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# **REFIGURING SPAIN**

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## Private Commercial Television versus Political

### Diversity: The Case of Spain's 1993

#### General Elections

In 1492, Elio Antonio de Nebrija wrote to Queen Isabel of Castile concerning his *Gramática* (work on Spanish grammar), observing that "language always had been a companion of the empire" and (we might add) an instrument for unifying the nation-state. Today in Spain that linguistic function is primarily fulfilled by mass media, which perform a unifying function both through language and content. This essay will explore the role that television coverage (and to a lesser degree newspapers) played in Spain's 1993 General Parliament elections, in which the issues of national unity and diversity were crucial. It will argue that rather than being represented as a choice among the full spectrum of diverse political parties participating in the process, the election was presented by the mass media as essentially a two-party race.

#### The 1993 General Parliament Elections

Spain's General Parliament elections of 1993 were prompted by a profound political, social, and economic crisis ("annus horribilis"), which was brought on partly by the extravagant expenditures of 1992 that funded the splendor of the Olympic Games in Barcelona and the Expo (world's fair) in Seville. A few of the telling danger signs were an unemployment rate of 22 percent, a 22 percent devaluation of the peseta, numerous political scandals and charges of corruption leveled against figures who were close to the government and its party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE), and a growing disappointment in the moves toward European unity.<sup>1</sup> According to Raúl Heras, Felipe Gon-

Table 1  
Votes for Spain's Parliament Seats

Party	1993 (%)	1989 (%)	% Difference	Vote difference	Geography
PSOE	38.79	39.6	-0.81	988,146	Spain
PP	34.77	25.8	+8.97	2,886,708	Spain
IU	9.24	9.23	+0.01	395,027	Spain
CDS	1.76	7.91	-6.15	-1,203,891	Spain
CiU	4.94	5.14	-0.20	132,058	Catalonia
PNV	1.24	1.26	-0.02	36,617	Basque country

Source: Yearbooks *Anuario El País* 1994, ed. José Manuel Revuelta (Madrid: Ediciones El País, 1994) and *Anuario El Mundo* 1994, ed. Ramón Tamames (Madrid: El Mundo, 1994), and personal elaboration.

Note: Total valid votes for Spain in 1993: 23,590,801 (100%).

zález was impelled to promise "the change of the change in politics," for Spain's 1993 elections threatened to bring "the end of an era."<sup>2</sup>

For the past fifteen years Spain had managed to maintain a delicate balance between a centralized and decentralized system: on the one hand, a democratic nation-state parliament and government were running the country from Madrid; on the other hand, there were three historical nationalities (Basques, Catalans, Galicians) and fourteen other regions, each with its own autonomous parliament and government. The political and economic crisis of 1992 threatened to upset this balance, and it was evident that the cohesion of the nation-state might be challenged in the 1993 general election.

This election was to fill 350 seats in Parliament plus 208 more in the Senate, which resulted in the need for different ballots in fifty-one provinces. This diversity plus the general tone of dissatisfaction would seem to hold some promise for the Basque and Catalan nationalist parties. Nevertheless, for several months before the election, there were forecasts of a close tie between the ruling Socialist Party (PSOE) and the conservative center-right Partido Popular (PP); some even predicted victory for the latter. But the polls proved to be wrong: for the fourth time in a row, the PSOE claimed victory, this time by a small, 4 percent margin (representing 900,000 votes).

The election results can be briefly summarized as follows (see also table 1):

—The ruling, socialist party, the PSOE, received 9.1 million votes; though losing its absolute majority in the Parliament, it won the election.

—The main opposition party, the center-right PP, received 8.1 million votes. Though losing the elections, it gained almost 3 million more votes than in 1989, breaking its former 5.5-million-vote ceiling and achieving its highest count in history.

—The leftist party Izquierda Unida (IU) received 2.1 million votes. Although this result represented almost 0.4 million more votes than in 1989, it did not fulfill the party's expectations and was considered a failure.

—The centrist party, Centro Democrático Social (CDS), received 0.42 million votes, 1.2 million fewer than it received in 1989. Although the polls predicted a loss for this party, the results were even worse than expected.

—The Basque moderate nationalist party, Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV), received only 0.29 million votes, barely keeping its constituency and declining slightly (0.02 percent) from its 1989 performance. This result was particularly disappointing when one considers that there was a 3.5 percent increase in voting participation within the Basque country.

—The Catalan moderate nationalist party, Convergència i Unió (CiU), received 1.1 million votes, which represented a 0.2 percent decrease over 1989. As in the case of the PNV performance within the Basque country, this outcome was considered a failure because there was a notable gain in voter participation within Catalonia.

After the election, analysts tried to explain the results by pointing to the last-minute uncertainty of many voters, a substantial number of whom were reluctant to vote. Yet there was actually a 7 percent increase in the voters turnout: 77 percent in 1993 as opposed to 70 percent in 1989 and 1986. With respect to the results in the Basque country, a number of "Spanish voters" (that is, Basque citizens who put their Spanish nation-state identity before their regional identity) finally voted in 1993 after having remained silent and inactive in previous elections. Although their votes increased the participation rate within the Basque country, these gains went not to the Basque nationalists but primarily to three Spanish parties: the ruling socialists (PSOE), the center-right opposition (PP), and the leftist opposition (IU). Several

Table 2  
Distribution of Votes in the Basque Country

Party	1993 votes	1989 votes	Class ideology	National ideology
PSOE	401,747	320,327	Social-Democrat	Spanish
PP	287,986	195,913	Conservative	Spanish
IU	102,615	49,302	Leftist	Spanish
PNV	291,448	254,681	Conservative	Moderate Basque nationalist
EA	129,293	136,955	Social-Democrat	Less moderate Basque nationalist
HB	206,876	217,278	Leftist	Radical Basque nationalist

*Note:* For the purpose of clarifying the political spectrum for an international readership, we simplified the character of the parties in the Basque country (including Navarra).

political analysts argue that the television debates among candidates from the two leading parties had much to do with these results and with the homogenization of the Basque electorate toward the Spanish model (see table 2).<sup>3</sup>

The rest of this essay will analyze to what extent the media coverage of the elections affected these outcomes. But before turning to this topic, we need briefly to review the broadcasting system in Europe and in Spain.

### The European Television Landscape

Presently there are many television channels serving Western European countries and (in the more populated ones) even a dual public and private ownership system, but these conditions do not necessarily guarantee plurality of content.<sup>4</sup> Although a plurality of channels inevitably leads to a multiplicity of programs, it is not clear that this always means a meaningful diversity in content and approach. Although one might have expected the emergence of a dual ownership system to increase diversity, the reverse may be the case. According to Elsa DeBens, Mary Kelly, and Marit Bakke, "public service broadcasters [PSB] have tradi-

tionally defined their programming responsibilities in terms of offering a wide and 'balanced' range of entertainment and information programs."<sup>5</sup> Because many of the new terrestrial private commercial TV channels (PrTV) have general programming with a broad appeal, they directly compete with PSB stations. As PrTV stations have moved toward popular entertainment programming, the PSB channels have tended to follow. In this competition for higher audience ratings, both increasingly seek a common denominator, which leads to a low-grade similarity in the contents of programming. This situation is particularly problematic in the TV coverage of news.

As Wilbur Schramm has argued, television is a medium that tends to pursue concreteness on political issues and a low level of abstraction and complexity.<sup>6</sup> In Europe and elsewhere, the content of TV news is increasingly being packaged in a personalized, dramatized, fragmented, and normalized form; it is transformed into a consumer good to be sold to audiences purely for profit.<sup>7</sup> Because of the commercial nature of these dynamics, one might expect them to be more pronounced on PrTV than on PSB stations. Yet in the face of competition for higher ratings, this duality may be more apparent than real. Like any other social institution, broadcast media prosper in a climate of stability and are threatened by change, but paradoxically (as Marc Raboy and Bernard Dagenais have argued) they also need to seek out (or possibly even fabricate) crisis or disruption in order to maintain that sense of high drama and action that is so appealing to viewers.<sup>8</sup>

As changes occur in the media environment and in politics throughout Europe, the reliance on television for election coverage becomes increasingly heavy. Around election time the need for sensationalism and spectacle in the representation of public life is frequently fulfilled by a "spectacular" staging of debates between candidates, who are encouraged to rely on the same persuasion techniques that are used to sell consumer goods. As several analysts have noted, elections become ritualized conflicts and, as in the United States, "face-to-face debates between party leaders . . . further reduce the possibilities of selective exposure."<sup>9</sup> Thus, the dramatization and personalization of the news may tend to reduce an election to a duality, that is, a dramatic struggle between two elements (two characters, two people, two parties). Such dualities frequently tend to be more apparent than real, for a "real"

opposition might threaten the normalcy of the system and thereby endanger the salability of the news.

Although commonplace in the United States, this reduction of political diversity to a false dualism is particularly problematic in Europe, where national identities are now in great turmoil. National identities may not necessarily mean nation-state identities, for there may be several national identities within a nation-state, as is the case in Spain and France. The creation and shaping of national identity is an ongoing, dynamic cultural process, in which media can function either to define the cultural distinctiveness of historic nationalities (such as the Basque country, Catalonia, and Galicia) or to unify the nation-state.

### The Broadcasting System in Spain

Spanish television was a public service broadcast (PSB) monopoly with two state-owned stations, TVE-1 and TVE-2, until 1988, when the Private Television Law was passed. By 1990 three private channel licenses for terrestrial state coverage transmission were granted. Two of these private licensees, Telecinco (owned by Silvio Berlusconi) and Antena 3 (owned by the Z Publishing Group), are free access channels with general programming, which obtain profits through advertising. The third, Canal Plus (owned by the French Canal+ and the Spanish Prisa Publishing group, which also owns the newspaper *El País*), is a coded channel whose profits come from monthly fees. There are also eight autonomous PSB channels with regional coverage,<sup>10</sup> whose funding comes from their autonomous parliaments and from advertising revenues; more than twenty local, alegal low-power television stations; and some DBS Spanish and imported channels.

Thus, Spain has a dual private and public TV system with four main state-level stations: two public (TVE-1 and TVE-2) and two private (Telecinco and Antena 3). According to the statute provisions, public broadcaster TVE is expected to encourage viewers to identify with the values of freedom, justice, equality, and political pluralism, promoting these values not merely passively but actively to maintain the health of Spain's democracy. Yet TVE is frequently criticized for favoring the party in power, the centrist ruling party UCD in the past, and the social-

ist PSOE through 1996. According to López-Escobar, with the advent of PCTV other parties have had better and more frequent access to the screen.<sup>11</sup> In June 1993, when the general elections took place, the two public commercial TV stations covered the practical totality of the population, whereas the two private television stations covered 86 percent of the Basque population.<sup>12</sup> More specifically, during 1993 the total highest audience percentages of these channels were: TVE-1 56.65 percent; TVE-2 17.69 percent; Antena 3 36.01 percent; and Telecinco 37.50 percent.<sup>13</sup>

What we were interested in exploring was whether any significant differences could be observed in the way the elections were covered by the private television stations in contrast to the public stations and whether this coverage could help account for the results of the election. We hypothesized first that the dramatization and personalization of the television news coverage tended to reduce this election to a duality between two parties, the ruling party (PSOE) and the right-center opposition (PP), and their respective candidates, Felipe González and José María Aznar, and second that although these tendencies could be found both on private and public stations, they would be more pronounced on the former than on the latter.

#### Television and Spain's 1993 General Elections

The television coverage of the 1993 elections could be broken down into three categories:

1. *Regular election-coverage*, which refers to the daily coverage of election information on regularly scheduled news broadcasts.
2. *Special election-coverage*, which refers to special programming (such as debates, interviews, and round-table discussions) staged and organized by the TV station around the elections. The station's editorial line (i.e., the image or identity it wants to communicate) would be seen in this kind of coverage.
3. *Free time-slots*, which the TV station offered to all parties according to the rules of equal proportion set by the Central and Regional Election Boards.

Our research focused on the second category (special election-coverage), since from an ethnomethodological point of view it seemed



more important than regular election news coverage in creating or reinforcing the personality, identity, credibility, and image of the TV channel.<sup>14</sup> To assess this coverage, we examined three research areas:

1. The special election-coverage (SEC) organized and broadcast during the campaign.

2. The newspaper ads that referred to the SEC and that were commissioned by the TV stations. We assumed they might work in conjunction with the SEC as an electoral campaign factor, favoring the advertised parties and as an image/identity shaper, showcase, or reinforcement for the TV channel.

3. Newspaper information items and Op-Ed articles that referred to the SEC. We assumed they would provide feedback on the perceptions the SEC generated in the print press as well as (through inference) in public opinion.

Within the first research area, we hypothesized that private TV channels would have placed more emphasis on state-level party dualism, stressing nation-state identity and homogenization, reducing political diversity and the presence of peripheral nationalist forces, and perhaps refiguring the event as a two-horse-race-style "presidential election." We also hypothesized that the debates might have benefited the two leading parties (the PSOE and PP) and damaged the vote turnout for the rest of the state-level parties (IU, CDS) and for the peripheral nationalist forces (PNV and CiU).

Within the second research area, we hypothesized that private TV channels would have placed more newspaper ads with higher visibility and taking up more space than those placed by public TV and that the majority of the electoral ads would have referred to dual debates—more precisely, to the debates between the two main leaders, Felipe González (PSOE) and José María Aznar (PP).

Finally, in the third research area, we wanted to assess the amount and kind of information published in the newspapers about the SEC.

For a period of thirty-nine days (from April 28, 1993, to June 6, 1993, which included twenty-four days of precampaign and the entire fifteen days of the official campaign), we analyzed the special election-coverage of four television stations: the two public state-level stations (TVE-1 and TVE-2) and the two free-access state-level private commercial channels (Antena 3 and Telecinco). For TV ads and information items about these SEC, we analyzed one newspaper, *El País*, the main

newspaper of Spain (which is edited in Madrid) and the prestige paper for reference and record. In 1993 it had 1.4 million readers, which is the largest circulation of general information papers in Spain. As for our units of analysis, in the first research area they were SEC TV programs (interviews, debates, round tables),<sup>15</sup> each of which had to be a minimum of thirty minutes long to be included; in the second area, they were newspaper ads in *El País* paid by TV channels, which we measured by space (i.e., the portion of page occupied by the item), interval, and ratio; in the third area, they were information and Op-Ed articles published in *El País*, also measured by space, interval, and ratio.<sup>16</sup>

### Research Results<sup>17</sup>

In the first research area, the special election-coverage on television, we found significant differences between the private and public stations. Of the eight debates in the two-candidate format, all were broadcast on the private television channels. They included two American-style "presidential debates" between González and Aznar, the first in the history of Spain. Organized by the private TV channels—Antena 3 and Telecinco—these highly dramatized debates were presented as face-to-face, two-man fights. Having tremendous impact, they ranked second and third in the year-round top TV audience ratings (being outdrawn only by the televised soccer game between Spain and Denmark on November 17, 1993). The first of these debates took place on Monday, May 24, on Antena 3 in prime time, garnering an audience of 9.7 million viewers (out of a total 1993 TV audience of 28.8 million and a total Spanish population of 39.4 million people). The second debate took place on May 31 on Telecinco, only six days before election day, drawing 10.9 million viewers. For days before and after these debates, Spaniards talked of little else.

Several other results in this research area supported our basic hypothesis about the differences between private versus public television election coverage. The private stations put more than twice as much effort into the SEC programming (69 percent) as the public stations (31 percent). Whereas the private channels featured only two-candidate debates, the public stations presented four-candidate debates exclusively. (See table 3.) Moreover, whereas the two-person debates broad-

Table 3  
SEC Programming Format (in %)

Media	1-interview	2-debate	4-debate	5-rt	10-rt	Total
Public TV	18	0	13	0	0	31
Private TV	28	29	0	3	9	69
Total	46	29	13	3	9	100

Note:  $N = 33$  programs. The number before the category name means "the number of candidates" taking part in that program (e.g., 5-rt means a 5-candidate round-table).

Table 4  
2- and 4-Candidate Debate Programs (in %)

Media	2-debate		4-debate			Total	Grand total
	PSOE, PP	PSOE, PP + CDS, PNV	PSOE, PP + IU, CDS	PSOE, PP + IU, CiU	PSOE, PP + IU, PNV		
Public TV	0	3	3	3	4	13	13
Private TV	29	0	0	0	0	0	29
Total	29	3	3	3	4	13	42

cast by private TV (29 percent) were held solely between PSOE and PP candidates, the four-candidate debates broadcast on public TV kept a balanced approach by granting participation to the PSOE in all cases and to the rest of the parties proportionately. (See table 4.)

The data in table 5 clearly show that both private and public television channels maintained a balanced approach in the interview programs, keeping the one-candidate format and including all major parties and even the peripheral nationalist parties (Basque PNV and Catalan CiU). Perhaps because of its "individuality," this programming format was not considered as potentially dramatic or spectacular as the debates.

In the second research area, the newspaper ads paid by TV stations, we found for the public stations no significant difference in advertising percentages between elections (10 percent) and entertainment (13 percent). This was not the case on the private channels: whereas Antena 3 offered a much higher percentage to election ads (20 percent) than to

Table 5  
Interviews in SEC (in %)

Media	CDS	CiU	IU	PNV	PP	PSOE	Total
Public TV	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
Private TV	3	6	6	3	4	6	28
Total	6	9	9	6	7	9	46

Table 6  
Newspaper Ads Paid by TV Stations (in %)

Media	Elections	Entertainment	Information	Total
TVE-1	9	11	0	20
TVE-2	1	3	0	4
Public TV	10	13	0	23
Antena-3	20	2	1	23
Tele-5	12	41	0	54
Private TV	32	43	1	77
Total	42	56	2	100

Note:  $N = 86.57$  pages.

entertainment (2 percent), Telecinco offered 41 percent of its ads to entertainment and only 12 percent to the elections. (See table 6.)

The majority of the private TV ads were about the debates (49 percent), followed by the category of TV-elections (33 percent), which addressed the relationship between the TV station and the elections and which therefore was significant in portraying the image of the station. In contrast, public TV showed the same proportion of interviews and TV-election ads (11 percent in both cases) and devoted only 3 percent to the debates. (See table 7.)

In contrast to the ad campaign for public television, which was balanced among the various parties, the ads for private TV overwhelmingly emphasized only two, the PSOE and PP. More specifically, 74 percent of their ads featured the PSOE, 71 percent the PP, 4 percent the PNV, and 0 percent for the IU, and CDS, and the CiU. They also emphasized the two-man horse race by devoting 69 percent of their ads to the PSOE-PP debates, as opposed to only 11 percent to the more

Table 7  
Newspaper Ads Referring to Elections (in %)

Media	Debates	Interviews	TV-elections	Total
Public TV	3	11	11	25
Private TV	46	7	22	75
Total	49	18	33	100

Note: N = 36.68 pages.

Table 8  
Newspaper Ads Referring to Political Parties (in %)

Media	Interviews				2-debate		4-debate		Total
	CiU	IU	PNV	PP	PSOE	PSOE, PP	PSOE, PP	PSOE, PP	
Public TV	4	4	0	4	4	0	2	2	20
Private TV	0	0	4	2	5	69	0	0	80
Total %	4	4	4	6	9	69	2	2	100

Note: N = 24.68 pages.

inclusive interviews. Out of that 69 percent, 61 percent focused exclusively on the two dramatic "presidential" debates mentioned above whereas only 8 percent concerned the other six debates. (See table 8.) Following these presidential debates, the PrTV channels ran large ads displaying the journalists and candidates, as if the events were being memorialized in these majestic historical images.

From a marketing viewpoint, the majority of the TV ads published in the newspapers (83 percent) emphasized *personalization* by including pictures of the journalists and/or candidates, but here again there was a significant difference between public and private stations. Whereas the ads for private TV show a strong tendency toward personalization (71 out of 77 percent), those for public TV are evenly divided between personalized and nonpersonalized ads. (See table 9.)

There were other key differences in the inferred contents of the ads for public and private television. Within the 26 percent of ads that contained inferred concepts, 20 percent related to the nation-state identity

Table 9  
Personalization of Newspaper Ads (in %)

Media	Yes	No	Total
Public TV	12	11	23
Private TV	71	6	77
Total	83	17	100

Note:  $N = 35.67$  pages. Public TV sum: 9 pages; Private TV: 25.67 pages.

Table 10  
Inferred Concepts from Newspaper Ads (in %)

Media	Spain						Nat.		Total
	Drama.	ID	Winner	Credi.	History	Freedom	diver.	Other	
Public TV	3	20	3	0	0	0	0	0	26
Private TV	30	3	19	8	6	2	3	3	74
Total	33	23	22	8	6	2	3	3	100

Note:  $N = 35.67$  pages.

(Spain ID) and 3 percent respectively to the concepts of dramatization (drama.) and winners (winner). In contrast, 70 percent of the private TV ads had inferred content: 30 percent related to dramatization, 19 percent to winners, 8 percent to credibility (credi.), 6 percent to the history of Spain (history), 3 percent to national diversity (nat. diver.), and 2 percent to the concept of freedom. Although the percentages for the history of Spain and freedom are relatively small, they are still significant in a qualitative sense because of the strong connotative resonance of these terms. (See table 10.)

The results in the third area of research, the information and Op-Ed articles published in *El País*, yielded 105 items (comprising 36.16 pages of newspaper space) devoted to the SEC on television. An overwhelming 91 percent of the items referred to the debates held between the PSOE and PP candidates, suggesting that in the journalistic judgment of *El País* only these two-candidate debates warranted their press coverage. Moreover, the two dramatic "presidential" debates accounted for 88 percent of the paper's coverage of the elections on TV. Only 3 percent

Table 11  
Info. and Op-Ed Articles about TV and Parties Involved (in %)

Media	Interviews	2-debates	4-debates	Round tables	TV-elections	Total
	1 party	PSOE, PP	4 parties	5 + parties		
Public TV	0	0	4	0	1	5
Private TV	1	91	0	1	1	94
Other TV	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	1	91	5	1	2	100

Note: N = 36.16 pages.

of *El País's* coverage dealt with the other two-candidate debates. (See table 11.)

### Conclusions

During the Spanish Parliament's elections of 1993, the private commercial TV channels strongly supported the reduction of the elections into a dualistic race between two parties, the PSOE and PP, and even more narrowly between two men, Felipe González and José María Aznar. This dualism created the false perception of a presidential election and reduced political diversity, which possibly had a negative effect on the results of the other parties. These private stations organized and broadcast 8 two-candidate debates, all of which exclusively featured the PSOE and PP. Since both are national parties that are defenders of the nation-state identity, this coverage could have favored state-level centralism, identity, and homogenization at the expense of nationalities and national diversity. The nationalist vote turnouts might have been negatively affected in the Basque country and Catalonia. In the Basque country, the main nationalist parties (PNV, EA, HB) declined in the percentage of votes they received and two of them (EA and HB) even experienced a loss in the actual number of votes.

In contrast, public TV stations organized and broadcast four-candidate debates. In this way, they avoided the dualization of the election and presented a higher degree of political pluralism, which

included the peripheral nationalist parties.<sup>18</sup> These conclusions are even more evident when we consider that both private and public TV channels kept a fair balance regarding the participation of the political and peripheral nationality parties in their SEC (one-candidate-format) interviews.

As far as the newspaper advertising campaigns are concerned, the private TV channels put much more emphasis on the PSOE-PP two-candidate, face-to-face fighting debates (69 out of 80 percent) than on the interviews or round tables. Even more specifically, the two presidential debates absorbed 61 percent of the ads out of the 69 percent total devoted to the two-man debate format. Thus the private TV channels favored these two parties and their leading candidates not only through their election programming but also in their newspaper advertising campaign.

The public TV stations kept a low and balanced profile in their newspaper ad campaign through their choice of program categories and through their inclusion of all parties, including the Basque and Catalan nationalists. Despite this diversity, the theme of Spanish national identity was strongly present.

The personalization of the ads was very strong in those of the private TV channels and evenly divided in those of the public stations. Private television stations also tended to highlight dramatization and victory and tried to link their own identity to freedom and credibility. Because it was the first time that such televised debates were broadcast in Spain, the private channels advertised them as historical events ("going into History"), which reinforced the nation-state identity. In this way, they tried to change their own image from a simple commercial company to a "Spanish institution" with historical significance.

The Op-Ed articles and information on the elections published in *El País*, Spain's most important newspaper, reflected the same atmosphere of personalization, dramatization, dualism, and polarization featured in the television coverage of the private channels. In fact, 91 percent of their articles on the TV coverage of the elections were dedicated to the debates between PSOE and PP, and 88 out of the 91 percent to the two "presidential" debates between González and Aznar. What the rest of the parties and candidates said on television apparently did not count.

Working together as well as with other political forces, the three factors we have studied (special election TV coverage, ad campaigns,



and newspaper coverage) seem very likely to have influenced how the public perceived the elections—the campaigns, the atmosphere, the issues, the expectations and fears, and, ultimately, the outcome. In any case, further analyses and research are needed to confirm these results.

### Notes

This essay is based on a paper presented at an international conference "Turbulent Europe: Conflict, Identity and Culture," held in London in July 1994.

1. Joaquín Prieto, "Elecciones de transición," *Anuario El País 1994*, ed. José Manuel Revuelta (Madrid: Ediciones El País, 1994), 78.

2. Raúl Heras, "La mutación del año negro," *Anuario El Mundo 1994*, ed. Ramón Tamames (Madrid: El Mundo, 1994), 22–23.

3. Such analysts include Iñaki Iriondo, "El olvidado nuevo alzamiento del voto españolista," *EGIN*, December 21, 1993, Euskadi '93), 4–5; José I. Ruiz-de-Olabuenaga, "Los resultados del 6-J y la inexistente singularidad vasca," *El Mundo*, June 9, 1993, 9; and Jabier Salutregi, "El Español, cuando vota, vota de verdad," *EGIN*, June 9, 1993, 2–3.

4. For a typology of national television systems in Western European countries between 1980 to 1990, see Kees Brants and Karen Siune, "Public Broadcasting in a State of Flux," in *Dynamics of Media Politics: Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe*, ed. Karen Siune and Wolfgang Truetschler (London: Sage, 1992), 104. In 1990 there were eleven countries, the most populated ones, with a dual broadcasting system—private and public.

5. Elsa DeBens, Mary Kelly, and Marit Bakke, "Television Content: Dallasification of Culture," in Karen Siune and Wolfgang Truetschler, eds.

6. Wilbur Schramm, "Channels and Audiences," in *Inter/media: Interpersonal Communication in a Media World*, ed. Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart (New York: Oxford UP, 1979): 78–92.

7. See W. Lance Bennet, *News: The Politics of Illusion* (London: Longman, 1983) and Gianpetro Mazzoleni and Michael Palmer, "The Building of Media Empires," in *Dynamics of Media Politics: Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe* (London: Sage, 1992), 26–41.

8. Marc Raboy and Bernard Dagenais, ed., *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order* (London: Sage, 1992).

9. Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, "The Political Effects of Mass Communication," in *Culture, Society and the Media*, ed. Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, and Janet Woollacott (London: Methuen, 1982), 247. See also Hans-Bernd Brosius and Hans Mathias Kepplinger, "Beyond Agenda-Setting: The Influence of Partisanship and Television Reporting on the Electorate's Voting Intentions," *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (April 1992): 893–

- 901, and H. M. Kepplinger, H. B. Brosius, and J. F. Staab, "Opinion Formation in Mediated Conflicts and Crises: A Model of Cognitive-Affective Media Effects," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 3 (1991): 132-56.
10. The regional PSB channels include two in the Basque country (ETB-1, which broadcasts totally in Basque language, and ETB-2, in Spanish); two in Catalonia (TV-3 and Canal 33, both in Catalan); one in Galicia (TV Galicia, in Galician language); one in Valencia (Canal 9); one in Andalusia (Canal Sur, in Spanish); and one in Madrid (Telemadrid, in Spanish).
11. Esteban López-Escobar, "Spanish Media Law: Changes in the Landscape," *European Journal of Communication* 7 (1992): 241-59 and "Vulnerable Values in Spanish Multichannel Television," in *Television and the Public Interest: Vulnerable Values in West European Broadcasting*, ed. Jay G. Blumler (London: Sage, 1992), 161-72.
12. Retevisión, report by J. A. Tartajo, Ref. RS/201/94, Madrid, April 26, 1994.
13. Tamames, *Anuario El Mundo* 1994, 351. Because these figures represent highest percentages during the year, their sum exceeds 100 percent. The total audience mean value of the autonomous channels was 3.07 percent; foreign TV, 0.44 percent; local TV, 0.44 percent.
14. Ethnomethodology is the study of commonsense knowledge glossed by three phenomena: (1) the stock of knowledge at hand; (2) the practices of commonsense reasoning; and (3) the commonsense reality or attitude of everyday life. See Kenneth Leiter, *A Primer on Ethnomethodology* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980), v-vi.
15. We adopted the following definitions for these programs. *Interviews (i)* are programs in which only one candidate participated and was questioned by journalists. *Debates (d)* are programs that have two or more candidates debating against/with each other in a direct way; there might also be one or more journalists posing questions and issues to candidates. *Round table (rt)* are programs consisting of generally more than five candidates and several journalists or specialists engaged in an open, free discussion of issues without direct confrontation among them.
16. We followed the standard procedures of content research methodology, including the correction notes published by Stephen R. Lacy and Daniel Riffe in "Sins of Omission and Commission in Mass Communication Quantitative Research," *Journalism Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (1993): 126-32.
17. All data and tables are at the disposal of the research community upon request.
18. Since our argument compares PSOE and PP with the other parties, these conclusions do not contradict López-Escobar's statement that PSOE's losses in votes were proportionately greater in cities with access to PCTV. In his test case, there is insufficient evidence as to which party received those votes.