such as the political cartoon, and considerable emphasis on analysis and interpretation, with election stories dispersed throughout the program.

There were also fundamental differences between the two channels in their perceptions of their audience. TVE 1 was devoted to letting the parties have their say, because the parties were their audience. One amusing remark made during an editorial meeting was quite telling. (1) Someone questioned whether the story being discussed at that moment was of interest to the audience. The reply from the producer was: "Do we

make our programs for the audience? Only 20% of our program is for the audience, the rest is for politicians and journalists!"

The perspective of TVE 1 news professionals about their audience ('politicians') and their owner ('government'), showed that the concept of public service broadcasting in Spain is a long way away from the BBC in Britain. The BBC is largely independent from the government, though its Board of Governors is appointed by the Prime Minister, and the renewal of its license fees are subject to vote in Parliament. It has been heavily criticized by government for its investigative reporting, and especially its objective coverage of the Falklands War in the early 1980s. TVE 1 also appears to be more 'politicized' than Germany's public service channels, ARD and ZDF, in which there is a somewhat even distribution of 'red' (Social Democratic Party) supporters and 'black' (Christian Democratic Party) supporters in the newsrooms and in high level positions. These two German public service organizations are also subject to external oversight and criticism from advisory review councils involving politicians from all parties (Semetko & Schoenbach, 1994). TVE 1 in Spain, however, is unique in that it is beholden to the party in government and its top news directors are part of a specially appointed team whose head is directly appointed by the prime minister.

News professionals at Antena 3 would have found it anathema to call the parties and ask them for their most important story of the day. Instead, reporters and producers there made a special effort to initiate news, via analysis and interpretation. They catered to what they believed their audience wanted. They regularly linked the campaign to stories appearing in all parts of the bulletin, and to the activities of government actors, in ways that are commonly found in Britain or the US during election campaigns (Semetko, Blumler, Gurevitch & Weaver, 1991). It was nearly impossible for the prime minister or another minister to appear in the news without an explicit link made by the reporter between the politician's activities and the forthcoming election, in the final weeks before the election, which is also common journalistic practice in Britain and the US. News on Antena 3 was also ironic and critical, occasionally disdainful, and frequently entertaining. There was some sacrifice of substance for style, instead of focusing on the substantive issues addressed in a speech at a rally, for example, Antena 3 reported on the style or tactics of the leader, or offered a humorous piece on how the leaders move -- Felipe's feet or Jose Maria's hands.

Moreover, at Antena 3, there was constant questioning in editorial meetings and an awareness of the need to help audience understand with analysis and the linking of stories in the flow of the program. Questions such as "Will our audience understand this?" or "How can we help our audience to understand this better?" were common. The audience consisted of a wide cross-section of members of the public, the masses and the movers and shakers. According to the Executive Director:

"We don't think our audience is either right wing or left wing. Our role is to 'watchdog' the government. As the government is now Socialist, when we criticize it, PP voters are happy with that. From Monday on, we'll be criticizing a PP government, so PSOE voters will be closer to us. We aim to target people who are interested in political information, maybe information that bores other people, but which is important for people who are in decisionmaking posts. We try to reach our people with *reportages*, we try to get more

women in our audience, but we don't want to give up the elite group. I know that if political information was left aside we would get a higher audience, but we don't want to miss that group. And we won't be influencing the society if we were to do that. If we didn't give political information then we wouldn't be watched by politicians, by businessmen, by intellectuals, so we'd be reaching massive audiences but not the groups of audiences who are running the society."

A "sacerdotal - pragmatic" continuum was first introduced to describe the range of attitudes found among news and current affairs professionals at the BBC, in their reporting on election campaigns, based on newsroom observation studies spanning three decades (Blumler and McQuail, 1968; Blumler, Gurevitch and Ives, 1978; Blumler, 1986; Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995; Blumler, Gurevitch and Nossiter 1995). "Sacerdotal" referred to the willingness of reporters to take up and present the what the parties put forward each day, almost without question, as the BBC's duty or obligation during election campaigns. But even in the BBC, some reporters were more "pragmatic." In other words, they wanted to let the stories fight their way into the bulletins on their own merits, based on news value criteria. The "pragmatic" approach characterized that taken by reporters at NBC in New York in 1984 and 1992, during election newsroom observation studies (Semetko et al, 1991, 1996), and to a certain extent at ITN in Britain (Semetko, Scammell and Nossiter, 1994; Nossiter, Scammell and Semetko, 1995). But to describe TVE 1's approach, in the 1996 election campaign, as "sacerdotal" and Antena 3's as "pragmatic" is misleading without an understanding of the highly politically charged environment in which these news organizations compete. In Spain, unlike the US or the UK, this is a continuum perched high on a political peak. What these differences mean for television audiences in Spain is the subject of the next section.

Television Audiences in Transition

Television is the most relied upon medium as a source of information, in comparison with radio and the press. In the May 1993 pre-election survey conducted by ASEP, 84 percent of respondents (18 years and older) had been watching television the day before, 50 percent had listened to radio, and 43 percent had read a newspaper, and 24 percent had read a magazine during the previous week (Diez-Nicolas & Semetko, 1995:250). The prevalence of television as the most relied upon medium remained throughout the 1993-1996 period, with the exception of an increased audience for radio due at least in part to a change in question wording in 1994, as is shown in Grafico 1.

Grafico 1 about here

Between 1989 and the June 1993 election, audiences for TVE 1 dropped from more than 70 percent of television viewers to just over 50 percent, with a similar drop in audience registered by the second public service channel though it was from just under 50 to just below 20 percent, and the audiences for the channels in the autonomous regions remained within the 20 to 30 percent range (see graphico 1 and 2 in Diez-Nicolas & Semetko, 1995: 250-251). By contrast, audiences for the two most popular private channels increased dramatically during this period. Antena 3 and Tele5 each drew attention away from the public service channel with their entertainment programming. Both channels displayed increases from 5 percent of television viewers, when first

measured by ASEP in 1990, to about one-third of television viewers by the time of the 1993 election. Viewers watch more than one channel, of course, and this is why these figures sum to more than 100 percent. These important shifts in audiences were particularly difficult for TVE because so much of the broadcaster's budget came from advertising revenue. As viewers zapped to other channels, so did advertisers' pesetas. It is worth noting that by 1997, a year after the election, the private channels actually surpassed TVE 1 in terms of audience share for overall programming.

This competition for audiences became even more intense after the 1993 election in the period leading up to the March 1996 general election, as can be seen in Grafico 2. During this period, audiences for Antena 3 programs soared well above those for Tele 5, from about one-third of television viewers in June 1993 moving up to close to 50 percent of viewers in the first five months of 1994 while Tele 5 audiences dropped to less than 30 percent. Audiences for TVE 1 hovered around the 50 percent range.

Grafico 2 about here

From 1994 onwards, Antena 3 was the main competitor to TVE 1 for general programming. In the six months prior to the 1996 election, Tele 5 also started to increase its share of the audience by slotting in specific entertainment programs to lure audiences away from Antena 3 and TVE 1.

So far we have concentrated on competition for audiences generally. The public service channel's advertising base was diminished because of severe competition for entertainment programming offered on the private channels. The public service channel retained a stronger lead over Antena 3 in the audience for news programs, but in this battle, Tele 5, the second private channel, was well behind as is shown in Grafico 3.

Grafico 3 about here

Between the 1993 and 1996 elections, audiences for news on Antena 3 increased from about 12 percent to nearly one-third, levelling off at just under a one-quarter about the time of the election. Audiences for news on TVE 1 declined over this period, from about 37 percent to about one-third, though with peaks and valleys that to some extent corresponded with shifts to Antena 3 for news.

Taken together, these trends suggest that we have witnessed the end of an era for public service broadcasting in Spain. If Hemmingway's character were to ask "For whom does the bell toll?" the answer would be, "for TVE."

Zapping as an Ideological Act?

Demographic profiles of audiences for overall programming on Antena 3 and TVE 1, based on nationally representative cross-sectional surveys fielded in April-June 1993, of the Spanish public aged 18 and over, showed that the audiences for the public service channel were more likely to be *female* (55 percent), *older* (45 percent over the age of fifty), *middle* (55 percent) to *lower social class* (26 percent), and more classifying themselves to the *left* (45 percent) on the left-right scale (with 18 percent on the right), than audiences for Antena 3. By contrast, audiences for Antena 3 were almost equally *male* (51 percent) or *female* (49 percent), *younger* (67 percent under fifty), *middle* (55 percent) to *upper social class* (25 percent), and more to the *right* (22 percent) than the left (41 percent) in comparison with TVE 1 viewers (Diez-Nicolas & Semetko, 1995: 253, cuadro 3).

The only change from this demographic pattern by 1996 was in terms of how viewers positioned themselves on the left-right scale. The minority of TVE 1 viewers who called themselves "right" or "center right" in 1993 (18 percent) dropped to 15 percent in 1996, and those placing themselves in the "center" went from 14 percent in 1993 to 18 percent in 1996, while those placing themselves to the "center left" and "left" remained constant at 46 percent, as is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 about here

Among Antena 3 viewers, the movement on the left-right scale was in the opposite direction. The proportion of those classifying themselves as "left or center left" dropped from 41 percent in 1993 to 38 percent in 1996, with those placing themselves in the "center" moving from 16 percent in 1993 to 19 percent in 1996, and the proportion of those who called themselves "right" or "center right" remained stable at 22 percent in 1993 and 21 percent in 1996, as is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 about here

The figures for 1996 are taken from ASEP's February pre-election survey, in which the total number of respondents was 1,215 (with 617 identifying themselves as having watched TVE 1 the previous day and 598 as having watched Antena 3 the previous day) and they are almost identical to the figures in January 1996, when the same questions were asked. This suggests that between the two elections, the shifts in ideological positions of viewers for TVE 1 and Antena 3 among viewers was in the direction of the public perception of the political leaning of that channel. TVE 1 was perceived to be sympathetic with the ("left", PSOE) Government, and Antena 3 was perceived to be anti-Government (or "right", PP).

Although there is considerable overlap between audiences for the general programming on both channels discussed in the paragraph above, there is comparatively little overlap between the audiences for the news programs on TVE 1 and Antena 3. These aforementioned demographic patterns are also evident when we look only at the audiences for news programs on these two channels, as displayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6 about here

By February 1996, less than one month before the March general election, 48 percent of TVE 1 news viewers identified themselves as "left" or "center left", 19 percent as "center" and 14 percent as "center right" or "right." Of Antena-3 news viewers, 39 percent identified themselves as "left" or "center left," 21 percent as "center," and 24 percent as "center right" or "right." These percentages are based on 421 TVE 1 news viewers, and 332 Antena 3 news viewers, out of 1,215 respondents, and of the remainder, the largest portion did not watch any news program, followed by viewers of news on Tele 5, then viewers of news on autonomous channels.

The demographic characteristics of the audiences for TVE 1 and Antena 3 news programs in February 1996 (in the pre-election survey) also differed in terms of how they voted in the previous national (1993) election. Of TVE 1 viewers in February, only 17 percent recalled voting for the PP and 43 percent voted PSOE in 1993. Of Antena 3 viewers in February, 27 percent recalled voting for the PP and 30 percent voted PSOE in 1993. This question was asked again in March 1996, in post-election cross-sectional survey (N=1,212) beginning the day after the election, in which respondents were asked how they had voted in the 1996 election. Of TVE 1 news viewers in March, 25 percent

recalled voting for the PP in 1996 while 38 percent recalled voting PSOE. Of Antena 3 news viewers in March, 34 percent recalled voting PP in 1996 while 25 percent recalled voting PSOE. The real 1996 results were 30 percent for PP and 29 percent for PSOE. There was a significant difference between the audiences for TVE 1 news and Antena 3 news in votes cast for PSOE and PP. TVE 1 news viewers were far more likely than Antena 3 news viewers to have recalled voting PSOE. Antena 3 news viewers were far more likely to have recalled voting PP.

Discussion

The ideological differences discussed above between TVE 1 and Antena 3, in terms of the audiences as well as the approaches taken in the newsrooms, were also reflected in the content of television news. Our content analysis showed that there was a considerable visibility bonus on television news for the PSOE and Felipe Gozalez in the 1993 national election, and this was especially strong on TVE 1 in the 'pre-campaign' (the week preceding the 14 day 'official' campaign period, when the public service channel was not bound by the 'stopwatch' balance rules), with respect to the number of PSOE actors seen in news stories, and in terms of the amount of time devoted to their soundbites, in comparison with PP actors and Jose Maria Aznar (Diez-Nicolas and Semetko, 1995:293). Even during the "official campaign" in 1993, the PSOE and the Prime Minister were also seen speaking considerably more often than PP or the opposition leader on TVE 1, largely because of the way the public service news professionals defined "campaign news." If the story was deemed to be "campaign news," then the story appeared in the 'block' of stories on the campaign and "stopwatch" rules applied. If not, according to TVE 1 reporters and editors, then "news value" criteria applied. Because ministers and prime ministers were inherently important, and because they continued to provide information on a "government as usual" basis during the final fourteen days of the 1993 campaign, they were seen more often in TVE 1 news than the opposition parties. This was not the case on Antena 3 in 1993. The application of news value criteria at the private channel had quite different consequences for the visibility of politicians. The 1993 content analysis suggests that the news values were applied at the two channels in ways that reflected the ideological orientations of the channels. This continued to be the case after the 1993 election.

In the months between the 1993 and 1996 elections, corruption dominated the news agendas of most outlets. Much of this was driven by the investigative efforts of reporters at the national newspaper *El Mundo*, and the corruption stories were regularly the subject of news on Antena 3. While TVE news programs did not ignore the developments in the corruption stories, observers as well as insiders interviewed at TVE generally agreed that the public service channel spent less time on that story than Antena 3 news.

We conducted a comparable content analysis during the pre-campaign and 'official' campaign in 1996.(2) The main conclusion to be drawn from comparisons between the two elections is that the visibility bonus on TVE 1 for PSOE and Gonzalez diminished in 1996. The newsroom observation at TVE 1 suggested that in an election campaign in which many expected a change in government, the atmosphere at the public

service channel was one of quiet apprehension (Semetko & Canel, in press). The heads at the top of TVE 1 expected to roll after the 1996 election, and there was less incentive to present "government as usual" news. Despite this, there were examples of such stories on TVE 1, that were entirely ignored by Antena 3. In short, although the content of the news on the two main channels was more similar in 1996 than in 1993, there were still some important and remarkable differences in terms of story selection. Privatization in Spain does not yet appear to provide support for the "convergence" hypothesis, in contrast to Germany (Pfetsch, 1996).

In this paper, we have discussed the developments in Spanish television since 1989 and the audience shifts from TVE 1 to Antena 3 and other private channels. We do not believe these shifts can be explained only in terms of programming schedules designed to "hook" viewers to stay with a channel, or the innovative formats developed by Antena 3, with the aim of holding viewers' interest. The differences between the profiles of audiences for these two channels generally, and the profiles of audiences for the news programs on these channels in particular, suggests that there was an ideological dimension behind news viewing.

The trends in audiences reported here raise questions about the role of television in Spain in the process of opinion formation in recent years. The data reveal an ideological difference between audiences for overall programming on these two main competing channels, and in particular for the news programs on the two channels, with the public service channel appealing more to those on the left and the leading private channel appealing more to those on the right. Given the corresponding differences in approach and philosophy of the two news programs, switching from one to the other is potentially an ideological act. Research on micro-level media effects in Spain should consider these macro-level developments in the media system, and their consequences for the information environment.

It will be interesting to see if the patterns we reported here change along with changes in structures of ownership and political control. After the 1996 elections, the PP government controlled TVE. The Socialists gained more control over Antena 3 through company stockholders in mid-1996 but just in the last two months, the PP wrestled it back. These complex shareholder battles over ownership did not go unnoticed in the Spanish press.

Endnotes

1. We would like to thank Maria Jose Canel, co-chair of the Department of Public Opinion in the School of Journalism at the University of Navarra, whose newsroom observation at TVE 1 contributed to this section of the paper.
2. Tables are available from the authors upon request.

References

- Barnes, Samuel H., Peter McDonough and A. Lopez Pina. (1986) Volatile Parties and Stable Voters in Spain. *Government and Opposition*, 21: 56-75.

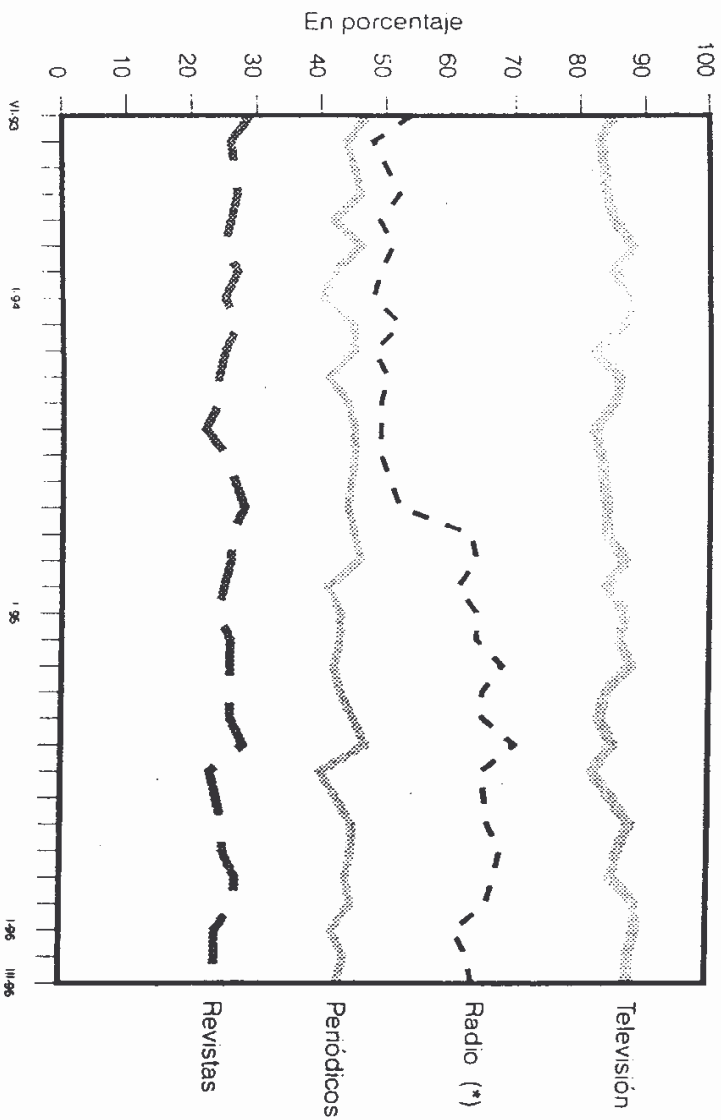
- Barnes, Samuel, Peter McDonough & A. Lopez Pina. (1988) Social identity and mass Politics in Spain. Comparative Political Studies, 21: 201-225.
- Barnhurst, Kevin G. (1997) Media Democracy: Young Adults Experience with Newspapers and Television in the United States and Spain. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Amsterdam, Faculty of Political and Social Cultural Sciences.
- Blumler, Jay G. and McQuail, Denis. (1968) Television in Politics London: Faber and Faber.
- Blumler, Jay G. (1986) "The Orientation of Journalists to Social and Political Institutions" in Golding, Peter., Murdock, Graham and Schlesinger, Philip. (eds), Communicating Politics: Mass Communication and the Political Process. Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Blumler, Jay, Gurevitch, Michael and Ives, Julian. (1978). The Challenge of Election Broadcasting. Leeds: Leeds University Press.
- Blumler, Jay G., Gurevitch, Michael and Nossiter, Thomas J. (1995). "Struggles for Meaningful Election Communication: Television Journalism at the BBC, 1992". Ivor Crewe and Brian Gosschaik [eds.] Political communications: the general election campaign of 1992. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 65-84.
- Blumler, Jay G. and Gurevitch, Michael (1995) The Crisis of Public Communication. New York: Routledge.
- Diez-Nicolas, Juan and Smetko, Holli A. (1995) "La television y las elecciones de 1993" in Munoz-Alonso, Alejandro and Rospir, Juan I. (eds), Comunicacion Politica. Madrid: Editorial Universitas. pp. 243-304.
- Diez Medrano, Juan. (1995). Divided Nations: Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- "Estatuto de Radiotelevision Espana" (1980). Official Bulletin of the State. Madrid.
- Gunther, Richard, Giacomo Sani, and Goldie Shabad (1986). Spain After Franco: The Making of a Competitive Party System. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Gurevitch, Michael and Blumler, Jay G. (1993) "Longitudinal analysis of an election communication system: Newsroom observation at the BBC 1966-1992" Osterreichische Zeitschrift fuer Politikwissenschaft [Austrian Journal of Political Science] 22 (4), pp. 427-444.
- Heywood, Paul (1995). The government and politics of Spain. London: Macmillan.

- Hunter, Graham & Pollack, Benny. (1987) Spanish Democracy After Four General Elections. Parliamentary Affairs 40:357-373.
- Lancaster, Thomas D. & Lewis-Beck, Michael. (1986) The Spanish Voter: Tradition, Economics, Ideology. Journal of Politics 43:649-671.
- Lopez-Escobar, Esteban (1992). "Vulnerable Values in Spanish Multichannel television" in Jay G. Blumler [ed] Television and the Public Interest: Vulnerable Values in West European Broadcasting. London: Sage. pp. 161-172.
- Lopez-Escobar, Esteban & Faus, A. (1995) Broadcasting in Spain: A History of Heavy-handed State Control, West European Politics 8(2): 122-36.
- Hunneus, Carlos. (1985). La Union de Centro Democratico y la Transicion a la Democracia en Espana. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas.
- Maravall, Jose Maria (1984). La Politica de la Transicion. 2nd edition. Madrid: Taurus.
- Miller, William L. et al. (1990) How Voters Change Oxford: Clarendon.
- Nossiter, T.J., Margaret Scammell and Holli A. Semetko, (1995). "Old Values versus News Values" in Ivor Crewe and Brian Gosschalk. [eds] Political Communications: the general election campaign of 1992. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 85-103.
- Pfetsch, Barbara. (1996) "Convergence through Privatization?" Paper presented at the European Consortium for Political Research. Oslo, Norway.
- Penniman, Howard R. & Majul-Leon, Eusebio. (1985) Spain at the Polls: 1977-1979, and 1982. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Preston, Paul. (1996) Franco. London and New York: Macmillan.
- Rospir, Juan I. (1996). "Political Communication and Electoral Campaigns in the Young Spanish Democracy" in David L. Swanson and Paolo Mancini, [eds] Politics, Media and Modern Democracy. New York: Praeger.
- Schlesinger, Philipp (1978). Putting "Reality" Together: BBC News. London: Constable.
- Schoenbach, Klaus (1987). "The Role of Mass Media in West German Election Campaigns". Legislative Studies Quarterly, 12 (2).
- Semetko, Holli A. (1991). "Images of Britain's Changing Party System: TV News and the 1983 and 1987 General Election Campaigns" Political Communication and Persuasion. Vol. 8. No. 4. pp. 163-181.

- Semetko, Holli A. (1995) Investigacion sobre tendencias de la Agenda-setting en los noventa. In Munoz-Alonso, Alejandro and Rospir, Juan I. (eds). Comunicacion Politica. Madrid: Editorial Universitas. pp. 221-242
- Semetko, Holli A. (1996). "Political Balance on Television: Campaigns in th US, Britain and Germany" Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics Vol. 1, No. 1.
- Semetko, Holli A. and Maria Jose Canel. (in press) Agenda-Senders versus Agenda-Setters: Television in Spain's 1996 Election Campaign. Political Communication.
- Semetko Holli A. and Klaus Schoenbach (1994). Germany's "Unity Election," Voters and the Media Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Semetko, Holli, Margaret Scammell, and T.J. Nossiter, (1994) "Media Coverage of the 1992 British General Election Campaign" in Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice [eds] Labour's Last Chance? The 1992 election and beyond Aldershot: Dartmouth. pp. 25-42.
- Semetko, Holli A. Jay G. Blumler, Michael Gurevitch, David H. Weaver, (1991). The Formation of Campaign Agendas: A Comparative Analysis of Party and Media Roles in Recent American and British Elections Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Swanson, David L. and Paolo Mancini, eds (1996). Politics, Media and Modern Democracy. New York: Praeger.

GRÁFICO 1

AUDIENCIA DE MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN, 1993-96

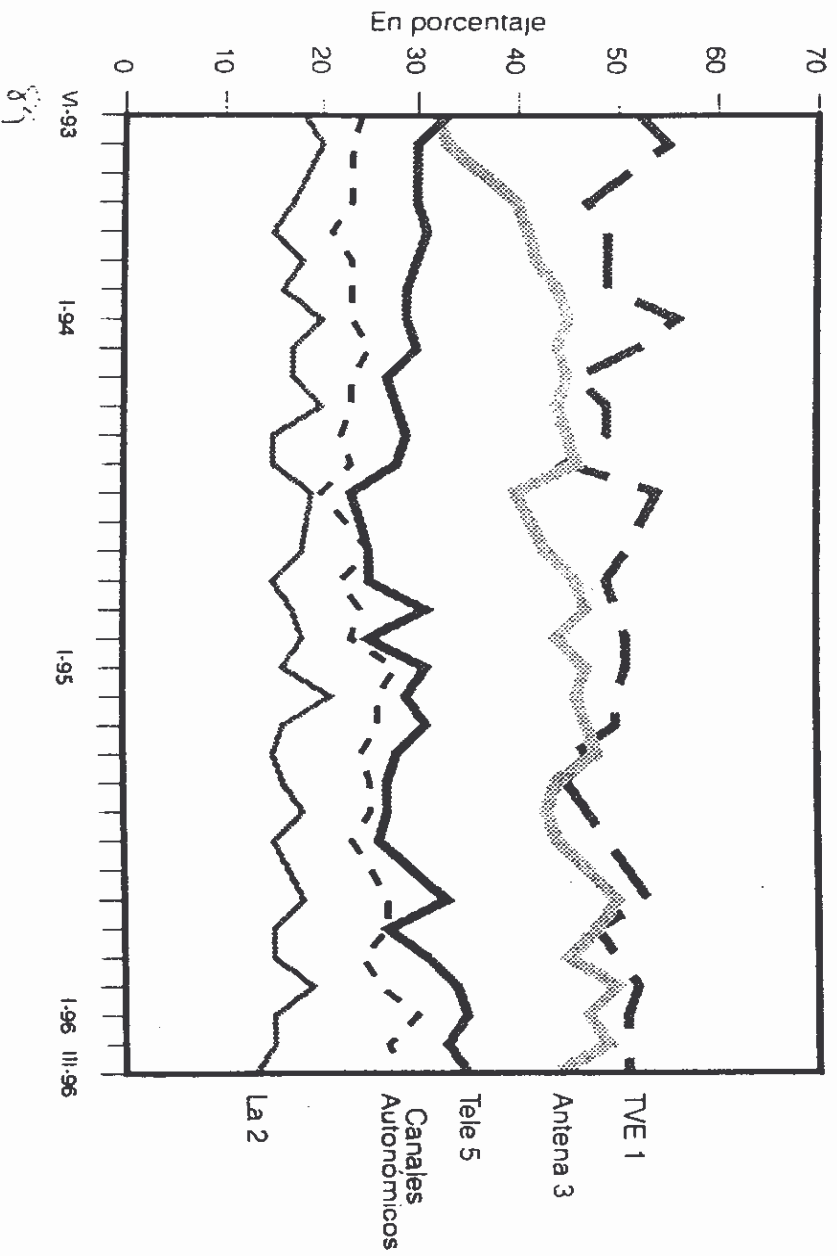


Fuente: Banco de Datos ASEP

(*) Al valorar las variaciones de estas series temporales debe tenerse en cuenta que, desde el X-94 se modificaron dichas preguntas.

GRÁFICO 2

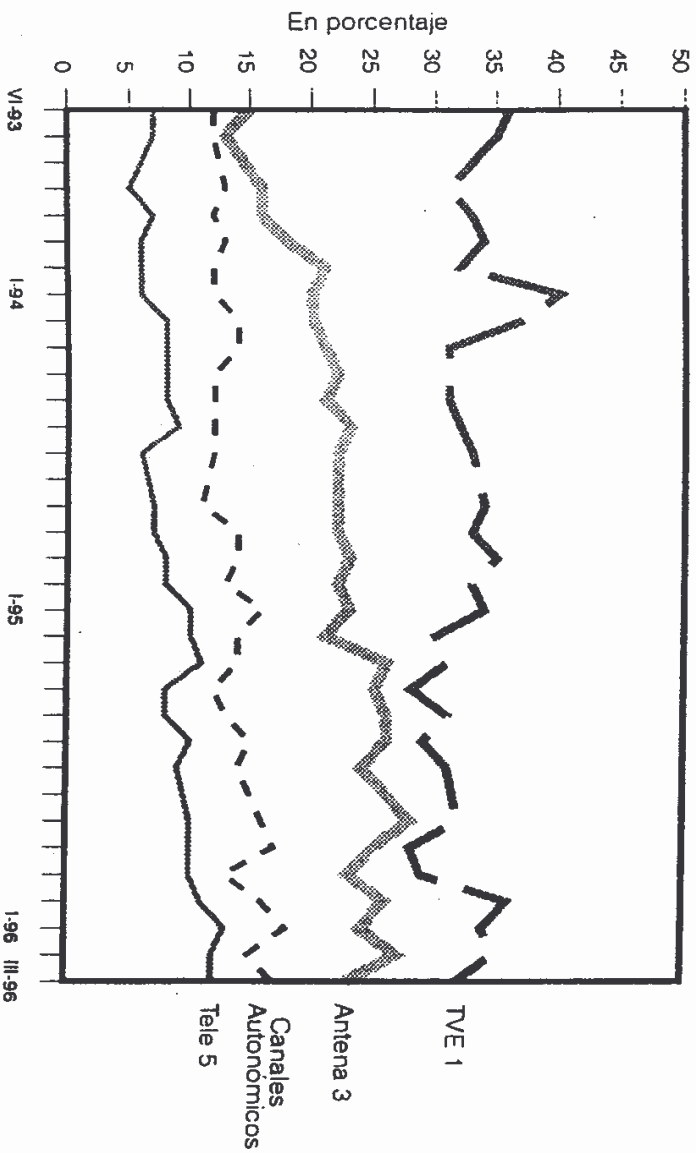
AUDIENCIA DE CANALES DE TELEVISIÓN, 1993-96



Fuente: Banco de Datos ASEP

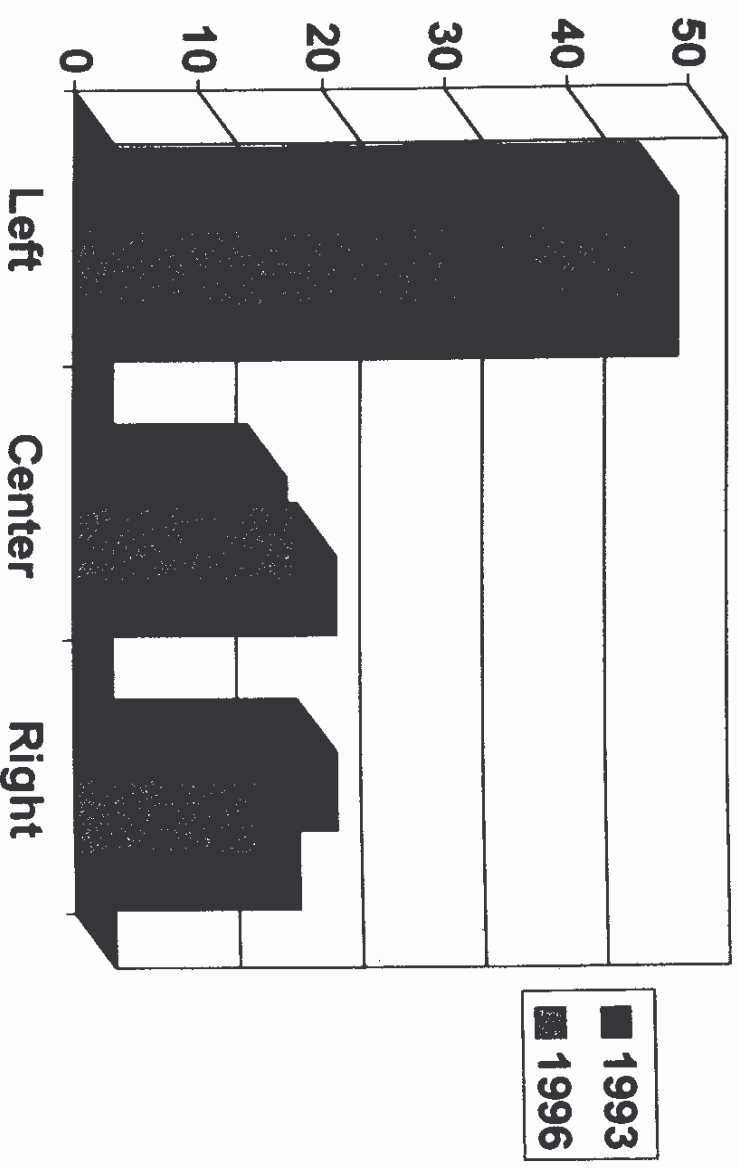
GRÁFICO 3

**AUDIENCIA DE BOLETINES
INFORMATIVOS DE T.V., 1993-96**

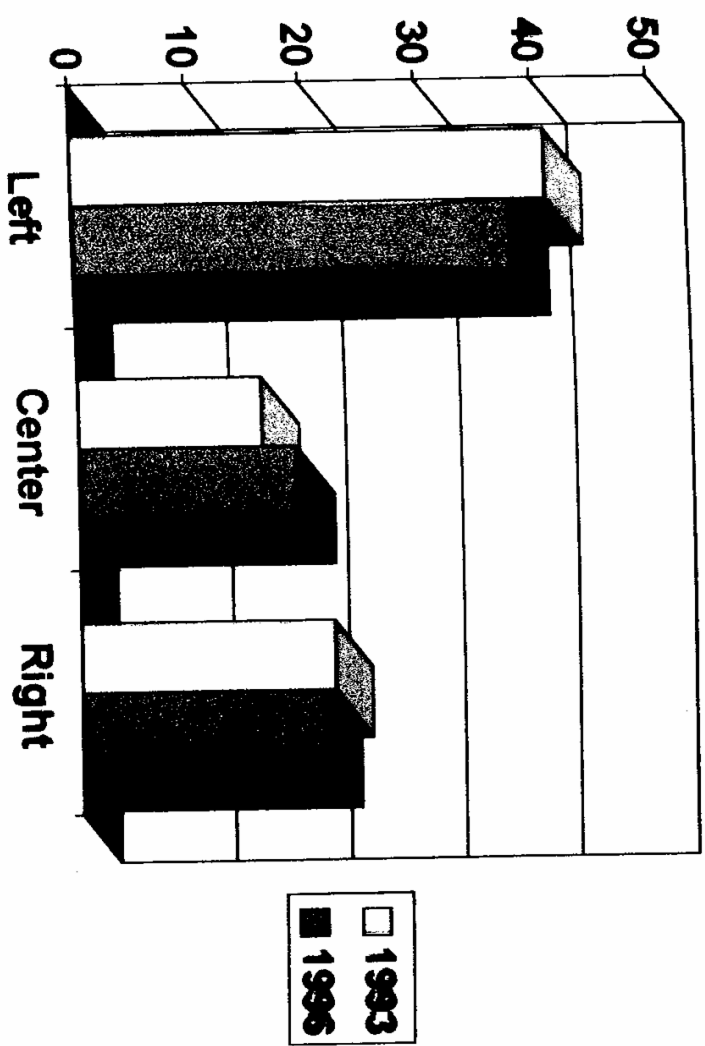


Fuente: Banco de Datos ASER

**Graphic 4:
TVE 1 Viewers: Left Right Self Placement**



**Graphic 5:
Antena 3 Viewers: Left Right Self Placement**



Graphic 6: TVE 1 and Antena 3 News Viewers: Left Right Self Placement

