

# The Evolution of the Concept of Public Service and the Transition in Spanish Television

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## SUMMARY

*The paper examines the presence of the public interest in contemporary Spanish television medium. For many years there was a solidly-held belief that there are important public assets (principally educational, cultural and democratic) which could only be provided by public television. In recent years in Spain, after the Transition process, and with democracy having been consolidated, a new period of maturity in television, in which society itself demands and expects that television in general, both public and private, guarantees a series of values and public assets.*

*In the first part, the author explains what are the origins of television in Spain: from what is the nature of public service and legislation that supports it (where are established the public interest criteria that must always prevail in the public television medium, and private television later) to the development and consolidation of the television system in Spain with the arrival of regional television, private television channels and pay television platforms. In the second part of the paper, the situation of the programme listings of general public and private television channels which operate in Spain is analyzed through the case study of the first week of March 2009. The study of prime time enables to know which are the most important genres of television programming in Spain and what television preserve the public interest. Finally which audience and what kinds of programs and genres connect with the interest of the citizens are discussed. The main objective is to study how the concept of public interest has changed in programming and how this is developing currently<sup>1</sup>.*

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Key words: public interest, public service, television legislation, genres, audience research, social responsibility

### **Introduction: From Public Service Television to Public Interest in Television.**

Public service television, as well as having an extraordinary tradition throughout Europe, has always enjoyed a recognized reputation regarding the quality of its programming, without forgetting the decisive role it has played in the conservation of the languages, cultures and identities that make up present-day Europe.

In recent years, most societies in both Western and Eastern Europe, have witnessed an intense period of political, economic, technological, structural and legal changes which have had a direct impact on the policies regarding their new television systems: the end of the monopoly of the public bodies; the entry of transnational forces at the business levels of production and distribution; the shift from public television with little on offer to a wide generalisation of channels; the emergence of unprecedented competition for profits and audience shares; uncertainty regarding how current programming models will be affected and uncertainty concerning possible changes in audience preferences and tastes. (Blumler, 1993: 11)

At present we have to recognise that, over the last few years, public television services in Europe have suffered significant imbalances. With the arrival of deregulation and decentralisation, public broadcasting services have found themselves dragged into a European audiovisual market in transition, one which is highly competitive on economic and technological levels. Parallel to this, every year numerous forums, meetings and conferences bring together professionals, politicians and researchers who attempt to broach the questions regarding the meaning, the functions and the defence of certain social values, the responsibility for which no longer rests solely on the shoulders of public service television.

The mission assumed in recent times by commercial television, whose programming was given over almost entirely to entertainment, has begun to introduce variations. In this sense, private televisions are showing ever more concern to offer contents that also touch upon the field of public interest. Television listings, while continuing to be based exclusively on entertainment, are increasingly incorporating into their programming contents themes, characters and issues which are contemporary to the societies in which they operate: gender-equality issues; the presence of sexual minorities; different cultural identities; environmental sustainability; social solidarity. This situation has not come about only because of the

demands of democratically-governed societies but, in a very special way, it is the direct consequence of the social driving force of the experiences citizens live and expect to find on television in general.

It cannot be ignored that the programming of television channels responds to the culture and the social habits of the society in which they act and which, at the same time, reflect an organizational model and a certain conception of social and economic relationships (Palacio, 1999:46).

Those European countries which managed to dissolve or bring about the downfall of dictatorial regimes have gone through a political transition in which it was necessary to put into place the symbolic values of democracy and finally, with the decisive contribution of television, have managed to consolidate a society with full liberties<sup>2</sup>. Palacio vindicates this in the book which commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of Spanish public television, *Televisión Española (TVE)*: “the programmes selected were an indispensable element in the social experience of Spanish people, and the fundamental aspect is that all of them enlighten us on the way in which TVE contributed to the processes of cultural, political and economic modernisation which Spanish society as a whole experienced throughout all of these years” (Palacio, 2006:11).

### **Television Legislation and the Debate over Public Interest in Spain.**

In 1956, in a Spain which was lacking in rights and devastated by the Franco dictatorship, television was born with the setting up of TVE, *Televisión Española*. With the death of General Franco (in November 1975), and after the first democratic elections in Spain (in June 1977), a “constituent period” and the creation of a democratic structure which would give rise to a television system for the whole of Spain began in *Televisión Española*. The constituent period ended with the approval of the Radio and Television Statute in 1980. The Transition in TVE consisted of various operations (Palacio, 2001:91-94); with the first being an attempt to erode the values which Francoism had permeated throughout Spanish society and then an effort to instil the values of liberty and democracy among those of Spanish society. The second measure originated as a result of the need to legitimate symbolically the incipient regime of liberties by creating a new statute for the political class and its activities in the public ambit of the State, a situation which TVE began to materialise by programming a certain type of show on election nights, using the now famous expression “the fiesta of democracy” (which was also repeated on the night previous to the referendum on the Constitution, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1978). Lastly, and complementarily to the political process, during the Transition the legal basis which regulates Spanish television as a whole

and which has remained in place practically to this day was established. From this period dates origin of the debates concerning the function of public service and public interest and the role which television was to play, and which in a certain way was to remain articulated, one way or another, in the legislation and the legal system developed for television.

With the passing, in 1980, of the “*Ley 4/1980, de 10 de enero de Estatuto de la Radio y la Televisión*”, the Radio and Television Statute, it was established by law that the ownership of radio and television broadcasting, configured as an essential public service, would correspond to the State. It was conceived as an essential vehicle for information and the political participation on the part of citizens, for the formation of public opinion, for co-operation with the educational system, for the diffusion of Spanish culture and that of its nationalities and regions. As well as this it was seen as a capital instrument that would contribute to liberty and equality being real and effective, with special attention being paid to marginalised groups and to non-discrimination against women.

In the Law’s fourth article it was established that the activities of the social communications media of the State would be inspired by the following principles:

1. Objectivity, truthfulness and impartiality of information.
2. The separation of information and opinion, the identification of those who uphold the latter and free expression of the same within the limits of paragraph four of article twenty of the Constitution.
3. Respect for political, religious, social, cultural and linguistic pluralism.
4. Respect for the honour, reputation and private life of persons and any rights and liberties recognised by the Constitution.
5. Protection of young people and children.
6. Respect for the values of equality reflected in article fourteen of the Constitution.

Achieving a political framework that allowed for self-government in Spain became one of the fundamental goals of the nationalist political organisations in the early years of the Spanish Transition. Left-wing organisations that operated on a state-wide level called for the Autonomy Statute passed in 1936 as a solution to the demands for self-government to be put into practice. With the gradual approval of the Autonomy Statutes, the Autonomous Communities regulated and created their own autonomous television channels via the “*Ley 46/1983, de 26 de diciembre, reguladora del Tercer Canal de Televisión*”, the Law regulating the Third Television Channel of 1983. Given that television is state-owned, and that licences are granted as a concession in the territorial domain of each autonomous community, the activity of the third channels (known as autonomous-regional televi-

sions), would also be inspired by the same principles that were applied to the public television service in TVE.

Probably, the situation that has had the greatest repercussions on the Spanish television market in recent decades was the arrival of private television channels giving state-wide coverage. With the passing of the *Ley 10/1988, de 3 de mayo, de Televisión Privada*, the Law allowing for private televisions to be set up, the indirect management of the essential public service television, whose ownership corresponds to the state, was regulated. Three new private television channels providing state-wide coverage then made their appearance; two of them free-to-air and with general-interest programming (Antena 3 and Telecinco) and a third, pay-TV channel, Canal Plus, with scrambled broadcasts but with several hours of free-to-view programming, also of general interest. Regarding the programming principles that these private channels must adhere to, the third article of the law states that the indirect management of the operating companies is to be inspired in turn by the fourth article (indicated above) of the Radio and Television Statute and, of course, it must comply with public service criteria.

The early nineties were characterised in Spain by a certain chaos in the world of television. These were the years in which strong supporters of public television, as Goombridge, Blumler or Bustamante argued that there were important public goods, mainly educational, cultural and democratic, which were provided by the well regulated public broadcasting. These “public goods” mean more than the sum of private benefits, and could only be cultivated and developed by governments.

Many tried to justify this situation in terms of the new scenario of competition that had arisen, but the development and the stability that television has finally reached in Spain show that it was other events that gave rise to a situation of which nowadays only the derogatory term which other media generated, “la telebasura”, or “junk TV”, is remembered. This referred to a type of programming whose sole objective was to reach high audience ratings at any price.

Palacio, as an explanation for this situation, points to a series of events which at that time reflected how little interested public governments were in putting order into the television system: a legal base such as the Radio and Television Statute which was obsolete in the new audiovisual scenario, the absence of an audiovisual regulating body, the delay in applying the EU’s 1989 Television Without Frontiers Directive (eventually it was applied in 1994) which established a series of benchmark criteria concerning production quotas, advertising, the application of watershed for limiting the broadcasting of certain contents and, as a consequence, the lack of a system for controlling offenders.

The concern which this situation provoked, especially where public service media were concerned, in view of their becoming distanced from the basic functions of

forming, informing and entertaining, materialised in Spain in 1993 with the approval of the creation of the “Special Senate Commission on Television Content”<sup>3</sup>, which drew up and approved during the fifth legislature a Report and a Proposal for the creation of an Audiovisual Council. To that end, the Commission held a series of informative sessions which were to be attended by numerous professionals. But the fact that during these sessions the declarations of professionals who were specialists in media, those of television management professionals, those of academics, those of members of the judiciary, and those of consumers’ associations were interspersed with those of members of the Catholic Church reveals that the senators had a prior idea of what they were looking for and little interest in understanding the motives of the other (Palacio, 2001:174). Among the most outstanding conclusions of the Commission is the conviction on the part of all experts that “in Spain there was no defined model of public television, nor a clear audiovisual system”.

Almost fifteen years after this report was drawn up, current conditions indicate that three basic affirmations may be made: public television continues to give notable backing to its programming of information (news and reports), fiction (North American films and home-produced series) and entertainment (sports and talk-shows); the private television market in Spain has become consolidated through four free-to-air private television channels and there is considerable audience backing for their programming; regarding the creation of an Audiovisual Council, this has yet to happen.

In 2004, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s socialist government initiated a reform, the aim of which was to enhance requirements for neutrality, transparency and quality, to overcome legislation that was insufficient and antiquated and establish a stable mechanism for financing that would adapt to the EU principles of proportionality and transparency in the management of public service radio and television. The reform finished in 2006 with the approval of the “*Ley 17/2006, de 5 de junio, de la Radio y la Televisión de Titularidad Estatal*”, the Law of State-owned Radio and Television<sup>4</sup>. The law maintains public ownership of state radio and television, reinforces and guarantees their independence by means of a statute and suitable control bodies, and confirms their public service status, with the aim of reconciling the social profitability that their activity should inspire with the need to address the widest audience in their programming while attending to social, educational and integrative aims. The function of public service of state-owned television and radio is defined, with quality programming, and the promotion of Spanish and European productions. It states that programming must be varied and balanced, for all audiences, covering all genres and aimed at covering Spanish society’s needs for information, culture, education and entertainment and should dif-

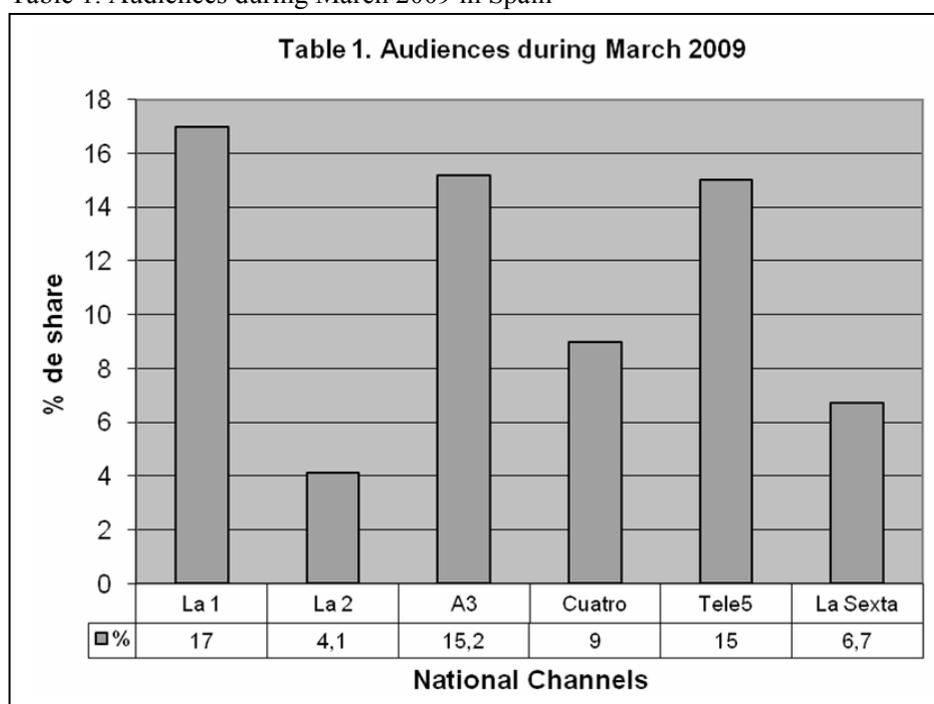
fuse the identity and cultural diversity of the same, promote the information society, pluralism, participation and the other constitutional values, guaranteeing access to significant social and political groups. Concerning the definition of public interest, the public service functions that the principles of production and programming must comply with are specified as:

- Promoting the understanding and diffusion of constitutional principles and civic values.
- Guaranteeing objective, truthful and plural information which must conform to the criteria of professional independence and political, social and ideological pluralism which are present in our society as well following the norm of distinguishing and separating, in a perceptible way, information from opinion.
- Facilitating democratic debate and the free expression of opinions.
- Promoting democratic participation by means of exercising the right of access.
- Promoting the territorial cohesion, plurality and the linguistic and cultural diversity of Spain.
- Promoting exchange and mutual understanding between the citizens of the member states of the European Union as a common space for coexistence.
- Offering access to different programming genres and to institutional, social, cultural and sporting events aimed at all audience sectors and paying attention to those themes which are particularly of public interest.
- Promoting the diffusion and knowledge of Spanish cultural productions, particularly audiovisual ones.
- Supporting the social integration of minorities and attending to groups with specific needs.
- Promoting the protection and safeguarding of equality between the sexes and avoiding any discrimination between them.
- Promoting knowledge of the arts, science, history and culture.
- Having as an objective that of attending to the widest audience, ensuring maximum geographical and social coverage with the commitment to offering quality, diversity, innovation and ethical requirements.
- Promoting the values of peace.
- Promoting understanding of, safeguarding and respecting ecological values and the protection of the environment.
- Ensuring the rights of minors.

Two new private general-content televisions, which broadcast in both analogue and digital, then made their appearance in this new scenario. In November 2005 owing to the conversion of the analogue channel through which it had broadcast

since 1990, the pay-TV channel Digital Plus began operating the Cuatro television channel. In March 2006 (with a broadcasting licence valid from November 2005) La Sexta began broadcasting officially with programming that was similar to that of Cuatro. This included the special presence of their own productions of comedy and entertainment programmes, American and Spanish series (the latter in the case of Cuatro) and live sports, in general a programming profile that was very much aimed at young audiences.

Table 1. Audiences during March 2009 in Spain

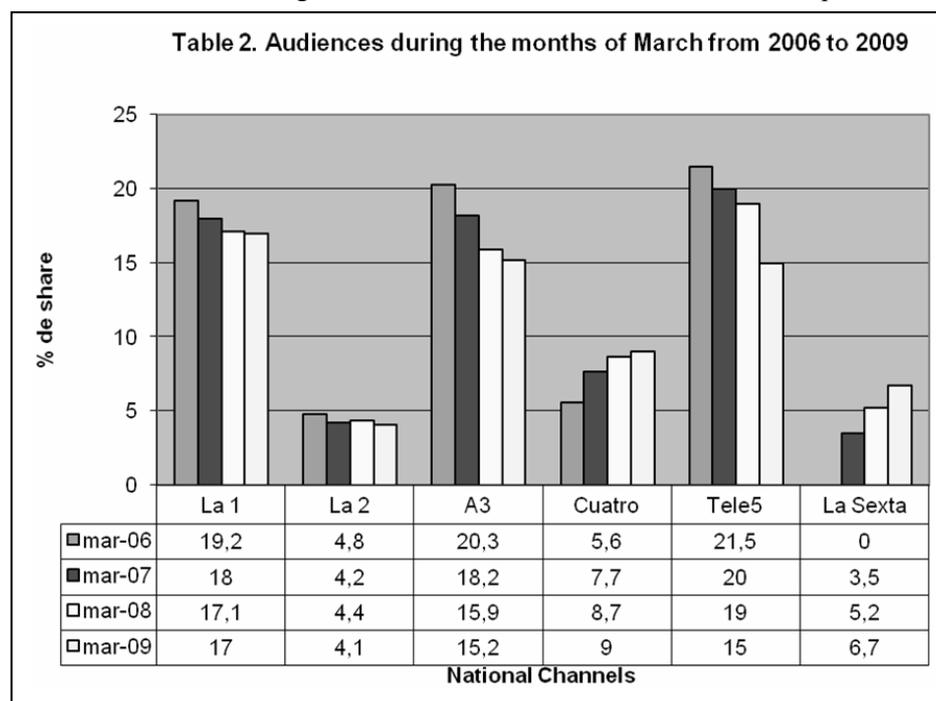


Source: TNS (Taylor Nelson Sofres in Spain)

From the audience tables corresponding to the last four or five years, it can be seen how these new channels, Cuatro and La Sexta, have found their place in the Spanish television scenario. In the latest figures for 2009, Cuatro has reached an audience share of 9% while La Sexta is improving its share on a month-to-month basis and has reached a new monthly record of 6.7% thanks to showing matches from the Spanish Football League. Going in the opposite direction, Telecinco has gone down by seven tenths of a percentage point, with a share of 14.9%. The pub-

lic channel TVE1 has managed stay in top position as the most-viewed channel for the last several months although it has also lost part of its audience share. The arrival of themed digital channels has begun to affect the open-to-air general-content channels notably, and has meant that over the last six months of 2009 the audience share of all channels has decreased.

Table 2. Audiences during the months of March from 2006 to 2009 in Spain



Source: TNS (Taylor Nelson Sofres in Spain)

### **Methodology: Measuring the Presence of “Public Interest” in Television by Means of the Genres Programmed.**

In January 2009, a group of researchers from various universities and institutions (Croatia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Spain), led by professor Zrinjka Peruško, set up in the University of Zagreb a research project to tackle the subject of “public interest” in the media in the countries involved. One of the lines of research is oriented towards the analysis of the presence of “public

interest” in the programming of general-content open-to-air television channels in these countries. The period to be analysed in the study was the week from the first to the seventh of March 2009 and the programming available that week. The researchers recorded and saved that week’s programming in order later to proceed to analyse it and to reach certain conclusions.

In the research work carried out in Spain, it should be specified that the programming of six general-interest channels which operate open-to-air at a national level: La 1, La 2, Antena 3, Cuatro, Telecinco and La Sexta, was recorded. Later, the decision was taken to study and analyse only the evening prime-time programming as this is when there is maximum audience and is the time in which all televisions invest most money and in which they try to reflect with a certain intensity the intentions and priority goals of the channel.

The analysis of the programme listings allows for a study of the multiple factors which have an impact on our understanding of television channels: which genres are most present in the listings?; how much audience backing do they receive?; how is “public interest” materialised in the programming?; how is the issue of the representation of society tackled, if it is at all?

The classification of macro-genres is based on the programme categories used in: Ward, D. Final Report: Study on the assessment of Content Diversity in Newspapers and Television in the context of increasing trends towards concentration of media markets. Media Division. Council of Europe. MC-S-MD (2006)001, 2006.

Below are the prime-time programmes listings for the seven days analysed and which correspond to each of the six television channels. The genres are identified in the tables by the codes which accompany each genre in the table: Fiction (FICT); Information (INFO); Entertainment (ENTER). In Spain, prime-time comprises the period between 21:00 and 00:00 (although there is a second prime-time between 14:30 and 16:30). All channels begin this period with a news programme. On Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup> the news programmes were prolonged, especially on the public channel (La 1) as a consequence of this day coinciding with autonomous elections being held for the Autonomous Parliaments in the Comunidad Autónoma Gallega (Autonomous Community of Galicia) and the País Vasco (Basque Country).

There are three basic characteristics of prime-time programming in the week of the first to the seventh of March: firstly the predominant genres throughout the week were fiction and entertainment; secondly, public television was responsible for the greatest amount of informative programming; lastly, concerning programme content, and looking more deeply at this, a notable attention towards contents of a marked social nature can be detected.

Table 3. Television program categories employed in coding

<b>Fiction</b>	<b>Information (high social value)</b>
Comedy	Art and culture (classical music & jazz, theatre, books, dance)
Drama	Consumer affairs
Movie	Current affairs
<i>Cinema (high social value)</i>	Documentary
Soap opera	History
Series	Magazine type of programs on any topic (usually political)
Miniseries	Nature and wildlife
<b>Entertainment</b>	News
Breakfast TV	Political interview
Sports	Schools and learning
Chat & talk show	Religion
Children's	
Fashion	<b>Other (none of the above)</b>
Hobbies & leisure	Announcements, advertising, etc.
Human interest	
Light entertainment – reality programs of all kinds	High social value: cinema fiction & information
Music (not classical or jazz)	
Quiz & game shows	

### Fiction and Entertainment programmes

The predominant genres in Spanish television channels' prime-time programming are principally fiction and entertainment.

Foreign fiction series, principally North American, take up a large part of the programming: "Smallville", "Desperate housewives", "Without a trace", "Sexy money", "The Simpsons", "The closer", "Runaway", "Journeyman", "Ghostwhisperer", "House", "CSI Las Vegas", "CSI Miami", "Life", "Bones", "Prison Break", "Criminal Minds", "The mentlist", "Acused", close behind, occupying a relevant position in the programming, are North American full-length feature films which have been box-office hits "Scenes of the crime", "Deep impact", "False witness", "The specialist", "Jurassic Park III", "Nothing to lose", "The green mile", "Franky Banderas", "The mask of Zorro", "X-Men", these last four titles were all shown on Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Home-made fiction also has its place in the listings of TV1, Antena 3 and Telecinco. Showing "Pelotas" (Balls), "Águila Roja" ("Red Eagle"), "Doctor

Mateo”, “La familia Mata” (“The family Mata”), “Los hombres de Paco”, (“Paco Men’s”), “Aída” y “Acusados” (“Acused”), “Hospital Central” (“Central Hospital”), Escenas de Matrimonio (“Scenes of marriage”) has helped to reinforce the brand image of these channels and in some cases has had a deep impact on the audience and earned their acceptance. Most of the plots are highly comic in tone and, aside from “Águila Roja” (“Red Eagle”), an adventure series set in the seventeenth century, all take place in contemporary Spain and in general are characterised for developing a wide range of topics associated with the values of current-day society: a strong presence of women among the leading characters, representation of different cultures, ethnic and sexual minorities, vindication of gender equality, criticism of gender violence and the presence of characters who are considered marginal to society.

Outstanding among the entertainment programmes is the daily talk-show “Buena-fuente”, which begins with an ironic and humorous look at the current political scene from the presenter Andreu Buenafuente, as well as important news items from the day. Other types of programmes like the talk-show “Saturday night live”, the daily programme “El hormiguero” (“The Ants Nest” or “The Anthill”), “Salvados” (“Saved”), “DEC Magazin” and “La Noria” (“The Ferris Wheel”), (the last two of these being dedicated exclusively to celebrity gossip) are more inclined to pure entertainment. Worth mentioning too is the format of “El Intermedio” (“The Intermission”), a daily talk-show led by the well-known showman “Wyoming” in which he makes a corrosive and acid critique of personalities and events in Spanish politics and society in general, always of a profoundly left-wing bent (critiques which become sharper when dealing with religious matters, including the Pope, or international politics, with powerful parodies such as those made of the ex-president of the USA, George W. Bush or of the current Italian president Silvio Berlusconi).

### **Information Programmes**

News programs (daily information) are a hallmark of all televisions. In this sense all opened the prime time television with a news program, (TVE-1, Telecinco, Antena 3, Cuatro, La Sexta), except La 2 that starts later. The news always defined the brand image of the channel. As noted Bustamante (*La television económica*, 1999) stabilization of private operators has shown that the information was a crucial element to legitimize their presence and that, even in cases of lack of direct return, they are indispensable for the image of television channels.

The two public channels show the most information programmes. Between the two, TVE1 (La1) and TVE2, every day of the week they programme information

spaces. The range covers documentaries aimed at providing knowledge of other regions and places, such as “La Noche Temática” (“The Themed Night”), “En Portada” (“Front Page”), “Informe Semanal” (“Weekly Report”) or the more recent format “Españoles en el mundo” (“Spanish People Around the World”). In recent years political debate programmes such as “59 segundos” (“59 seconds”) have become consolidated within the programming. One of the particular features of the programming during the week in question was the high number of programmes dealing with the economic crisis. There was a debate about the economic crisis during the first part of “59 segundos”, while the second part was given over to university reform and Bologna.

“Comando actualidad” (“Current Affairs Commando Group”) is another format which, in the manner of docu-reality reflects the economic situation as experienced by many Spanish families during the crisis. The programme shown during the first week of March carried the title “Llegar a fin de mes” (“Getting through the month”). TVE2 also includes a variety of information formats in its programming, with contents dealing with cinema, music, art, geography and documentaries.

Information programmes, although present to a lesser degree, do appear in the listings of the private channels, especially in Cuatro and La Sexta, the two youngest channels. With the definition “new reporting in a pure state”, Cuatro has begun a type of format which makes use most notably of the hand-held camera with reporters entering into situations and lives of people who are often forgotten amidst more spectacular television programming. “Callejeros” (“People of the Street”) gets into underprivileged neighbourhoods, communities and places which exist in many Spanish cities. Making use of the same reporting style is the programme on La Sexta “Vidas Anónimas” (“Anonymous Lives”), which turns ordinary citizens themselves into the protagonists to show the singularity of their professions. In a similar vein is the investigative programme (with a certain air of criticism) “Diario de” (“Diary of”), on Telecinco, in which the journalists go into complicated, marginal situations, or ones of relevant social interest (drugs, economic crisis, terrorism or prostitution).

Lastly, and worth mentioning, is a type of format used by Cuatro, close to docu-reality, whose principal objective consists of offering people a service. In this sense “Supernanny” is an excellent example. Its principal mission consists of supervising, teaching and offering parents real and useful guidelines to help them raise their children. In the same line, “Hermano Mayor” (“Elder Brother”) is another format which is aimed at correcting the antisocial and marginal conduct and behaviour of wayward adolescents.

## Audience Results

From the tables below it can be seen how home-made fiction productions and public television informative programmes enjoy the absolute backing of audiences. Among the most-watched programmes which never drop below three million viewers are the fiction series “Águila Roja”, (“Red Eagle”) “Doctor Mateo”, “Aida”, “Pelotas”, (“Balls”) “Hospital central”, (Central Hospital) “Los hombres de Paco”, (“Paco’s Men”), and the foreign fictional series “CSI”, “Life”, “House” the news programmes “Telediario 1 y 2” and “Informativos Telecinco 21:00” are the most-watched news programmes. Among the other most-watched programmes, an information programme, “Comando Actualidad” (“Current Affairs Commando Group”), on TVE1, which covered a social issue in the midst of the economic crisis: “Llegar a fin de mes”, (“Getting through the month”) reached an audience share of 15.6%, 3,024,000 viewers.

Table 4. Genre, audience, share and channels on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2009

<b>1-mar-09</b>	<b>CHANNEL</b>	<b>SHARE %</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>GENRE</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>A3/ 22:01</b>	20.8	4,098,000	Dr. Mateo
<b>2</b>	<b>Tele5/ 21:33</b>	17.3	3,412,000	Aida
<b>3</b>	<b>Tele5/22:42</b>	17.3	3,233,000	Aida
<b>4</b>	<b>La 1</b>	17.4	3,069,000	News (21:00)
<b>5</b>	<b>La 1</b>	21.5	3,010,000	News (15:00)
<b>6</b>	<b>A3/ 14:30</b>	24.3	2,948,000	The Simpson
<b>7</b>	<b>A3</b>	20.2	2,820,000	News (15:00)
<b>8</b>	<b>A3/ 16:00</b>	20.3	2,672,000	Cinema “An never let her go”
<b>9</b>	<b>A3</b>	14.4	2,528,000	News (21:00)
<b>10</b>	<b>Tele5</b>	15.0	2,516,000	News (21:00)

Table 5. Genre, audience, share and channels on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009

<b>2-mar-09</b>	<b>CHANNEL</b>	<b>SHARE %</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>GENRE</b>
1	Tele5/21:49	23.5	4,845,000	CSI
2	Tele5/22:41	22.9	4,529,000	Life
3	Tele5	19.3	3,389,000	News 21:00
4	Tele5/23:27	21.7	3,347,000	CSI: Miami
5	La 1	17.8	3,151,000	News (21:00)
6	La 1/22:10	16.2	3,141,000	Pelotas (Balls)
7	La 1	21.9	3,018,000	News (15:00)
8	Tele5/20:09	20.6	2,865,000	Game-show Pasapalabra (Password)
9	A3	19.8	2,732,000	News (15:00)
10	La 1/16:15	22.6	2,702,000	Amar en tiempos revueltos (Love in troubled times)

Table 6. Genre, audience, share and channels on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009

<b>3-mar-09</b>	<b>CHANNEL</b>	<b>SHARE %</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>GENRE</b>
1	La 1/ 22:09	19.3	3,450,000	Music-show Los mejores años (The best years)
2	Tele5/21:59	17.3	3,444,000	Hospital Central
3	Tele5	19.9	3,319,000	News (21:00)
4	La 1	18.8	3,222,000	News (21:00)
5	Cuatro/22:21	15.3	3,183,000	House
6	La 1	22.2	3,109,000	News (15:00)
7	Cuatro/21:29	16.0	3,042,000	Talk Show El hormiguero (The Ants Nets)
8	La 1/16:14	23.2	2,909,000	Amar en tiempos revueltos (Love in troubled times)
9	Tele5/20:11	21.8	2,909,000	Game-show Pasapalabra (Password)
10	A3	20.7	2,884,000	News (15:00)

Table 7. Genre, audience, share and channels on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2009

4-mar-09	CHANNEL	SHARE %	AUDIENCE	GENRE
1	La Sexta/20:00	23.1	3,757,000	Football. Kings Cup (Ath. Bilbao-Sevilla)
2	La 1	24.2	3,431,000	News (15:00)
3	Tele5/21:41	16.4	3,219,000	Escenas de matrimonio (Scenes of marriage)
4	A3/22:31	17.7	3,077,000	Los hombres de Pacoo (Paco's Men)
5	La 1/22:14	15.6	3,024,000	Comando Actualidad (Current Affairs Comando Group)
6	La 1/16:16	23.6	2,957,000	Amar en tiempos revueltos (Love in troubled times)
7	A3	19.6	2,770,000	News (15:00)
8	Tele5/22:34	16.2	2,759,000	Acused
9	La 1	15.5	2,752,000	News (21:00)
10	Tele5	15.2	2,667,000	News (21:00)

Table 8. Genre, audience, share and channels on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2009

5-mar-09	CHANNEL	SHARE %	AUDIENCE	GENRE
1	La 1/22:14	25.8	4,889,000	Águila Roja (Red Eagle)
2	La 1	18.9	3,251,000	News (21:00)
3	Tele5	18.6	3,148,000	News (21:00)
4	La 1	22.8	3,115,000	News (15:00)
5	Tele5/21:55	14.0	2,785,000	Criminal Minds
6	A3	16.4	2,782,000	News (21:00)
7	Tele5/22:43	14.9	2,770,000	Criminal Minds
8	Tele5/ 20:10	20.5	2,767,000	Game-show Pasapalabra (Password)
9	La 1/16:15	22.9	2,756,000	Amar en tiempos revueltos (Love in troubled times)
10	Cuatro/21:43	13.5	2,656,000	Talk Show El hormiguero (The Ants Nets)

Table 9. Genre, audience, share and channels on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2009

6-mar-09	CHANNEL	SHARE %	AUDIENCE	GENRE
1	La 1/22:17	20.2	3,659,000	Talk Show La hora de José Mota (The hour of José Mota)
2	La 1	23.0	3,196,000	News (15:00)
3	La 1	20.6	3,145,000	News (21:00)
4	La 1/16:15	23.2	2,854,000	Amar en tiempos revueltos (Love in troubled times)
5	Tele5	18.8	2,845,000	News (21:00)
6	A3	19.5	2,704,000	News (15:00)
7	Tele5/21:58	14.7	2,580,000	Escenas de matrimonio (Scenes of marriage)
8	Tele5/20:09	20.4	2,551,000	Game-show Pasapalabra (Password)
9	A3/22:01	21.0	2,539,000	Talk Show DEC
10	A3/14:29	21.0	2,498,000	The Simpson

Table 10. Genre, audience, share and channels on March 7<sup>th</sup> 2009

7-mar-09	CHANNEL	SHARE %	AUDIENCE	GENRE
1	La Sexta/20 h.	27.9	3,752,000	Football Spanish League Barcelona- Ath.Bilbao
2	La 1	22.2	3,031,000	News (15:00)
3	A3	19.8	2,694,000	News (15:00)
4	A3/14:29	20.6	2,423,000	The Simpson
5	A3/22:42	17.0	2,331,000	The mask of Zorro
6	La 1/19:04	19.8	2,265,000	Cine de barrio "Señora Doctor" (Ms. Doctor)
7	La 1/16:06	18.4	2,242,000	Cinema A Knight's Tale
8	La 1/18:46	19.2	2,175,000	Cine de barrio
9	Tele5/21:47	16.3	2,078,000	Talk Show La noria (The Wheel)
10	La 1/21:30	13.2	2,057,000	Informe Semanal (Weekly Report)

Audience data show four models that completely define television programming in Spain today:

1. Sports, particularly football is the genre that wins the whole audience when it is scheduled. On March 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, two football games are scheduled ("Ath. Bilbao-Sevilla" and "Barcelona- Ath. Bilbao") for a minority broadcaster, La Sexta, than with a standard 6.7%, those two days get a 23.1% and

27.9% of share respectively, the highest result for the whole week. This reflects a very common situation in the Spanish television programming, that football always gets the highest audience and never finds competition in programming. In this sense, it should be noted that football is the source of all conflicts between broadcasters in Spain. This situation has caused serious disagreements between the television channel La Sexta (close to the government), and the group PRISA (group of communication that holds among others, the newspaper "El País", the radio station "Cadena Ser", the television channel Cuatro and the pay-TV channel "Canal Plus").

2. News programs are always among the first places of the audience research. But not only the night prime time, also the first prime time: at 15:00. In Spain, there is a first prime time motivated by the cultural rhythms ranging from 14:30 to 16:30. The public television news gets the best results, but also the private channels Telecinco and Antena 3 are among the top ranking of audiences. This situation shows that for Spanish audiences, information on television is a major genre that is consolidated among the first choices of the public.
3. The fiction and specifically the Spanish fiction, picks up another of the preferred options for the Spanish television audience. Analyzed seven days, three nights win fiction. Two nights Spanish series, one of them, "Red Eagle" (from public television TVE-1) achieved a 25.8% share, the second highest of all the week after football. The other Spanish series, "Dr. Mateo", achieved a 20.8%. "CSI" is the third most watched program in all week with a 23.5%. Since the start of its broadcast in Spain, "CSI" has always been the leader of his night.

Spanish fiction is the third genre most supported in the rankings of audience research. Acceptance of the Spanish series consolidates these programs at the top of the ranking, but also programs that are outside of prime time, as is the case of "Love in troubled times" (series with some touches of *telenovela* that portrays the shame period of the Spanish dictatorship) with 22% share. Another revelation for programming is the success of "The Simpsons", which from the beginning of their broadcasts and programming in the first prime time (14:30), has always occupied the top positions in rankings of audiences.

Another important issue around fiction is the lack of support for cinema in prime time. Just some movies work a little out of prime time, as the case of "Cine de Barrio", film session scheduled at 18:30 and recovering popular titles in the history of Spanish cinema.

4. During the week analyzed, football wins two days, two days wins the Spanish series, one day an American series, and the entertainment programs other two days. The genre of entertainment is the fourth option in programming.

“The Best Years” and “The hour of José Mota” are programs broadcast by public television TVE-1. Both programs use popular culture as the axis that articulates its contents. “The Best Years” is a music show. Each week uses the music of different decades. Members of another famous TV show “Pop Idol” (“Operación Triunfo”, also from TVE-1) sing and dance, while the live audience attending the program, participating actively.

“The hour of Jose Mota” is a talk show that stars the comedian and showman Jose Mota, which performed comic sketches about situations that parody various aspects of social, political and cultural life of Spain.

These types of talk shows have always had a great success and have generated a varied number of entertainers (Gila, Martes y Trece, Cruz y Raya, Los Morancos) who remain in an important place in the memory of the Spanish audiences.

### **Final conclusions: Social Responsibility in Programming**

Beyond the fact that three genres, fiction, entertainment and information predominate in prime-time television programming in Spain (football could be considered another genre), there seems to be a common denominator in programme listings in which, although it has always been characterised by attempts to reach high audience shares and the biggest profit margins, (meaning more advertising revenue, with the exception of public television which, owing to the new Ley 8/2009, de 28 de agosto, de la Financiación de la Corporación RTVE – Law governing the financing of RTVE – cannot contract advertising as of January 2010) it is becoming evident that general-interest open-to-air television in Spain has started along a path on which it is possible to glimpse a new era for television in Spain.

With the Spanish television market now consolidated, it seems that the operators have raised quality levels in their programming. The indicators are not only reflected in criteria of technological and artistic quality of productions, especially of fiction, with series which sell on numerous European and international markets. The criteria of quality are evident in programming content. The most recognisable fact in recent years is being caused by the modification of the requirements that society itself has always demanded of the public media, as the guarantor of certain principles of programming and public interest which was only associated with the latter. The new Spanish society, characterised for having managed to consolidate

over the last three decades the values of democracy, demands of all media, regardless of whether they are public or private, programming that as well as informing and entertaining, also assumes the values of the society in which it operates and therefore that it acts in consequence of this.

Television channels, driven by their own interests, are not unaware that it is impossible to turn a blind eye to the reality and the concerns of the citizens to whom they address themselves and, as a consequence, have begun to assume the social responsibility that affects them. This situation has meant that genres such as entertainment or fiction have introduced into their formats contents which represent the values of current-day Spanish society. Among others, the presence of women in all walks of life, both professional and social, the implication of criticism of gender violence, the visibility of the homosexual community, principally gays and lesbians, the representation of new models of family, the emergence of a society in which different cultures coexist, the protection of the environment, the culture of tolerance, welfare and health.

Let one of the channels that was most criticised during the so-called junk TV period, and which in 2009 has lost up to seven decimal points of audience share (provoked by the lack of football in its programming and by the strong competition from the channel La Sexta, which with a markedly youthful audience profile has become its greatest competition since its origins in March 2006), stand as an example. Telecinco in order to stay away from junk television of the nineties began in 2000 various solidarity initiatives to clean up its image and approach to social interests of the programming. One of them started in the year 2000 as solidarity initiative, "Doce meses, doce causas", ("Twelve Months, Twelve Causes"), which aims to raise the consciousness of the spectator by means of advertisements about social themes throughout the twelve months of the year. Among the most outstanding are: "Against Gender Violence"; "For Freedom of Expression"; "Respect Other Cultures"; "Equal Opportunities in the Workplace"; "For Solidarity and Volunteering"; "Support Refugees"; "Schools Free of Bullying and Violence"; "Eat Healthy Food"; "Read More". This and other initiatives (programs with social content) in Telecinco managed to establish a good image and social recognition in the current decade.

As a final conclusion, it is possible to confirm that nowadays, public interest content is present right across the programme listings. While public television is ahead in terms of information programmes, and its news programmes have the backing of the majority of the audience, national fictional series have become an indispensable element of all channels and are the best type of programmes for ensuring audience loyalty, projecting a certain brand image of the channel and giving

a presence in them to a series of values in which society is represented and recognises itself.

Any television channel in the twenty-first century which aims to become a reference point for Spanish society must assume its condition of solidarity and social responsibility towards the same.

### ENDNOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> This research takes place into the research Project Plan Nacional I+D 2006/03962/001 “Cultura, sociedad y televisión en España (1956-2006)”. Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia. Dirección General de Investigación.
- <sup>2</sup> If the Spain of 1956 was a society without rights and lack of democratic institutions, the Spain of 2006 has a Constitution that is in very good health, with pluralistic institutions democratically elected, with a structure of government in which powers are clearly differentiated, in which the system is fully guaranteed freedoms. Carmen Caffarel, General Director of Radio Spanish Television in (2006) *Las cosas que hemos visto. 50 años y más de TVE* Madrid: Manuel Palacio (Ed.) Instituto RTVE.
- <sup>3</sup> Gutiérrez Vicén, Carlos (ed.): Report of Special Commission on Television Content; Madrid, Secretaría General del Senado, 1995.
- <sup>4</sup> By the Law of the State Radio and Television on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 was dissolved the Public Ente Radio Spanish Television and Societies TVE, S.A. and RNE, S.A, creating the current Corporation RTVE, since then the President- Chief instead of being appointed by the government must be elected in Parliament by two-thirds of the Deputies except in the first election where a simple majority will be enough.

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## **Razvoj ideje javnog emitiranja i tranzicija na španjolskoj televiziji**

**Carmen Ciller Tenreiro**

### **SAŽETAK**

Rad ispituje prisutnost javnog interesa u suvremenom španjolskom televizijskom mediju. Dugo je prevladavalo uvjerenje da postoje važna načela javnog interesa (prvenstveno edukacijska, kulturna i demokratska) koja mogu biti zadovoljena jedino od javne televizije. Posljednjih godina u Španjolskoj, nakon tranzicijskog procesa, i nakon konsolidacije demokracije, novi period zrelosti televizije, u kojoj samo društvo zahtijeva i očekuje da televizija općenito, javna kao i privatna, garantira niz vrijednosti i javnih načela.

U prvom dijelu, autorica objašnjava podrijetlo televizije u Španjolskoj: od toga koja je priroda javnog emitiranja i zakonodavstva koja je podržava (gdje su ustanovljeni kriteriji javnog interesa koji uvijek moraju prevladavati u javnom televizijskom mediju, i privatnoj televiziji kasnije) do razvoja konsolidacije televizijskog sistema u Španjolskoj s dolaskom regionalne televizije, privatnih televizijskih kanala i televizijske platforme koje se plaćaju. U drugom dijelu rada, programi javnih i privatnih televizijskih kanala koji djeluju u Španjolskoj analiziraju se kroz studiju slučaja u prvom tjednu ožujka 2009. Studija prime time-a omogućuje saznanje o tome koji su najvažniji žanrovi televizijskog programa u Španjolskoj i koje su televizijske kuće očuvale interese javnosti. Na kraju raspravlja se koje se publike i koje vrste programa i žanrova povezuju s interesom građana. Glavni cilj je proučiti kako se koncept javnog interesa promijenio u kreiranju programa i koji su suvremeni trendovi.

Ključne riječi: javni interes, javno emitiranje, televizija, televizijsko zakonodavstvo, žanrovi, istraživanje publike, društvena odgovornost