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Children's programming on *Televisión Española* under Franco (1958-1975).

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Abstract

This article analyses the children's programmes which were made by, and broadcast on, Spanish television channel *Televisión Española* from the time when programme schedules were first published in the press (1958) until the end of the Franco era (1975). The programming is then linked to the evolution of *Televisión Española* as an institution, as well as with the social and political context of the nation. The study takes into account the days and times of transmission, programme duration, the number of new shows broadcast per year and the most common content/ formats. Each programme's structure, its characters, the role of the presenter, involvement of children and the values and ideas conveyed are also assessed. We will demonstrate that the dictatorship initially used these programmes to promote patriotic and religious feelings, and later on, to prepare children and young people for the new social and economic realities of the country (such as urbanisation and industrialisation).

Keywords

Children's programmes, Franco, indoctrination, television, TVE

Introduction

The aim of this research is to analyse the programming strategies adopted by *Televisión Española* (TVE) during the Franco era to capture the children's audience. It also studies the programmes TVE made in-house, along with their content. In short, we aim to offer an overview of what was broadcast (in terms of format and content) as well as what objectives these programmes were made to serve.

The study is innovative as there is no existing published research on this issue in Spain, nor is it dealt with in the more general publications about TVE (Baget, 1993; Barroso and Tranche, 1996; Palacio, 2005). This article outlines the initial results of a research project begun more than 2 years ago, with the intention of providing an account of the programming for children and young people broadcast on Spanish public television up to the inception of the private channels (1990). The subject is of great significance as, during the period analysed here, television had a very strong ideological element, due to the historical and political characteristics of the Franco regime.

The dearth of bibliography to be found in Spain contrasts with an abundance of academic literature about the period in the United States in particular, and Great Britain to a lesser extent. The literature from these countries largely consists of empirical studies based on surveys, discussion groups and interviews. Today, these

studies allow us to understand what children were like as an audience at that time, what their tastes were and what expectations they had. Despite the differences between the societies, many common elements in children's attitudes towards television can be observed.

The first studies, carried out in the United States at the end of the 1940s (Luke, 1990), measured how much time children spent watching television and assessed the effect that this fantasy world had on them. The authors' stances were clear: some considered television to be a villain; others saw it as a baby sitter, while another group thought of it more as a source of learning (De Fleur and De Fleur, 1967).

The role of television was tackled in the new pedagogical approaches, in the wake of the world premiere of *Sesame Street*. It was also demonstrated that many children's programmes underlined the differences in gender roles (Sternglanz and Serbin, 1974) and that there was a link between television and crime and aggressive behaviour among children and young people. Later, the shows themselves were analysed, along with television's impact as an agent of socialisation (Leifer, 1974). The adverts broadcast during children's hour were also analysed (Doolittle and Pepper, 1975). Another group of studies looked at children's tastes during the early years of television (Streicher and Bonney, 1974) and the strategies used by the TV stations to make programmes more popular (Wakshlag and Greenberg, 1979). Those programmes that proved unpopular with children were also analysed (Webster and Coscarelli, 1979).

Material and methodology

We analysed programmes made in-house for the children (up to 13 years old) and youth (aged 14 to 18) audiences. TVE's attempts to attract the teenage audience were not very successful. This situation changed in the 1980s, thanks to music shows inspired in the *Movida madrileña* ('Madrid's happening'), which targeted this audience.

Our analysis of primary sources was exhaustive. We located all of the 112 programmes broadcast for children and youth audiences between 1958 (when information about programmes began to appear in the press) and 20 November 1975, the end of the Franco era. We established the date the programmes began and ended, the day and time of broadcast, how often they were shown, who the director, presenter, scriptwriter and producer were as well as the type of content. In most cases, the content was defined using the television production terminology of the time. Where that was not available, we used the terms favoured by the press in those days: 'sport', 'educational', 'variety', 'circus', 'competition', 'informative', 'fiction', 'games', 'news', 'comedy', 'musical', 'magazine shows', 'religion' and so on. This enabled us to quantify the days and times of broadcast, the duration, the number of new programmes shown each year, scriptwriters, most frequent presenters and producers, as well as the most repeated content.

Television schedules published by *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* were used to identify and define the programmes. According to our chosen sampling method, we studied the schedules from the first week of the first month, the second week of the second month and so on. Each change of programme was traced to locate its beginning and end dates. The other essential source of information on TVE's programming was the documentation kept in the state archives, known as the Archivo General de la Administración (AGA). The files give a precise account of each programme shown, the adverts that accompanied it and any noteworthy effects.

Specific searches in the television review sections of the press (*ABC* and *La*

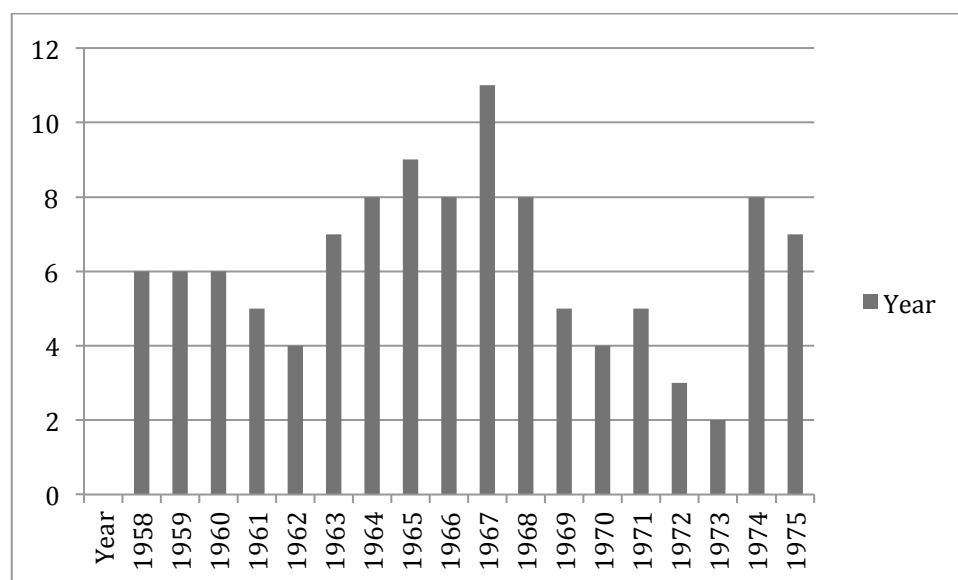
Vanguardia) as well as specialist publications (*Tele Radio*) yielded further details about each programme. This wealth of information enabled us to gauge the opinion of the critics, who were independent of TVE. Finally, we conducted searches (for the title of each programme) in TVE's database, ARCA, and watched all of the programmes for children and young people which are conserved in the archives (42 in total). Thus, in each case, we were able to analyse the structure of the programme, the characters, the role of the presenters, the extent to which children were involved, the language used and values (moral, social and other) conveyed.

We also paid attention to aesthetic changes, serialisation and the degree of professionalism involved in the production. In addition, we studied the characteristics which allow us to understand the idea of childhood as a social and cultural construct which is brought about through these programmes. We will show that in just a few years, television became the main source of entertainment for children and the Franco regime grasped the opportunities this provided. The regime used television not only for the purposes of moral and ideological indoctrination but also to prepare the audience for changes in the economic sphere (industrialisation, urban planning) as well as the cultural one (there was a certain degree of liberalisation in the final years of Francoism). Thus, children's and youth television programming was at the service of the requirements of the Franco regime, which were presented as being the needs of the country itself.

General characteristics

The information gathered about programmes made in-house and broadcast by TVE between 1958 and 1975 allows us to identify three clear stages (Figure 1). Although this periodisation is based on the analysis of programming for children and young people, it also bears some relation to the historical context and to the institutional development of television in Spain.

Figure 1. Number of children's programmes on TVE, 1958–1975.



Source: Database compiled by the authors.

The first stage marks the beginning: 1958 to 1963. When it was first launched, TVE faced a number of technical constraints, as well as financial ones. The state was unable to provide significant resources as its fledgling industrialisation policy, which

involved the investment of large amounts of public funds, had taken the finance ministry to the brink of bankruptcy. This factor, along with the state's inability to implement the payment of a fee per television set, led first to programmes being sponsored, and later on, to advertisements being shown. The signal did not reach a significant percentage of the Spanish territory until 1963, nor was the number of sets very high (standing at less than one million).

These limitations meant that the number of premieres (newly created programmes) was low, but steady. The first children's programmes broadcast had neither a fixed day nor continuity. We must take into account that in 1957 TVE was on air for just 3 hours a day. The programming responded to practical issues – shows had to be easy to produce and relied on the typical children's genres involving the circus and puppets, both of which were performed live. *Lo que cuenta la tía Cristina* ('Aunt Cristina's tales') (1958) was a short 10-minute programme in which a story was told. This programme marked the beginning of Herta Frankel's involvement. Frankel, an Austrian who had settled in Barcelona, would remain at TVE throughout the entire period. This selection was supplemented with American products (cartoons and series). During this period, there was no shortage of game shows, such as *Premio al más listo* ('A prize for the cleverest') (1958–1959), nor of religious programmes, which were presented by priests. TVE followed the existing radio model and *Las Hazañas de Marianín y Teresa* ('Marianín and Teresa's great feats', 1958) is a clear example. With the exception of the circus, the rest of these early programmes lasted only a few months: TVE was experimenting, and at the same time doing whatever could be done.

The second stage took place from 1964 to 1968. The number of hours of television broadcast increased, as did the number of hours of programming dedicated to the children's and youth audiences. Whereas beforehand the audience had been perceived as homogeneous, at this point the schedulers start to identify various groups, and programmes try to cater for the different age ranges. TVE consolidated its place in society, coinciding with something of an economic boom generated by the Stabilisation Plan (economic liberalisation, realist currency devaluation), emigration and tourism. Not only did sales of TV sets increase, but the Ministry of Information and Tourism also launched *teleclubs*, which were places where people could watch television in rural areas (rooms in town halls, parishes, bars, etc.). This official endeavour is an indication of the importance that the regime's ideological apparatus granted to the medium.

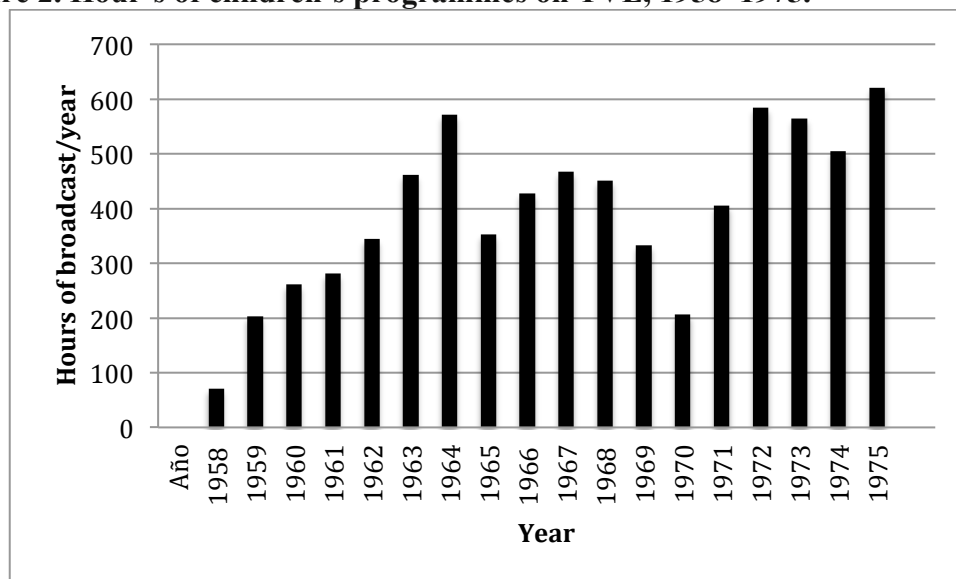
TVE's broadcasting facilities improved markedly with the opening of the modern studios at Prado del Rey. Its second channel was launched in 1966, though its geographic coverage was very limited and it did not have its own children's programming, offering just a few minutes of foreign cartoons in the afternoons.

The third phase, from 1969 to 1974, saw the consolidation of successful formulas, and for that reason the number of premieres fell back to 1960 levels. Although Adolfo Suárez (1969–1973) and his successors in the post of TVE Director General sought to improve and broaden the programming for little ones, there was no debate on the suitability of these shows to the needs and interests of children and young people, or at least the press does not record it. The political (assassination of the Spanish Prime Minister, Carrero Blanco, in 1973) and economic situation (the crisis of 1973) prevented TVE from adopting liberalising measures.

If we trace the evolution of the number of hours per year programmes made in-house for children and young people that were broadcast in Spain (Figure 2), we can see that, with the exception of 1964, the highest figures correspond to the period

1972–1975. Although there were less premieres, programmes became longer and remained on the air for longer. *Con vosotros* ('With you') (1970–1974), *Hoy también es fiesta* ('Today is a party too') (1970–1974) and *Los Chiripitifláuticos* ('Flautists by fluke') (1970–1974), for example, all had a lifespan of between 3 and 4 years, and the length of each programme was between 1 and 3 hours.

Figure 2. Hour's of children's programmes on TVE, 1958–1975.



Source: Database compiled by the authors.

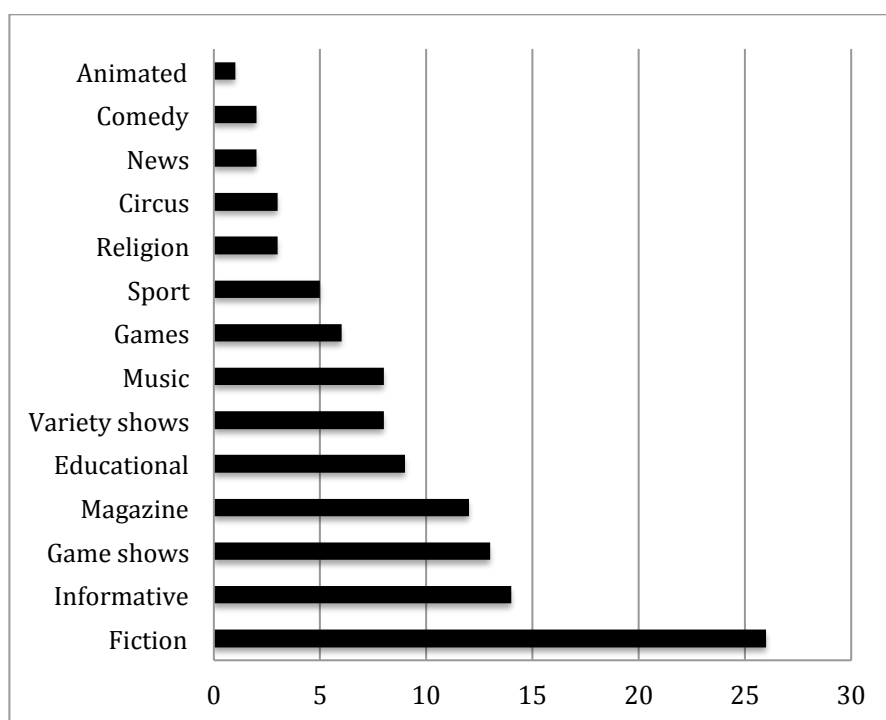
TVE conducted its own evaluation of the programmes, but the results were not made public. Therefore, the fact that they remained on air can be taken as an indirect indication of a positive evaluation. This assumption is supported by the reviews in the newspapers, which were free to cover any television programmes which did not involve political opinions. In contrast to the situation in America, advertising in Spain did not have any influence on scheduling. Spain is an unusual case: TVE, the public (and only) television station, was financed almost completely by advertising, yet advertisers had far less power than in the United States. In fact, ad slots were auctioned off among the advertising agencies until at least 1968. The audience was not taken into account because audience figures were not published at that time. In fact, there was no specific advertising for children during the children's programme timeslots until 1975 (AGA, boxes from 21831 to 21840; and 35691 to 35699). Alongside products typically marketed to this age group (toys, sweets, chocolate etc.), items aimed at adults were also advertised, including alcoholic drinks, cleaning products, electrical appliances and so on. In 1968, TVE created a specific department to oversee advertising, but the basic rules did not change (Montero et al., 2010).

Until 1964, children's programmes were shown on Saturdays, Sundays and some- times Thursdays (as some schools did not have classes on Thursday afternoons). From then on, daily children's slots were scheduled, though there were less children's programmes on Sundays and Wednesdays once football matches started being shown on TV (Bonaut, 2008, 2010). Programmes for children and young people were not shown on Sunday mornings. TVE must have drawn the conclusion that it was a time for religious services, just as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) had (Oswell, 2002: 46).

Entertainment was the key priority in programming for children and young

people. Television was presented to them as a form of relaxation and leisure, just as it was to adult audiences. In this context, fiction was by far the most frequent type of content (Figure 3). Fiction products consisted of theatre, acting out stories, puppet shows or chapters of adventure stories filmed cheaply in the studio. Children's fiction involved very low-budget productions. These shows also served the wider family audience.

Figure 3. Number of children's programmes in genre.



Source: Database compiled by the author.

Fiction was followed by variety shows and educational content in terms of numerical importance. Variety shows followed the guidelines of those for adults, adapting the format for children. Educational slots aimed to create model citizens according to the values of Francoist society: respect and obedience to adults (family and political) unity, Christian values and strict public morals (dress code, the interaction between members of the opposite sex etc.). They also intended to prepare them for their future professional and personal lives, as will be explained later in the article.

Sport and sporting contests between children and young people appeared very seldom on TVE and, even then, only in the last phase. In the late 1960s, the authorities conducted various institutional campaigns to promote participation and it was then that the first sports programmes for the younger audience appeared. There were not many religious programmes either, though some remained on air until 1970. There is no parallel in other countries; whereas the BBC produced *In the Beginning* to introduce children to the Old Testament (Sims, 1971: 22), religious slots in Spain had a more directly instructive purpose.

In short, the subject matter of programmes for children demonstrates that TVE's objective was to amuse and entertain them, though it did not miss the opportunity to educate (scientific and musical knowledge above all), or broadcast some basic guidelines for becoming part of the grown-up world, with all its rules and values.

However, the concept of children and adolescents held by the broadcaster was not particularly realistic.

First stage: trials

Children were offered entertainment in the form of variety programmes and fiction. Variety shows involved clowns and other circus sketches, songs, magic, stories, adventures, mime artists and competitions. The circus and puppets were the references to childhood. Producing these programmes was relatively easy, which was important as they went out live. They began in 1959 with the programme *No apto para mayores* ('Not suitable for grown-ups') (1959), which was broadcast on Saturdays. The two most successful shows were *Recreo* ('Breaktime') (1960) and *Chavales* ('Kids') (1961). These were shown on Thursdays and their aim was also to provide amusement, but they were designed for both younger and older people, with a family audience in mind. The presenters (Boliche and Chapinete), who had begun their careers on the radio, became very famous – this shows the impact that television already had in society.

The magazine programmes were born out of variety shows. The aim was to ensure children had an entertaining afternoon. Studio-based performances alternated with prerecorded series and cartoons. The first magazine programme was called *Fiesta con nosotros* ('Celebrate with us') (1962–1965) and it was shown on Sunday afternoons. Herta Frankel's puppets were the driving force of this programme as well. This type of show achieved great popularity and had a prominent place in children's programming throughout the entire period under study, particularly in the third phase. Another common programme type involved the re-enactment and narration of stories.

The stories introduced children to traditional tales, in programmes such as *Cuento infantil* ('Children's story') (1960), and classic authors in *Teatro infantil* ('Children's theatre'), one of the longest running programmes of the time, which was on the air between 1959 and 1974. These theatre plays performed by actors in a studio were very simple and no special attention was paid to the aesthetics in this period. The themes and the action were set in faraway worlds and eras: a squirrel that puts on glitter to be different; a maid turned into a roe deer because she only thought of herself; or a peasant child that finds a treasure and, because he is honest, gives it to the authorities. As it will be shown later on, in the late 1960s, *Teatro infantil* ('Children's theatre') showed plays written by children.

Experimentation led to a wide variety of formats. Game shows, for example, occupied a prominent place on Spanish TV, as they had previously done on the radio. Contestants competed with each other on knowledge (which in reality was more like rote learning), or skill. Like programmes for pre-schoolers, these game shows encouraged children to participate from their homes. They asked for answers to be sent in by post. For example, *La vida y el juego* ('Life and play') (1963–1964) had a section dedicated to viewer participation: if they got the correct answer, they received a toy as a prize. Programmes for pre-schoolers invited them to follow the songs and movements at home.

Children's news programmes (such as *Telepequediarario* ('Kids' news bulletin'), 1962–1963) did not last long on TVE. This demonstrated once again that there was no interest in connecting Spanish children with the real world, as we have noted previously. Comedy programmes, based on parodies (*El barquito de papel* ('The paper boat') and *Mundo ligero* ('Light-hearted world'), both broadcast between 1963 and 1964), did not take root in Spain either. The Spanish comedic tradition, with its sharp and sarcastic humour, was more for adults than children: stories involving a

world inhabited by cavemen or the relationship between a newlywed couple and their neighbours, for example, were not comprehensible to little ones.

It is important to point out that, in this early stage, other countries used television to educate their little ones. The objectives varied according to the dominant political values of each country. In Spain, television was required to ‘contribute to completing their education, instilling in them patriotic and religious feelings of unquestioned significance’ (*Tele Radio*, 1959: 26). Both variety and fiction shows featured religious and moral indoctrination. For example, *Recreo* featured a re-enactment of a Japanese legend in which the main character converted to Catholicism (*La Flor del Bien* (‘Good flour-ishes’)). In *Fiesta con nosotros* the characters celebrated Easter Sunday, and many of the stories in *Teatro infantil* dealt with friendship, self-improvement and divine intervention. The popular science programme *Visado para el futuro* (‘Visa for the future’) (1963–1965) always adopted a Christian approach, which was explained by a priest.

A priest also taught Christian doctrine in *Lecciones del catecismo* (‘Catechism lessons’) (1959), which prepared children for their first communion. In *Sólo para menores* (‘Only for minors’), which was on the air between 1962 and 1966, another cleric gave instruction on religious and moral issues, with the slogan ‘Always cheerful to make others happy’. There was also an opportunity to demonstrate the achievements of the regime: ‘chubby boys and girls’ competitions or ‘the boy and his dog’ presented the country’s improving economy to viewers (*Tele Radio*, 1963). Lastly, we must point out that the various European television stations began to work on co-productions in this period. Nonetheless, Spain restricted itself to buying successful formats from other channels, such as R.A.I.’s music contest *Concertino* (‘Small orchestra’) (1963–1964).

Second stage: development and differentiation

The hallmark of this second phase is differentiation, with particular regard to the programming. It began in June 1964: a 55-second-long ad, entitled *Vamos a la cama* (‘Let’s go to bed’) created by the Moro studios (Fernández, 2007: 103) marked the definitive moment when programming was targeted exclusively to adults. Another feature of differentiation was distinguishing between the age groups within the children and young people’s audiences. Spain broadcast its first pre-school programmes (*Jardilín* (‘Nursery school’), 1966–1968) and shows for young people. *Jardilín* was inspired by the American show *Romper Room*. The action takes place in a nursery school classroom. The children learned to behave according to the rules of the grown-ups ‘because grown-ups know the things that are best for us and these are always good things’, the presenter insisted.

TVE broadcast two types of programme for the youth audience (14 to 16/18-year-olds) on Saturday afternoons: one dealt with their problems through dialogue or debate, and the other offered modern music. The first type (such as *Habla contigo* (‘Talking to you’) 1967–1970) aimed to create a consciousness among young people about religious problems, on both the social and personal level. Similarly, programmes like *Tenemos la palabra* (‘Our turn to speak’) (1967–1968) aimed to analyse problems that were affecting their viewers. The audiences were bored by chat shows, according to letters sent to *Tele Radio* magazine by viewers, because the discussions were led by adults (parents, priests or teachers). Music programmes such as *Todos somos jóvenes* (‘We’re all young’) (1967–1968) proved more popular.

There was also differentiation between the genders. In Spain, therefore, announcers advertised series for boys (such as *Santi, botones de hotel* (‘Santi the hotel

porter') 1965) and series for girls (*Antoñita la fantástica* ('The amazing Antoñita') 1967). In the programme for boys, the main character was a lively, brave and adventurous boy; in the girls' programme, Antoñita had been a very popular character on the radio in the 1940s, and later featured in the highly successful novels created by Borita Casas. Nonetheless, we can identify a more realistic approach than that taken in the preceding stage. Antoñita, for instance, is a cheeky girl who wears a miniskirt. Here, as in other theatrical productions, the skilled performances by the actors stand out.

Contests between schools were also created, promoting a sense of belonging to the group, as well as a spirit of competition and self-improvement. The most successful game show in Spain was *Cesta y puntos* ('Baskets and points') (1965–1971): a cultural adaptation in the form of a basketball match. In fact, this show was one of the most highly rated, by both press and viewers alike. Getting the ball involved answering questions based on the *bachillerato* ('high school') curriculum in various subjects: Latin, history, mathematics, physics, biology and religion.

Children's participation increased, both in the studio, where they stopped being mere spectators, and in their homes, as presenters invited them to send in suggestions, drawings, comments or questions. The children responded enthusiastically. To promote and channel this participation, TVE set up its own children's club. There was a similar initiative in Britain, though in this case the idea came from a commercial station. Associated Television's Junior Club tried to create an informal and friendly atmosphere (Oswell, 2002: 136). There was a clear intention to attract younger viewers and build a loyal audience, and the results were positive.

The other key characteristic in this era was the increase in the number of hours of television broadcast, both in terms of general programming as well as children's content. The supply of programmes also increased and the content became more varied. Furthermore, video recorders came into use in the television industry, allowing programmes to be recorded, which facilitated technical and creative advances.

The education of children and young people remained part of the schedules. Programmes pointed out how Spanish ingenuity (with the examples of Blasco de Garay, Torres Quevedo, Isaac Peral, Jaime Ferrán, Juan de Ochoa etc.) had come up with inventions of global importance (in *Adelante el inventor* ('Inventor spotlight') 1964–1965). Meanwhile, *Escuela de campeones* ('School of Champions') (1965–1966) showed viewers how to become a champion, following the examples of leading Spanish sports personalities. An athlete or player would explain their discipline and invite the children present to take part in that sport.

The requirements of Spain's nascent industrialisation and the spread of newly established programmes of vocational training (courses of study known first as 'bachillerato laboral', and later as 'bachillerato técnico') led to the broadcast of shows such as *Protagonista el hombre* ('Man takes the lead'), 1966–1968, and *A cinco años vista* ('Five years from now'), 1971–1972. These shows highlighted the importance of new professions in the fields of electronics, radiotelegraphy, photography as well as the role of police officers, linotype operators and so on. These professions were considered to be for men, and the shows contributed to shaping young people's image of the modern world of work (De Fleur and De Fleur, 1967: 789).

Some children's programmes sought to advise on how free time should be spent. *Lección de ocio* ('Lesson on leisure') (1964–1965) made all sorts of proposals, some of which were also aimed at adults. These included theatre, bookbinding, detective novels, amateur film-making and cookery books. *Nuestro amigo el libro*

(‘Our friend the book’) (1964–1965) invited viewers to read, while others promoted a love of cinema (*Imagen club* (‘Image club’), 1967–1969) or music (*Nuestra guitarra* (‘Our guitar’), 1968–1969).

Despite these home-grown initiatives, Spanish children preferred Westerns: above all *Bonanza*, ‘because the goodies win and the family stays together’ (Encuesta sobre medios de comunicación de masas en España, 1965: 215). In this era, TVE purchased some American television formats (including the game show *Clan Familiar* (‘Family Clan’). The show painted an idyllic picture of large families, and in the Spanish version, the Franco regime endorsed this vision with prizes and other incentives). The purchase of US formats led to growing fears of an invasion of outlooks and attitudes associated with the ‘American Way of Life’. The Americanisation of children’s programmes also caused concern for the BBC (Buckingham et al., 1999: 20).

Third stage: adaptation and consolidation of successful formats

What characterises this stage is the continuity and stability in children’s programming. In Spain, however, there was a lack of consistency and cohesion: for example, cartoons (such as *Snoopy*) might be screened at 11 p.m. or programmes for adults shown in the children’s time slot. Children’s programmes were not the best of TVE’s output, although criticism from the press focused mainly on the presenters. They were accused of doing silly things, failing to entertain the children and lacking imagination.

TVE focused on entertainment in this era. Educational shows all but disappeared, as did religious programmes as a consequence of the slow liberalisation that the religious freedom act (passed in 1967) had prompted in both the regime and in society in general. Television joined the cause of modernisation and of reflecting the new social and economic reality of Spain as an urban, industrialised and more dynamic society. As we have noted, there was an increase in sports programmes (such as *Camino del record* (‘En route to a record’), 1973–1974 and *Torneo* (‘Tournament’), 1975–1979), which promoted competition between schools, and some of the participants were recruited into professional sport (*ABC*, 1975).

Magazine programmes, which included shows for audiences of different ages, were common in this period. The most successful magazine shows were, first *Un globo, dos globos, tres globos* (‘One balloon, two balloons, three balloons’) and, later, *La Guagua* (‘The bus’). The fact that *Un globo ...* was on every day contributed to its popularity (and to that of its theme tune, which is still sung at traditional fiestas). Its long reign on air – 4 years – was equally important. One of the programmes broadcast within *Un globo, dos globos, tres globos* was *Ábrete sésamo* (‘Open Sesame’). This was a dubbed version of the National Educational Television Network’s *Sesame Street*. It did not arouse any debate in Spain (Morrow, 2006). The BBC’s equivalent was called *Play School*. Like *Sesame Street*, *Play School* aimed to stimulate children’s imaginations, creativity and activity. *La Guagua* was a bus which collected songs, dances and games on its travels. Children’s performances were followed by competitions, folk and traditional children’s songs (by the singer Ismael) and slots such as *Tiempo libre* (‘Free Time’) which continued the tradition of seeking entertainments and hobbies for the kids. No changes are observed in this kind of programmes.

Children’s participation in the programmes reached new levels. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, TVE broadcast plays and choreographed shows, written and performed by children (or youth theatre companies). One example was *Los chicos y*

su teatro ('Kids and their theatre'), broadcast on 26 January 1969, which featured four plays which had been written and performed by children. However, they did not deal with political or historical subjects, in contrast to the German Democratic Republic's channel, which in that period used fiction to instruct its youth on the reconstruction of Germany, the Second World War, the East–West conflict and so on (Wiedemann and Tennert, 2004: 436).

This era – *late Francoism* – is marked by a lesser degree of ideological pressure. The end of the regime was on the horizon (Franco was elderly and ill) and many sectors of society sensed that change was imminent. The internal opposition – which encompassed the labour movement, universities, nationalists and the clergy – bustled with overt activity and even gained a presence within some public bodies. TVE would be one such body: political activism combined with labour demands, and clashes broke out between adherents to the new ideological positions which were gradually being adopted (Fernández- CORMENZANA, 2001).

This climate of practical liberalisation, in both the country and the TVE studios, encouraged the creation of programmes such as *Cuentopos* ('Let's find a story') (1974– 1975), which turned out to be one of the most original proposals of the era. It was a theatrical performance in which fabulous characters performed stories which were groundbreaking for the time. In 1975, it was suspended for several months, leading to the resignation of the head of children's programmes, Milagros Valdés. *La comparsa* ('The carnival troupe') (1975–1977) also combined recreational and didactic intentions, with vibrant, fun tales to debunk idealised beliefs or perceptions of reality.

La casa del reloj ('The clock house') (1971–1974), a daily programme for younger children, written by Lolo Rico, fits into this same category. The structure was simple: presenters taught a song, told a story and showed a brief report along with some foreign cartoons. Sometimes concepts (such as wide, slim, big and fat or the importance of physical exercise) were explained. But children disliked this programme because it was too didactic. It was the first co-production between TVE and the BBC in the area of children's programmes.

Apart from those already mentioned, there were no truly innovative formats or contents during this phase. The channels learnt that children were not an adventurous audience: they liked what they knew, and shows that were familiar to them (Wakshlag and Greenberg, 1979: 68). For example, puppets and the circus, two of the traditional elements of children's programming, made a comeback on TVE. *El país de la fantasía* ('Fantasy land') recounted the adventures of several puppets (including Violeta the little mouse), with Herta Frankel, once again. Its stories were simple, tender and naïve. *El circo de TVE* ('TVE's circus') was a varied and very well-rounded show, offering the adventures of a group of clowns, musical numbers as well as the usual circus performances, aimed at the wider audience.

Conclusion and discussion

Initially, 'children' are considered to be a single catchall category. We find puppets and the circus, traditional mainstays of children's entertainment, on almost all of the programmes. There is a perception that their families, and particularly their mothers, watch the programmes with them: back then, most women quit their jobs after getting married. Furthermore, both the number of programmes for children and young people, and the total number of hours they are broadcast, are low. The radio experience served as inspiration.

In the second stage, the various age groups within the children's audience begin to be recognised and TVE decides to approach programmes for the groups in different ways. Thus pre-school programmes are made for the younger children, and others for the children's and youth audiences. However, the group aged between 14 and 18 years were not quite catered for by the television schedules. Some attempts were made to capture their interest, but these proved unsuccessful. This is not surprising: the aim of giving them a participatory format was incompatible with the extant political regime. The 'debates' were not really debates (just as in public life); instead, they were subject to many constraints. On TVE, the moderator was an adult 'with authority' who imposed the subject and the rules of the discussion. The young people were able to sense from television and their programmes, the narrow confines within which the rest of the Spanish population lived.

The number of hours of television for children increased but never reached a significant percentage of total airtime. Children were an interesting audience, but adults were more so because Spain only had one generalist channel which had to serve the needs of people of all ages: the second channels in continental Europe were aimed principally at adult audiences with a higher level of education.

In the third stage, the number of hours of programmes broadcast for children stabilised. This is a period in which programmers were open to experimentation and reflection on the level of involvement children should have in their own programmes. The aim was that the children themselves would have the leading roles in, and even write, some shows. This concern with children's involvement can be seen, to a lesser degree, in the fact that programmers sought their opinions or collaboration, whether in the studio or at home. From an early objective of simply instilling the rules of adults in them, the schedulers' concept of children evolved, coming to consider them as people in their own right, with concerns and a world of their own. This change came about in the final years of the Franco regime and would not become widespread until the onset of democracy.

Although the intention was always to entertain, the educational role assigned to television in its early days appeared to be most important in the case of programmes targeted to the children's and youth audiences. The programmes instilled patriotic and religious feelings, particularly in the early years. The Catholic doctrine was present, whether directly or indirectly, in each and every one of the formats, through parables, teachings, recommendations, questions in competitions and so on. However, since the passing in 1967 of the religious freedom law (due to pressure from the Second Vatican Council), children's programmes about religion disappeared from the airwaves. In other words, television programming was adapted to suit the needs of the regime (as occurred in other countries). Patriotism, for its part, was mainly propagated through tales of exemplary Spaniards, from the past or present, whose career or personal conduct should be held up as a point of reference for all good Spaniards. This *indirect learning* (Streicher and Bonney, 1974: 59) relied on support from the family, school and children's literature.

Fiction (in the form of plays, stories, films etc.) was the usual vehicle for these lessons about values and principles. There was no desire to mobilise young people; in fact, it was quite the reverse. Thus imaginative themes linked to fictional tales set in faraway times and places were emphasised most. These included *the 1001 nights*, the middle ages, the 19th century and so on. The values which television instilled in the children and young people were the dominant ones in each society. For example, on TVE, obedience, respect for hierarchy and the fulfilment of duty were emphasised repeatedly. Thus, shows from other countries (i.e. American ones in the Spanish case)

and co-productions gave the audience a window on other points of view and, above all, other lifestyles.

Spain had one of the highest rates of illiteracy in Europe, and the government, concerned about this issue, found a solution in TV. Therefore, children's programmes emphasised the importance of reading. They presented the latest publications, gave away books and so on. Classic authors of different nationalities and from different eras were featured alongside modern ones through plays. These were not expensive productions: the staging was simple, but done with care, and the actors were genuine professionals. There were different types of fiction: from comedies such as *Los Chiripitifláuticos* (1970–1974), in which funny characters had zany adventures, to dramas like *El romance del conde Alarcos* ('The ballad of Count Alarcos'), which came from *Páginas del Romancero* ('Pages from the ballads') (1974), and was shown in a magazine programme. It tells the story of a princess who falls in love with Count Alarcos. As Alarcos is already married with children, the princess persuades the King to order the deaths of the Count's wife and sons. Obviously, this type of fiction was still intended for a family audience. In the mid-1960s, the influence of television on the family was considered to be positive (Encuesta sobre medios de comunicación de masas en España, 1965: 228).

They also tried to encourage children and young people to take up hobbies. Whether the hobbies promoted were attractive to children or even practical (one example involved a guitar-building contest) was a different matter. Filling children's free time was another concern. In Spain, this was a pressing issue, because the changes brought about by industrialisation and the consolidation of a new urban society meant that young people's leisure time had to be oriented in a radically different environment to their parents' rural childhoods.

Tradition (represented by folk music, fables, classic tales, old-fashioned children's songs, regional dances, traditional games, circus etc.) featured more prominently than modernity. It seems that the most modern means of communication of the time was assigned the task of maintaining tradition.

Finally, we must remember that these programmes make up several generations of men and women's first memories of TV. Thus, the shows, their presenters and their characters made a significant contribution not just to their entertainment but also to their social, cultural and emotional development.

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