AGENDA, FRAMING AND EDITORIAL BIAS IN STATE-RUN TELEVISION NEWS IN SPAIN

Results of the Regional and Municipal Elections of 28-M 2023 Versus the Announcement of Early General Elections

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ABSTRACT

Television continues to be an information source of very notable social significance. Through it and thanks to its mediating role between the political sphere and citizens, a large part of them build or support their ideas about public debates. Among all the possible news topics, television news programs select some (agenda) for treatment and dissemination in a certain way (framing and bias). We analyze here the differences, through content analysis, between the main Spanish state television news programs in relation to two relevant news events. We conclude that there are significant differences between the work of each channel and that the editorial lines of the respective channels (Antena 3 and Telecinco, conservative line; TVE and La Sexta, progressive line) determine their informative approaches to the news events studied.

1. Introduction

Many studies confirm that television, despite the strength of other media providers, continues to be the main source of information for most citizens. In response to the question "Which media do you usually use to find out about news in Spain?" (CIS, 2023, p. 2), 69.8% of respondents answered 'television', almost 15 points more than 'printed or digital press', which came second (55.1%), ahead of 'online social networks' (44.1%) and 'radio' (43.5%). Television is the main source of information for all age groups over 35, but it also has a strong presence in the 18-34 age group. It should also be remembered that much of the multimedia consumption that has replaced traditional linear TV consumption is still TV consumption, albeit in digital environments, which partly means that younger audiences also watch TV news, although in many cases they prefer to watch only extracts of these news programmes on social networks or other web windows. In short, a lot of TV news continues to be consumed online.

The strength of television as a news medium is clearly demonstrated by data such as the fact that, according to Kantar Media, more than six million people of legal age in Spain watch one of the state television news programmes (TVE1, Antena 3, Telecinco and La Sexta) every day between 2 pm and 4 pm. In short, television news programmes are a powerful way of representing the world through images and sounds, and although in the current digital environment they no longer have a monopoly on the construction of socio-political reality, they continue to be the main way in which most people in Spain receive information and in which citizens have a high level of trust as a source of information (Newman et al., 2020).

In this research, we explore the concepts of *agenda setting, media priming, framing* and bias or editorial line applied to a case study: the analysis of the first edition of the four most-watched news programmes on Spanish state television on 29 May 2023, the day after the regional and local elections held in Spain (results of the 28-M elections) and also the day on which Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez unexpectedly announced early in the morning that the general elections would be brought forward to 23 July 2023. The results of 28-M made the Popular Party (Partido Popular, PP), then led by Alberto Núñez-Feijóo, the clear winner of the elections against the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE), then in the national government led by Pedro Sánchez, which lost much of its regional and municipal power.

On the morning of the day after the 28 March elections, a few hours before the midday news, Pedro Sánchez appeared before the media at the Moncloa Palace to announce an early general election in an institutional statement without questions. Taking direct responsibility for the (poor) results of his party in the elections held the day before, the President of the Government considers it necessary to react and to submit his democratic mandate to the will of the people, so that the Spaniards can express themselves again in the elections on 23 July, a few months before the actual end of the 14th legislative period, which under normal conditions would have been in December 2023. This important announcement comes at a time when the first editions of all the television news programmes are being prepared, which, logically and before the announcement of the early elections, would have been largely based on the results of 28-M, but which, with the aforementioned announcement, have had their schedules changed.

The appearance of Pedro Sánchez and the content of his speech have sparked speculation about the meaning of such a political manoeuvre. Although the opposition to the Sánchez government (mainly the PP and Vox) and the PSOE's own allies in the central government initially welcomed the news of an early election (without initially questioning the date of 23 July), there was talk of an attempt to shift the focus of public attention (agenda) from the results of 28 March to the announcement of an early election (framing). The framing of the elections and the corresponding campaign and pre-campaign before 23 July have also been linked by some to the negotiation processes that would take place practically simultaneously with the campaign and pre-campaign between the PP and the extreme right-wing Vox party, which would necessarily have to negotiate during the months of June and July in order to form governments in several Autonomous Communities and in numerous local councils, This could be an advantage for the PSOE in the run-up to the general elections on 23 July, given the strain that the PP could be under in these negotiations with Vox, on the one hand, and the resulting possible electoral strategy of the PSOE in the face of a possible PP government in coalition with Vox after 23 July, on the other. There is also a reference to the urgent pressure on the political parties to the left of the PSOE to reorganise themselves before the new elections. But beyond other possible approaches to analysing the

events of 28 and 29 May, the main interest of this study is the role played by the state television news on 29 May.

2. Theoretical Framework

Agenda setting, priming and *framing* are three of the most important theories of the last fifty years in the field of communication research (Saperas, 1987; Bryant and Miron, 2004). These terms are almost inescapable when it comes to studying the cognitive effects of mass communication, which have their roots in the twentieth century, but whose shockwave has, if possible, been revived to the present day.

In general, the theory of *agenda setti*ng (Cohen, 1963; McCombs and Shaw, 1977) refers to the process of media selection of topics (Sevenans and Vliegenthart, 2016), which determines *what to think about.* From this dirigisme, or orientation of public attention towards certain issues, the theory of *media priming* (Iyengar et al., 1982; Krosnick and Kinder, 1990; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1994) emerges, according to which the media can partly determine the standards by which people make evaluations of these issues and acquire arguments to decide *what to think about them* (Weaver, 2007; Kinder, 2007). *Framing*, a theory that will be discussed in more detail below, identifies the mechanisms that shape *how we think* (Lakoff, 2008).

Leaving aside the historical debate about the independence or integration of these three theories (McCombs, 1997; Price and Tewksbury, 1997; Scheufele, 1999; Reese et al., 2001), which now seems to have been resolved (Maher, 2001), there is a consensus in the academic community about the autonomy and, at the same time, the theoretical complementarity of *agenda setting, priming* and *framing*. Robert M. Entman (2007) is probably the author who has presented the most complete theoretical and methodological model to date for integrating these three theories, including some other concepts such as *bias* - the general tendency of a media outlet - or *news slant* - the particular tendency of a specific news item - which are also relevant for the purposes of this paper.

For some authors who have studied *framing* theory in depth as a conceptual tool for communication research (Johnston, 1995; Amadeo, 2002; Bryant and Miron, 2004; Sádaba, 2008; Vicente and López, 2009), the first appearances of the concept of *frame* can be found in the works of the anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972), but it was Erving Goffman (1974) who, in the field of microsociology, proposed a more refined definition of the term *frame*, conceiving it essentially as a mental framework or cognitive structure that guides both perception of reality and its representation.

Framing theory was initially developed in the fields of psychology and sociology and then gradually moved into the field of communication studies as an organisational and interpretive framework for news (Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) and Gamson and Modigliani (1989), among others, presented *framing* theory in the 1980s as a revision of certain *agenda-setting* postulates, in what McQuail (2005) describes as the fifth wave of development of communication paradigms.

The empirical use of *framing* in news discourse analysis was pioneered in the late twentieth century (Iyengar, 1991; Shoemaker and Reese, 1991; Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Zaller, 1992; Gamson, 1992; Edelman, 1993; Pan and Kosicki, 1993), most notably by Entman, for whom *framing* essentially involves selection and salience. *To frame* is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them salient in a communicative text in such a way as to emphasize a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

We could say that *agenda setting* and *priming* are based more on the greater or lesser possibility to access a topic depending on its relevance, i.e. to take a topic into account or not, whereas *framing* is more rooted on the concept of applicability, understood as the interpretative connection between two topics, in short, thinking about a topic through a specific interpretative framework. *Framing is thus based* on the potential to generate recognisable interpretative mental frameworks through significant changes in discourse. In this way, *framing* is linked to communicative interaction and the social construction of reality, while *agenda setting* and *priming* are linked to theoretically simpler processes of causality (Van Gorp, 2007).

A century after Walter Lippman (1922) formulated the concept of "indirect knowledge" of our surroundings, the notion remains valid today. We gain "indirect knowledge" of our surroundings from media stories and use them to shape our own "maps of the world". According to Lippmann, people often

confuse the "pseudo-environment" created by the media with the real environment, and the "mental maps" created influence people's behaviour, with consequences for the "real environment". In this scenario of influence, it should not be forgotten that the media are political actors with specific interests that move in a field intersected by power relations (Califano, 2015, p. 63). In this sense, the postulates of Chomsky and Herman (1988) on the various filters to which the media are subjected and which condition their work are still valid: the ownership structure; advertising; communication departments; influential groups and "anti" ideologies.

All functions in contemporary political systems evolve through communication, so it is not surprising that authorities in modern societies seek to manage communication channels in order to secure their role in the system (Swanson and Nimmo, 1990). The conception of information or communication actions undertaken by the institutional or political system hinges on the possibility of somehow modifying the agenda and behaviour of the media, that is, of exploiting their connective facet of systems, of exploiting (to their advantage) their role as a nexus. The media are powerful transmission belts for the political message but, as we pointed out a few paragraphs ago, they are also organisations with their own objectives and at the same time indispensable instruments for other systems to achieve theirs (Easton, 1965).

The way in which news programmes organise the content of their programmes reveals their point of view on events, the way in which they understand and interpret current affairs and the way in which they create categories for understanding social events. However, in addition to the possible diversity in the conception of news programmes, there are other differentiating elements in the treatment of news that make the treatment of the same event on different television channels peculiar (Arana, 1999). In the field of political journalism, bias is understood as the systematic tendency to favour some actors or positions to the detriment of others through the instrumentalisation of sources or through preferential or unfavourable editorial treatment (Fico et al., 2006).

3. Objectives, Research Questions, Hypotheses and Methodology

The objective (OG) of this study is to compare the different news treatments given by the four television channels mentioned above to the news events under study (28-M election results and the announcement of the general elections), in order to describe the behaviour of the channels in terms of agenda setting, framing and editorial lines or biases. We try to find out whether the main news channels in Spain show similar and uniform tendencies when it comes to dealing with the actions of different political actors. In this line, we also analyse whether the editorial position of these media in relation to specific events influences the selection of sources and the opinions they express. We have formulated the following research questions:

Q1: Which of the two news items analysed (28-M election results and the announcement of early general election) were emphasised by the news reports analysed?

Q2: Was there a quantitative and/or qualitative difference in treatment between the different channels?

Q3: How did each channel manage the use of sources (selection of sources and testimonies)?

Q4: What factor(s) might have determined the respective reporting approaches of the channels analysed?

Consequently, we put forward the following research hypotheses:

H1: The editorial line or position of each channel conditions/biases the news treatment, including the management of sources, of the news events under study.

H2: The political influence of the government in power over public television (Sotelo, 2019) is reflected in the news treatment of the news events under study.

H3: In terms of political communication, the announcement of an early election is underpinned by a self-interested strategy to divert media attention in order to minimise the public echo of the 28-M results.

The study methodology used is that of quantitative and qualitative content analysis. As Hidalgo Troya (2019) points out, in the process of knowledge construction in social research, we speak of qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research allows a rigorous, systematic and objective approach to the study of a reality, relying mainly on the analysis of categorical and numerical variables, preferably using statistical techniques that make it possible to show the trend of the data and to establish, through functional relationships, the interrelations and dependencies of variables for explanatory and predictive purposes (Hidalgo, 2019, p. 28). The quantitative approach makes it possible to test hypotheses and

establish relationships between variables from a logical/positivist perspective (Igartua, 2006). Criticisms that accuse quantitative analysis of being reductionist may belong to a phase that has already been overcome, before a new era in which it is considered that these measurements can also be extraordinarily useful (Tilles, 2016).

The study sample is the television news programmes broadcast on 29 May 2023 in the midday edition of the channels Antena 3, La 1 de TVE, Telecinco and La Sexta. The unit of analysis is the news item, understood as individualised information in a presentation format. In a content analysis project, once the sample and the unit of analysis have been defined, it is necessary to draw up a coding sheet with the variables to be studied and their values. The coding sheet takes into account the following variables: duration of the news item, opening news item, time dedicated to the announcement of the election results, time dedicated to the 28-M election results, formats dedicated to the announcement of the election results, formats dedicated to the 28-M election results, genres dedicated to the announcement of the election results, genres dedicated to the 28-M election results, priority news agents (speaking time of the people in this study).

It is well known that quantitative research in the social sciences has limitations and shortcomings and therefore needs to be complemented by qualitative research. However, quantitative results provide clues for the subsequent development of qualitative and more specific studies based on the information collected, which generally allow us to unravel the meanings hidden in a text (Bardin, 1986; Krippendorf, 1990). In this study we have used both quantitative and qualitative techniques, which always contributes to enriching the methodological apparatus, since a multifaceted and multiple approach is desirable to fully understand social reality (Corbetta, 2010) and, in this sense, a mixed methodological framework allows us to obtain the various advantages of both approaches. For the qualitative analysis work, we used discourse analysis techniques (Santander, 2011).

4. Results

The time devoted by each news item to the two news objects varies considerably from one channel to another (Figure 1). Of the 2,348 seconds of the Antena 3 news bulletin, 423 seconds were devoted to the announcement of the elections (18% of the news bulletin), 1,362 seconds to the results of the previous day's elections (58% of the news bulletin) and 563 seconds to other topics (19.7% of the news bulletin).

TVE's La 1 news programme, with a total duration of 2,940 seconds (if we include the sports block inserted in the news programme itself) and 2,464 seconds (excluding the sports block),[1] devoted 1,299 seconds to the announcement of the election (52.7% of its news programme - excluding sport), 193 seconds to the results of the 28-M election (7.8% of its news programme - excluding sport) and 972 seconds to other topics (39.4% of its news programme - excluding sport). The public channel devoted the first 17 minutes of its news programme and the last 4 minutes to the issue of the electoral advance, and basically resolved the information on the results of 28-M with a long video that practically consumed the total of 193 seconds devoted to this issue. Telecinco's newscast devoted 435 seconds of its 2,145 seconds to the announcement of the election (20.2% of the newscast), 835 seconds to the results of 28-M (38.9%) and 875 seconds to other topics (40.7% of the newscast). Finally, La Sexta's newscast, with a duration of 1,975 seconds, devoted 790 seconds to the election campaign (40% of the newscast and its first 13 minutes); 690 seconds to the results of 28-M (34.9% of the newscast) and 495 seconds to other topics (25% of the newscast).

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[1] TVE's news programmes are the only ones to include sport in the news itself, unlike the other channels, where sport is included in autonomous blocks separate from the general news. For our calculations, we use the reference length of the La 1 news programme, excluding the time devoted to sport.

Figure 1. Distribution of time between news topics.
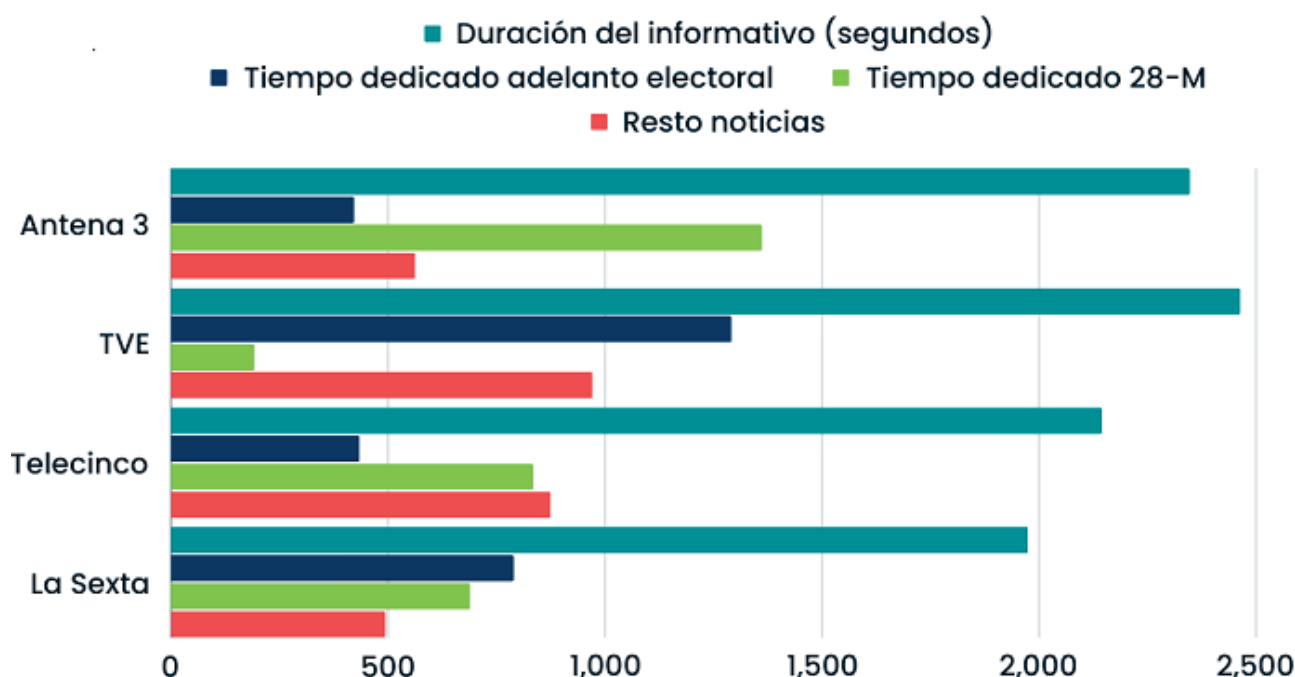
Source: own elaboration.

In terms of the use of formats, Antena 3 is the channel that devoted the least number of lead-in formats, followed by video (ENT+VTR) and video (VTR), to the election announcement (5 pieces of this type in total), but it is by far the channel that devoted the most pieces of these formats to the results of the 28-M election (11 pieces in total). It should be noted that this type of format is considered to have a greater editorial relevance due to its duration and other characteristics, compared to other formats such as queues, briefs or studio or infographic presentations, which are more often reserved for lighter news treatments. On the other hand, TVE is by far the channel that devotes the most ENT+VTR and VTR formats to the announcement of the electoral advance (10 pieces) and the least to the results of 28-M (2 pieces). Between the two extremes are Telecinco, with 5 of these formats dedicated to the announcement of the electoral advance and 4 to the results of 28-M, and La Sexta, with 7 of these formats for the electoral advance and 6 for the results of 28-M.

The news programmes of the four channels made relatively extensive use of the live format to report on the announcement of the election (5 live Antena 3; 10 live TVE; 5 live Telecinco and 4 live La Sexta), but this is not the case for each channel when reporting on the results of the 28-M, for which Antena 3 devoted 7 live reports and Telecinco 5, while TVE and La Sexta did not include any live reports on this issue. Apart from the fact that live coverage is being used more and more frequently in Spanish news programmes, and not always justifiably, this format also presents an emphatic dose of information and gives the viewer the feeling of being a privileged witness to events. Live television imparts a certain sensitive, affective and emotional logic to the event being reported, and also favours the impression of immediacy.

Regarding the use of queues, Antena 3 dedicated 3 queues to the announcement of the electoral progress and 7 to the results of the 28-M; Telecinco dedicated 2 queues to the electoral progress and 8 to the results of the 28-M; La Sexta dedicated only queues (3) to the results of the 28-M and TVE did not dedicate any queues to either of the two news events. In terms of the format of the infographic presentation, Antena 3 devoted 13 infographic presentations to the coverage of the 28-M results, while the other channels each devoted one infographic presentation to the results. Only Telecinco and La Sexta used a separate presentation or studio intro to cover the announcement of the early elections.

In terms of news genres used, Antena 3 is by far the one that makes the most use of news development genres or in-depth reference pieces (such as reports or features) to cover the results of the 28-M elections (11 pieces of this genre compared to only one for the electoral advance). TVE devoted 3 development pieces to the announcement of the electoral advance and 2 to the results of 28-M.

Telecinco dedicated 3 development pieces to the announcement of the electoral advance and 5 to the results of 28-M. La Sexta dedicated 3 development pieces to the announcement of the electoral advance and 10 to the results of 28-M. All four channels used the genre of statements (by politicians) to cover the announcement of the electoral advance: 2 statements on Antena 3 and 2 on Telecinco; one on La Sexta and 6 on TVE. In the coverage of the 28-M results, Antena 3 includes 6 statements and TVE only one. With regard to the other news genres identified in the analysis, we have decided to combine the news genre and the chronicle genre here for accounting purposes, although we are aware that they are distinct genres with their own specificities. By news we mean the minimum unit of information, and by chronicle we mean information from the point of view of a correspondent, special envoy or expert. The news is dominated by a purely descriptive presentation of the facts, i.e. the journalist offers information without judgements, interpretations or opinions, using language that is as neutral/objective/aseptic as possible, while in the chronicle there is usually a greater interpretive, analytical or explanatory burden, with less aseptic language than in pure news. In all the news programmes analysed, there is an increase in the number of links with reporters who travel to the places of interest (political party headquarters and Moncloa Palace) from where they report on the reactions of politicians to both news events, in what we consider to be a certain hybridisation between news and chronicle. In this sense, Antena 3 is once again the leader in the coverage of the 28-M results, with 17 pieces of this genre, compared to 5 pieces dedicated to the announcement of the election results. On the other hand, TVE is at the other end of the spectrum, with 11 of these genres for the election campaign and none for the 28-M results. Telecinco devotes 7 of these genres to the electoral process and 12 to the 28-M results, while La Sexta devotes 3 to the electoral process and 4 to the 28-M results.

For research purposes, we have included in this study the following variable, which is summarised in Table 1: the length of time relevant people (sources) appear in the news. There are four (and only four) people whose appearance is repeated in all the news programmes: Pedro Sánchez, Alberto Núñez-Feijóo, Santiago Abascal and Ione Belarra. In the Antena 3 news, Pedro Sánchez appeared for 58 seconds, Alberto Núñez-Feijóo for 38 seconds, Santiago Abascal for 25 seconds and Ione Belarra for 18 seconds. In the TVE news, Pedro Sánchez appears for 80 seconds; Alberto Núñez-Feijóo, 25 seconds; Ione Belarra, 22 seconds and Santiago Abascal, 17 seconds. In the Telecinco news, Alberto Núñez-Feijóo appears for 35 seconds; Santiago Abascal, 25 seconds; Pedro Sánchez, 20 seconds and Ione Belarra, 19 seconds. And on La Sexta, Pedro Sánchez appears for 50 seconds; Alberto Núñez-Feijóo, 8 seconds; Ione Belarra, 7 seconds and Santiago Abascal, 5 seconds. Apart from these four common sources, it is noteworthy that Antena 3 is the channel that offers the most voices of political actors, as it also includes important testimonies from members of the Citizens (Ciudadanos) party (18 seconds from Adrián Vázquez and 11 from Begoña Villacís); from Isabel Díaz-Ayuso (16 seconds), President of the Community of Madrid and member of the PP; and from Pablo Echenique (14 seconds), from United We Can Party (Unidas Podemos). Telecinco also offers a "total" of Isabel Díaz-Ayuso (10 seconds).

Table 1. Quantitative analysis

	Antena 3	TVE	Telecinco	La Sexta
Duration of the news programme	2.348 s.	2,940 s. (with dep.) 2,464 s. (without dep.)	2.145 s.	1.975 s.
Time devoted to the announcement of an early election	423 s.	1.299 s.	435 s.	790 s.
Time spent on results 28-M	1.362 s.	193 s.	825 s.	690 s.
Opening news	Advance elect.	Advance elect.	Advance elect.	Go ahead elect

Dedicated election advertisement formats	ENT+VTR / VTR	4	10	5	7
	Tails	3	0	2	0
	Direct	5	10	5	4
	Pres. study	0	0	1	1
Dedicated formats 28-M results	ENT+VTR / VTR	11	2	4	6
	Tails	7	0	8	3
	Direct	7	0	5	0
	Pres. infographic	13	1	1	1
Dedicated election advertisement genres	News	2	3	2	1
	Development (report)	1	3	3	3
	Chronicle	3	8	5	2
	Statements	2	6	2	1
Genres dedicated to 28-M results	News	16	0	9	4
	Development (report)	12	2	5	10
	Chronicle	1	0	4	0
	Statements	6	1	0	0
Reference persons who speak (time)	Pedro Sánchez	58 s.	80 s.	20 s.	50 s.
	Alberto Núñez-Feijóo	38 s.	25 s.	35 s.	8 s.
	Santiago Abascal	25 s.	17 s.	25 s.	5 s.
	Ione Belarra	18 s.	22 s.	19 s.	7 s.

Source: own elaboration.

To complement the quantitative analysis, we have also looked at some qualitative aspects of the news treatment given by the four channels to the two news events of interest to us. The four channels opened their respective newscasts with the announcement of the election. Antena 3 and TVE opened with the VTR of Pedro Sánchez announcing his lead (the only reference to Sánchez's announcement of his lead). Telecinco and La Sexta opened their newscasts with a presentation or studio introduction by their respective presenters giving the news of the early election announcement, but at the same time linking it to the PSOE's poor election results the day before (28-M).

The news event with the highest number of evaluations in terms of the use of linguistic expressions is the one related to the 28-M election results. In this respect, Antena 3 is the channel that made most references to these results and the one that used most expressions, and the one with the most symbolic or connotative charge: Antena 3 talked about the "PSOE landslide", the "defeat" (of the PSOE), the "great victory of the Popular Party", "the 'blue tide' sweeps over Spain", the "incontestable victory", the "debacle of the PSOE", the "resounding victory of the Popular Party", "incontestable results", "euphoria in the PP headquarters", "the disastrous result of the PSOE", "the ballot boxes punish the PSOE". Antena 3 highlighted that the only socialist leader who "resisted" (on 28-M) is Emiliano García Page, qualifying that it is "striking" that he is "Pedro Sanchez´s most critical leader", thus suggesting editorial bias links.

During the introduction, Antena 3 news presenter explicitly refered to the fact that "these local and regional elections were basically a plebiscite between Sánchez and Feijóo" and that "the unquestionable results of the PP [on 28-M] consolidate its leader [Feijóo] with just a year of management at Génova". Although the 28-M elections were local and regional, Antena 3 repeatedly presented these results as a punitive response to the central government's management and, especially, to the figure of Pedro Sánchez. In a specific report on ENT+VTR, Antena 3 linked the PSOE's poor local and regional election results with the Spanish government alliances throughout the legislature ("with the Catalan independence movement and Bildu"); with "disagreements with its partners in government" (especially with Unidas Podemos) and with some of the measures adopted at national level during the legislature, such as the Criminal Code reform to reduce the crimes of embezzlement and sedition "in favour of independence" and the "only yes is yes" law, the "Irene Montero´s star law that caused a trickle of releases of sexual offenders and that the PSOE later had to reform".

TVE is possibly at the opposite extreme to Antena 3. It is much more restrained semantically and spoke only of the PSOE's "bad results" on 28 March. In the public broadcaster there was only one editorial appeal with a certain connotative or exaggerated charge when referring to the "PSOE debacle". The phrase "tragedy in the progressive bloc", heard on La 1 news programme, is attributed to sources from the Unidas Podemos party. Similarly to Antena 3, TVE also included an ENT+VTR piece in its news programme as a review of the central government's legislative period, but with very different news angles to those of Antena 3, as La 1 news programme talked about "the first legislative period of a coalition government in our democracy" and that "they have also been four years marked by events far beyond our borders: the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the inflation crisis". Throughout the VTR, TVE highlights measures such as the labour reform "agreed with employers and trade unions", the pension reform, the increase in the minimum wage, the minimum subsistence income, the euthanasia law, the housing law and the forthcoming Spanish Presidency of the European Union; The public broadcaster's report did not avoid references to criticisms made by the opposition and some members of the PSOE. These criticisms include the measures adopted by the state government in relation to the Catalan Procés and the "clashes" between government partners, with explicit reference to the "only yes is yes" law and military support for Ukraine. In Telecinco there was talk of an "unquestionable victory" and a single phrase alluding to the "electoral debacle of the PSOE". On La Sexta there was talk of a "socialist landslide", "very bad result" (for the PSOE), "electoral upheaval" and "overwhelming victory for the Partido Popular".

Qualitatively, in terms of the appearance of the sources and the content of their "totals", there are also differences between the respective channels. On Antena 3, as on Telecinco, although to a lesser extent and intensity, there was a predominance of triumphalist assessments by members of the winning parties on 28-M, especially the PP, and defeatist assessments by the losers, especially the PSOE. On TVE, practically all the "totals" from political sources refered to the early elections. On La Sexta, there was a better balance between "totals" referring to the early elections and those referring to the 28-M elections. La Sexta adds the opinion of several experts and citizens on the electoral progress, and when it comes to "totals" on 28-M, these are very much oriented towards the pacts for the formation of future local and regional governments.

5. Conclusions

In general, there is a great deal of thematic coincidence in the news programmes analysed, but at the same time a significant diversity in terms of the journalistic approach to the specific events reported (OG). The news treatment of the events analysed by the four TV channels analysed differs significantly, especially between certain channels. The most notable differences (P1 and P2) are between Antena 3 and TVE. Antena 3 gives quantitative and qualitative priority to information about the results of the 28-M elections, while TVE gives priority to the announcement of the election results. The difference in the time devoted by Antena 3 and TVE to the respective news events is very noticeable and significant, it is a clear indication of the prominence of the 28-M results in Antena 3's news and of the announcement of the election results in TVE's news. The difference in news prominence between Antena 3 and TVE can also be seen in the unequal use of formats and genres for the more or less in-depth journalistic treatment

of the two news events. Antena 3 devoted more in-depth pieces to the results of 28-M, while TVE did the same for the announcement of the early elections.

Telecinco is more in line with Antena 3, although not as markedly so, and La Sexta is more in line with TVE, but also less markedly so, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The channel that offers the best balance between the two news events, in terms of time devoted and the formats and genres used for each event, is La Sexta.

From a qualitative point of view, editorial positions or biases can be observed in all the channels, especially in Antena 3 and TVE, although to a lesser extent in the latter than in the former. The analysis of the news discourse leads us to speak of a clear alignment of Antena 3 with the interests of the PP, and to a lesser extent in the case of Telecinco. TVE shows a certain alignment with the PSOE, albeit modulated, as in the case of La Sexta. Regarding the use of sources, there is relative homogeneity in the selection of sources by the channels, but all of them show a dimension of unequal access according to their editorial bias, which produces incomplete information, and a dimension of unbalanced treatment through preferential or unfavourable editorial procedures (P3 and H1).

It can be concluded that the editorial lines of the respective channels (Antena 3 and Telecinco, conservative line; TVE and La Sexta, progressive line) (Humanes, 2014) determine their informative approaches to news events (P4). As a public service channel, TVE should not have an editorial line in terms of positioning between political parties. However, our study reveals a political influence on TVE (H2). The third research hypothesis (H3) is confirmed, although only partially, since the announcement of an electoral advance diverts attention, more so in the case of TVE, or attenuates it, in the case of the other channels, to the results of the 28-M elections

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