

Programming Strategies and Possible Places for Constructing a Public Image of Immigration: the 2002/2003 Season in Catalonia

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■ *A comparative study of the programming policies of the major television networks makes it possible to appreciate opportunities of access and how social conflicts are posited as public problems. In the case of problems deriving from immigration to Spain, the programming strategies of the major stations determine the supply of possible places for constructing a public image on immigration-related issues. This article summarises a study of the free-to-air television offer in Catalonia during the 2002/2003 season, made up basically of the coverage of the three Spanish networks TVE-1, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV, and the Catalan regional station TV3. A comparative analysis of the four programming schedules suggests significant differences between the two public stations and between them and the private ones: a strategy of silence used at TVE-1, a notable pre-sence at TV3 and fictional options at Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV.*

Key words

Programming policies, immigration, news treatment, conflict, television, public opinion

1. Introduction

The particular problem arising from migration from the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Asia and their new settlements is common in EU countries. Conflict generated with regards immigration is seen in the debates that have taken place in Europe over the past decade, which deal with both the processes of regularisation or control of access to immigrants and issues such as integration, identity, multiculturalism, political rights, racism and xenophobia.

The complexity of these social problems translates into an increasingly vast diversification of media discourses in the media's work of constructing a public image about immigration in our most immediate context. It involves a diversification that goes beyond thematic spheres to cover the variety of discursive strategies used in the media: immigration is shown on TV news shows and other programmes not only in the form of information but also as fiction and viewer entertainment.

An analysis of the programming strategies of the highest-rating stations among the free-to-air channels in Catalonia during the 2002/2003 season enables us to note these trends as well as the way the stations positioned themselves as social actors, the discursive strategies they used and the spaces they reserved for constructing a public image of immigration in Spain.

This article presents part of the results of a broader research project entitled "Television and the Construction of a Public Image of Immigration in Spain", funded by the Ministry for Science and Technology as part of the 2001-2003 National Knowledge Plan¹.

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2. Television Programming Policies: Station Strategies as Narrator and Social Actor

Television programming policies, like the strategy of the station that transmits them, respond to a multiplicity of conditioning factors that can be grouped into two major dimensions: economic (which responds to advertising funding on the basis of ratings) and cultural (which refers to the relationship between the station and public on the basis of particular content)².

Factors in the first dimension include station goal according to the hierarchical order of functions it has to meet, which is largely defined by management type (public or private); its classification as a generalist or special-interest station, and whether it is a free-to-air or pay channel. The selection of TV stations that were the study object of this analysis (TVE-1, Tele-5, Antena 3 TV and TV3) were among the latter group, i.e., they all formed part of the free-to-air TV offer in Catalonia.

To these factors we should add other more specific ones that affect the programming policy of each broadcaster: return on investment, performance of the advertising market, socio-geographic coverage area, target public and competition between stations and other audiovisual uses.

With regards the cultural dimension and the relationship the station establishes with the public, there are a number of preliminary considerations that are the hallmarks of TV today: flow programming³, television viewing habits and potential public and definition of television genres.

Viewing habits and seasonal variables marked by a country's social lifestyle and cultural habits determine the definition of the stages of the season and the viewing times of television programming according to needs (news, entertainment, etc.) at each time of the day. This means an analysis of programming by timeslots speaks not only to the public at which the station is aimed but also the intended scope of spaces where it is possible to address social problems such as immigration, according to the position on the programming schedule⁴.

With regards television genres, any systematic classification of programming would remove us from the current context of programmers and television producers who increasingly plump for "container" programmes that include

elements from different genres, or programmes where a genre hybrid is the essential feature.

Some key trends in programming in recent seasons reaffirm the dissolution of genres. One example is the application of 'cross-genre' strategies in particular stations' programming schedules, whereby content from a top-rating programme (generally a reality show) is included in all the station's talk shows. This practice has even generated a style that goes beyond supplying content from a particular programme to instead become a feature of and reference point between station programmes. This confirms the principle of flow television and in some cases can lead to the extreme of progressive content homogenisation⁵.

Taking into account the matters shown here, we adopted a certain generic denomination of programme groups: news (general, sports, specialised, weekly, etc.), entertainment (infotainment shows, game shows, talk shows, chat shows, general entertainment programmes) and television fiction (specifically inhouse productions). We excluded sports broadcasts and foreign film fiction from our analysis as we considered them to be productions not strictly related to television and because we saw they had little impact on the explicit treatment of the issue of immigration as defined herein⁶.

This generic denomination makes no attempt at being exhaustive but is simply an operative orientation, as the goal was to discern the way each programme addressed social issues like immigration. The type of treatment was observed on the basis of programme format or genre and each one's ability to transmit a discourse on difficulties or progress made in the integration of migrants; publish figures or reports about migrant groups; or offer spaces for a public debate about questions of social interest related to immigration⁷.

3. Possible Places to Construct a Public Image of Immigration Via Television Stations

The comparative analysis that follows emphasises the existence of spaces that could easily include the presence of social issues like immigration, contextualised within programming schedules to try to assess the importance and scope that each station gave to these issues, as well as the coverage of them that they promoted.

The delimitation of these possible places in television programming made it possible to define fragments of television broadcasting that were key elements in analysing the construction of a public image of immigration via the selected television stations, i.e., defining the significant sample on which it would be possible to analyse the presence and treatment of this issue in the television discourse. Also, by contextualising the importance and scope of these possible places, we could see the mediation role each station awarded itself in its work as a political actor who promoted particular social constructions of the issue of migration.

Broadly speaking, the three Spanish and one Catalan station used in the analysis presented a practically stable programming structure on work days and weekends alike throughout the 2002/2003 season. The main variations responded to particular feast or holiday days and vacation periods. This, together with the need to keep this analysis brief, led us to present the results obtained by each station in the fashion of an outline, focusing particularly on programming from the months of September to December and March to June, the heaviest viewing periods of the year.

3.1. TVE-1: Absence of Immigration Beyond News Shows

In the 2002/2003 season, TVE-1 had a programming policy in line with sector trends, although it displayed an attitude of risk reduction that practically eliminated new concepts from the schedule altogether. Under the Popular Party government's second term, the public station opted for entertainment shows in primetime and limited any difference with the programming schedules of its private competitors.

The backbone of the station's programming was its various news shows, although besides *Telediario* and the traditional *Informe Semanal*, spaces devoted to generalist information were conspicuous by their absence. The presentation of issues of difficulties or progress in the integration of immigrants, or figures or reports on immigration were limited to the space of one-hour reports per week or the 45-minute news shows.

The station's programming policy with regards inhouse fictional series showed they were a privileged product clearly capable of gaining a loyal primetime following. The season analysed featured *Ana y los 7*, *Cuéntame* and *La*

vida de Rita. *Ana y los 7* is a comedy in the tradition of TVE-1's sitcoms (e.g., *Hostal Royal Manzanares*) that was not only its highest-rating show but was also very popular amongst younger viewers. *Cuéntame cómo pasó* was comedy as a historical review and, thanks to its quality format (the show has repeatedly won prizes) added to its functions that of establishing itself as an image standard of the station brand to an extent that the comedy about everyday life *La vida de Rita* was unable to do in its five broadcasts, despite a significant production effort.

Despite that, none of the three series presented the issue of immigration either in the main storyline or through any other plot or character. This is significant, because the absence of immigration in a fictional series implies an absence of stories in which questions are established relating to the integration of migrants in structures of conflict and resolution, i.e., the presentation of difficulties and progress towards coexistence. It renounces the representation of behaviours and attitudes linked to this social problem and, in short, the recognition of the existence of immigration as a social reality that occupies our stories⁸.

Another noteworthy aspect of TVE-1's programming policies was the uniformity of the morning and afternoon slots, aimed at a predominantly female, adult audience. This meant that children and young people's programming was relegated to the weekends and in turn featured spaces that could present public issues like immigration on the weekdays. These spaces, although different in structure and treatment, shared elemental features. In the context of the season analysed, they included: the talk show *Por la mañana* and the informative programme *Saber vivir* in the morning block, the interview show *Cerca de ti* in the afternoon, and, in the night access slot, the magazine/report format of *Gente*, somewhere between entertainment information and commentary on society and the world of celebrity gossip.

In both the section on current events in *Por la mañana* and the first half of *Gente*, issues are presented with a format similar to the news, but with a treatment of proximity that falls somewhere between the anecdotal and most pure form of sensationalism on the one hand, and thorny real-life crimes on the other. The same thing was found in the afternoon interview programme *Cerca de ti*, although it increased the manner of exploiting intimacy as it selec-

ted issues and content directly linked to interpersonal relationships from the private sphere.

As programmes that could offer spaces for debating social and public issues, we found on TVE-1 only the potential of *Saber vivir*, restricted to the health field, and *Ésta es mi historia*, a debate format about personal stories, although this was in the night slot.

With regards the former, there was a complete absence of any reference to the issue of immigration, which led us to think that either immigration involves neither any positive or negative changes in the field of health and public health, or that immigration does not exist, at least for this programme that purports to be a public service.

The second, *Ésta es mi historia*, is defined by being the only space open to debating public issues of social concern and which could most easily tend to include issues of immigration. The debate dynamic, even though the tone is one of controversy and exacerbation, at least promotes the exchange of opinions and even the public manifestation of discrepancies on issues such as immigration-related crime, coexistence between different cultures and changes needed for integration. However, in the 2002/2003 season, there was no evidence that any of these questions were discussed on *Ésta es mi historia*.

In short, TVE-1's programming in the 2002/2003 season was aimed mainly at a female, adult audience, which wanted a regular news service and a high level of entertainment content. Entertainment was provided by comedy and game shows and by news programmes, interview programmes and news formats where the content was based on the world of celebrities and news in briefs. The inhouse fictional offer was very limited, although it did have a consolidated trajectory.

Spaces that could have transmitted immigration-related content of a public nature were limited to the four news programmes, the hour devoted to *Informe Semanal* on the low-rating Saturday night slot, and potentially the sections that offered reports on current events on *Por la mañana* and *Gente*. To this we should add the possibility of *Ésta es mi historia* establishing a debate which, although controversial, could address public issues. However, the transmission time of this space, on Fridays just before the dawn slot, speaks to the weight the station gives to these types of public forums and media debates.

3.2. Antena 3 TV: Immigration in Fiction to Complement News Spaces

Like TVE-1, Antena 3 TV's programming was grounded on the four news programmes. But unlike the public station, the daily *A3Noticias* news spaces were shored up by significant dedication to information in morning slots, thanks to the new space *Buenos días, España* and the interview and debate format provided by *El primer café*. I should also add two programmes that fell halfway between information and show business and which aired in low-rating time slots: *Espejo público*, before Sunday night prime time, and *Alerta 112*, in the early hours of Friday mornings.

Espejo included more in-depth and up-close reports on daily current affairs, while *Alerta 112* focused on attractive images and extraordinary events. These included situations of conflict and tension in the form of warnings from emergency services officers, which, because of their treatment, tended to be entertainment pieces using examples of isolated cases rather than contextualised information on conflictive events.

With regards inhouse fictional programming, Antena 3 TV had a number of consecutive failures in its premieres throughout the season: *London Street* was the first to fold, after just three episodes; *Código fuego*, one of a number of workplace-based series, this time set in a fire station, got to five episodes; *Un lugar en el mundo* aired all 13 episodes of the first season but only when moved to the dawn slot, while production on *El pantano* was abandoned altogether. In fact, changing places on the schedule was one of the factors that collaborated in the speedy demise of these fictional premieres in a context of a financial crisis at the station and therefore the need for slashed production costs. The fictional series that survived the season was not a premiere but the consolidated classic *Un paso adelante*⁹.

This cordial series featured the issue of immigration in a constant fashion, as it included among the characters and main storylines a Cuban character called Pável, who gave rise to diverse plots relating to the integration of immigrants. The series provided significant material for analysing conflict and resolution structures that we found in scenes where the main problem in the storyline concerned immigration.

Uniform morning and afternoon blocks aimed predominantly at a female, adult audience, as seen at TVE-1, were repeated at Antena 3 TV. However, the private station did

not relegate children and youth programming to the weekend, and aired the children's "container programme" *Megatrix* in the morning and reduced *Buenos días, España* after Easter.

The spaces that occupied the morning and afternoon slots followed a logic that proved to be common to all the Spanish stations over the course of the season: the rise in 'gossip magazine'-style content. Morning chat shows were structured around diverse sections and the presenters and collaborators varied, but broadly speaking they followed the same development.

In terms of Antena 3 TV, it is important to mention a lesser dedication to issues of a public nature in the programme *Como la vida*, presented by Alicia Senovilla. This was due to the already mentioned 'cross-genre' content arising from a top-rating programme, in this case the adventure reality show *La isla de los famosos*.

On the other hand, the treatment of public issues from the standpoint of illustrated examples of regular people's lives was the predominant formula in the afternoons. This formula was common to Ana Rosa Quintana's chat show, *Sabor a ti* and the programme *El diario de Patricia*, which aired after it.

Sabor a ti devoted a section to briefly interviewing people involved in stories that did not transcend the personal sphere of development¹⁰. The afternoon interview show *El diario de Patricia* was a testimonial programme based on stories of regular people who allow their daily lives to be used in the programme's feature topic or discussion to exhibit private feelings. The general trend of featuring sometimes less than exemplary behaviour not to be debated or questioned unless via laughing at or mocking the people concerned does not allow immigration to be treated as a public issue.

In short, Antena 3 TV's programming in the 2002/2003 season opted for regular news services and (because of the failure of its inhouse television fiction) films and entertainment programmes: i.e., game shows and chat and interview programmes.

Its commercial orientation was shown in the scarce presence of possible places for the construction of public issues or social problems such as immigration. From among the best-rating entertainment places, there was only room on spaces like *Alerta 112*, and, in a private capacity, in the testimonial sections of *Sabor a ti* and *El diario de Patricia*.

The weight of the analysis must lie with the daily news shows, the weekly programme *Espejo público* and the fictional series *Un paso adelante*.

3.3. Tele-5: The Potential of Television Fiction in the Construction of the Issue of Immigration

Similarly to Antena 3 TV, Tele-5 also devoted its first morning time slot to supporting its news services with an interview and debate programme, *La mirada crítica*. This was the only news space that rounded off the daily editions of the *Informativos Telecinco* news programmes.

With regards inhouse fictional series, Tele-5's premieres did not fail as heavily as Antena 3 TV's, but they did suffer from the station's attempt to exploit the new cycle of inhouse fiction. *Una nueva vida*, a sequel to *Hospital Central* starring the well-known gynaecologist from the latter, did not survive five broadcasts, while *Javier ya no vive solo* found its footing after a second season on the wane. This series modified its approach by placing the star in a children and youth protection centre, which made it possible to introduce social issues that went beyond the family structure.

The classic workplace-based series *El comisario* and *Hospital Central* continued to win the Tuesday and Wednesday primetime slots. And, after a number of programming adjustments, Sunday nights were a success for the classic sitcom *Siete vidas*. However, the series that consolidated its position as the station's top rating show was the family comedy *Los Serrano*.

Tele-5's inhouse fictional series were the perfect place to address public social issues like immigration, firstly because of the workplace-based series set in the health and police spheres where the stories presented were inspired by real events and revealed current social issues. It was not unusual to find plots where immigration appeared as an issue through characters or situations in which immigrants were involved and where their condition as an immigrant marked the evolution of the storyline. To this we could also add *Javier ya no vive solo*, where the plotlines concerned issues such as child anorexia, sexual or racial discrimination, xenophobic violence and others.

On the other hand, comedy series were also permeable to issues such as immigration. *Los Serrano* presented a group of school friends of one of the family's children which included an Argentinean and a Moroccan. *Siete vidas* parti-

cular form of humour was based on current events and the ironic criticism of problematic situations.

Television fictional series dominated the station's prime-time slots throughout the season. The alternative was imported series (the premiere of *CSI*) and reality shows along the lines of *Gran Hermano*: i.e., *Hotel Glam* and *Vive cantando*. Also, Tele-5's 'gossip magazine'-style shows included one long one, *Salsa Rosa*, on Saturdays and, in the first months of the season, the broadcasting of another controversial programme, *A corazón abierto*. Tele-5 opted for films to a lesser extent than Antena 3 TV (*Cine 5 estrellas*), but it did programme them on weekend afternoons (*Cine Fiesta*).

With regards morning and afternoon programming, the uniformity of the blocks already discussed in the cases of TVE-1 and Antena 3 TV also applied here, but Tele-5 varied them slightly over the course of the season. The failure of the youth series *20 y tantos*, which tried to emulate the great success of the earlier show *Al salir de clase*, led the station to overhaul its programming. In the second quarter of 2003 it premiered *Aquí hay tomate*, a chat show characterised by its irreverent and provocative tone. Another show to disappear was the interview programme *Nadie es perfecto*, when it failed to reach minimally acceptable ratings after a month on air. It was replaced by the US series *Charmed* and the daily summary of *Hotel Glam*.

In fact, *Hotel Glam* was one of the main content suppliers to Tele-5's immovable morning and afternoon chat shows, *Día a día* and *A tu lado*. The structure of each gave rise to the appearance of sections of a variable length and presence throughout the week where the issue of immigration could potentially be raised.

While *A tu lado* included a brief testimonial interview space as the only section not devoted to gossip, María Teresa Campos' *Día a día* included a discourse unrelated to this type of stereotype in the form of the section dedicated to commenting on current events. Unlike TVE-1's morning programme, it established a debate between the collaborators and the programme presenter that could be analysed as a commentary on the news agenda of the day.

An ironic and humoristic commentary was offered by the format *Pecado original* after the nightly news. Through an anonymous presenter, who changed each episode, different sections were connected ranging from strange things

found on the Internet through to parodies of the most controversial news stories of the day. The emphasis on political and social stories made this programme a possible place for a discourse on public issues that go beyond the strictly news and/or fictional genres.

After July, Tele-5's morning programming became a clear attempt to capture children and youth audiences via series and repeats. One new fictional series that was a failure, although a discreet one, was the comedy *Tres son multitud*, which did not survive the summer period. Fiction repeats and the broadcasting of feature-length films made up for the lack of inhouse premieres during the holidays.

In short, Tele-5's programming in the 2002/2003 season backed regular news services, inhouse and foreign fiction and reality shows and programmes dedicated to gossip as the main source of entertainment. This limited the number of possible places for the construction of immigration as a social problem. Together with the daily news shows and *La Mirada crítica*, there were a number of inhouse fictional series, especially ones set in workplaces or of a public nature. With regards the rest of the programming, social issues were relegated to the sections of the two morning and afternoon chat shows, and the former was the only one that did in fact address them.

The scarce presence of spaces to transmit public issues again revealed the commercial orientation of the private Spanish stations. Far from a broad proposal to complement the public service, they built their corporate image to include a certain amount of work that extended from information shows through to certain special programmes.

At Tele-5, as well as televised charity events, there was an initiative called *Doce meses, doce causas* which consisted of approaching an issue or problem of a social nature through a campaign made up of adds starring station celebrities, a brief section in the news, the odd one-off report and special editions of the afternoon chat shows. These played two roles: to make people more aware of the problem concerned and to reinforce the station's corporate image. Issues relating to immigration were not the 'cause' under discussion in the season analysed.

3.4. TV3: Support for the Construction of Immigration as a Public Issue: Plural and Diverse Presence

TV3, the leading station of the Catalan autonomous

company Televisió de Catalunya (TVC), which has been broadcasting regularly since 1984, publishes its programming goals and criteria on its website each year and emphasizes its work as a leading broadcaster for Catalan viewers and its desire to maintain its ratings leadership with a varied and plural programming offer. In terms of the 2002/2003 season, the station particularly established the goal of shoring up news shows and consolidating the inhouse fictional offer, along with chat shows, documentaries and new formats¹¹.

Unlike the Spanish stations, TV3 offers not just regular news shows (morning, lunchtime, evening and night) but a series of programmes and spaces devoted to a greater or lesser extent to general information which, with an absolutely diversified presence on the programming schedule and different treatment on its programming schedule, enable the presentation of issues of a public nature. Chat shows based on news current affairs that do not resemble the dominant model aimed at gossip and the world of show business (*Bon dia, Catalunya, La columna*), interview and debate programmes (*Coses que passen, En camp contrari*), local news (*En directe*), reports (*Entre línies*) and documentaries (*30 minuts*) are just some of the spaces that make it possible to expand the reduced information of the classic news format and go into greater depth into knowledge about and public debate on difficulties and progress in migrant integration beyond the publication of institutional data and reports or the immediacy of the political/social news agenda. These programmes, that air at all times of the day and night, mainly have entertainment and guidance functions, but give most priority to information as a transversal and cohesive element of the Catalan station's programming.

With regard fiction as a pillar of quality and cultural proximity, internally produced series were the station's clear bet for optimal yield in the primetime slots. *El cor de la ciutat*, a series that aired each day after the news, was the leader in the lunchtime primetime slot as well as being the station's most-watched show. The presence in the night primetime of inhouse shows, mostly comedies or humour programmes, was also important: *16 dobles*, *Majoria absoluta*, *Dinamita*, *Jet lag* and repeats of *Plats bruts* and *La memòria dels Cargols*.

In terms of the treatment of immigration through various

characters and storylines, one highlight was the most dramatic ensemble series *El cor de la ciutat*, which during the analysed period included as stars of the main storylines the Moroccan immigrant, Huari, who is fully integrated in the Barcelona neighbourhood where the action is set and, when he disappeared, the Cuban immigrant, Nelson. With this new regular character, the station entered discourses about the acceptance of new foreign members of a reception community via structures of conflicts and resolutions that demonstrated possible types of behaviour and attitudes with regards mutual knowledge and the integration of social habits and which revealed some of the difficulties and progress in immigrant integration and the progressive formation of new cultural identities.

The existence of immigration as a social reality of great importance was transferred to other TV3 fictional stories in a form that was not so realistic, such as in *16 dobles*, where an immigrant from Eastern Europe raised the issue of marriages of convenience to obtain legal resident status, or the comedy *Majoria absoluta*, which included a young South American in a rather eclectic family. The treatment of the issue of immigration in TV3's inhouse fictional discourses was not only broad but also plural in forms and references.

As with the Spanish stations, TV3's morning and afternoon blocks were uniform, although, as we have said before, they stood out for a greater news component in the morning and afternoon chat shows. This involved a greater potential for the presentation of public issues in these time slots. The morning chat show *Bon dia, Catalunya* was based around current issues as debate topics of the day with the participation of the public and included the controversy surrounding immigration in schools and the need to rebalance the number of immigrants at public schools (80%) with the number at subsidised centres (5%) and to implement integration methods.

The programme that occupied this time slot between March and July 2003, *Dies de tele*, also allowed a significant and more unexpected presence of the issue of immigration, as the events section raised the issue of international adoptions by repeating a report on Chinese orphanages that had led to a rise in the number of adoptions in Catalonia; the integration of the Muslim community through the battle of the mosques; and the image of immigration-related crime,

which it showed by recovering a report on Peruvians who rob travellers on Catalan motorways.

The afternoon slot, on the other hand, softened the news component in favour of a family-based, quotidian treatment of 'issues that interest us all' in politics, society and culture. The plurality criterion of Julia Otero's show, *La columna*, diversified the characters that appeared: from politicians and professionals through to all types of anonymous people who play a role in the social reality. This approach, the multiplicity of different sections that appeared throughout the week, and the desire to break from the trend of focusing on gossip or private issues made *La columna* a reference point in terms of approach towards immigration-related issues. To complement this line, in the night access spot we found *En directe*, a local news show based on connections with young reporters who interact with the protagonists of the stories. They looked at issues related to social questions to the extent that they configure the current situation of the Catalan society they try to reflect from a local angle. Examples from the season studied included the immigrant sit-in staged in churches, the integration problems of some migrant groups and the cleaning works in the Sant Andreu barracks occupied by immigrants.

The Catalan station stood out for its inclusion of the issue of immigration in primetime programmes due, to a large extent, to the strong formative and news vocation revealed even in spaces which in recent years are usually related with the field of entertainment. A particular example was the report programme on social issues that went to air at 10.30 p.m. on Mondays called *Entre línies*, which frequently addressed aspects related to immigration on the basis of following real stories¹².

Also, the new debate format through reflection generated by coexistence between people of opposite opinions, *En camp contrari*, addressed the issue of immigration by looking at the difficulties of integration involved for both the newcomers and society alike.

This issue was raised in a similar fashion in the current affairs debate programme *Coses que passen* on Sunday nights, although it focused on the need to learn Catalan. Before this space, the station rebroadcast the classic in-depth report programme, *30 minuts*, which has been internationally recognised and where social issues related to immigration often appear¹³.

To this we should add sporadic appearances of the issue of immigration, filtered in a more subtle manner, such as in *Vides de pel·lícula*, a night interview programme broadcast in summer: the transmission of the film *Out of Africa* was followed by an interview with a young African living in Catalonia; and the variations on a number of programmes of *La setmana de TV3* devoted to Africa (*Totes les cares d'Àfrica*), an initiative of the station which aimed to provide the public with reflection elements on social values by showing them a number of realities or issues not normally addressed with the depth they deserve. Although the issue was not specifically immigration, it did touch on its origins and causes.

In short, TV3's programming in the 2002/2003 season, aimed at a majority public, characterised by being mainly middle class and adult, clearly shored up its news and formative nature as well as fictional stories as a basic pillar of entertainment.

The presence of the issue of immigration was extended across practically all the time slots with a special significance in primetime and through any genre.

It is especially significant that the programmes which featured the issue of immigration nearly always addressed it from the perspective of the integration or conflicts arising from it, although debates were established in the manner of a public and media forum. It is even more significant that some of them appeared on the station's most emblematic and highest-rating shows. This makes it possible to conclude that the Catalan station's programming throughout the study period was very sensitive to this issue and it was addressed extensively.

4. Conclusions

The comparative analysis of the programming policies of the Spanish and Catalan generalist stations made it possible to show the common and divergent aspects in their positioning as social actors with responsibility for the programming of the most popular television stations in terms of the construction of the public image of immigration. As a conclusive summary, we have noted a number of reflections on the delimitation and scope of the places that the analysed stations offered on their programming schedules for the

construction of issues of a public nature such as immigration, along with an analysis of the strategies they used to address them. A first element common to all the stations analysed was without a doubt that the daily news shows, in their various editions, were the leading station references with regards their role as a social and political actor through the narration of the daily reality. The difference was the stations that complemented the rigid format of the daily news (subject to the imperatives of currentness and novelty, as well as brevity of onscreen time) with diverse formats that provided an alternative to the news treatment.

While TVE-1 reduced the possibility of addressing the issue of immigration as a problem of a public nature almost exclusively to the news formats in its editions of the *Telediario*, the private Spanish stations offered, in their morning slots, in-depth discussion or treatment spaces of this and other issues on the public agenda (*Buenos días, España* and *El primer café* on Antena 3 TV, *La mirada crítica* on Tele-5, and *Bon dia, Catalunya* on TV3).

Except for Tele-5, which opted for a humorous and ironic commentary on the news agenda (*Pecado original*), all the stations analysed had a common tendency in the afternoon or access slots to give space to more extensive reports that opted for an approach of proximity both in audiovisual style and in terms of the socio-geographic boundary mark, although with different nuances (*En directe* on TV3, *Espejo público* on Antena 3 TV and *Gente* on TVE-1).

However, the Catalan regional station was the one that stood out in this informational work circumscribed to regular editions and an evening format of proximity. TV3 expanded and diversified the offer of programmes whose principal goal was to report both with regards discursive strategies (interviews, reports, onset debates and documentaries were some of the proposals presented) and the location of these spaces on the schedule, mainly in primetime viewing hours (*Coses que passen*, *En camp contrari*, *Entre línies*, *30 minuts*). The Catalan station opted for constructing the issue of immigration as a public problem with a broad and plural scope in news terms, which enabled it to not only publish data and reports on immigration but also transmit discourses about difficulties or progress in the integration of immigrants, or to generate and promote public debates about questions of social interest related with immigration.

The presence of information in primetime contrasted

with the programming policy of the Spanish stations, which opted exclusively for an entertainment offer to maximise ratings. In the 2002/2003 seasons, this offer involved reality shows and, to a lesser extent, inhouse fictional series.

Reality shows were the star programmes not just in ratings but also particularly in terms of potential to generate content that could nourish spaces outside the primetime slots. The 2002/2003 season showed the expansion of this phenomenon in the Spanish stations, where the homogenisation of the morning and afternoon blocks was indisputable. This reduced the possibility of creating possible places for the construction of immigration as a public issue, as the spaces proposed, which were practically identical from one station to another, aside from the content of the reality show in question, were limited to the private sphere and the anonymous testimonial sections of general members of the public and did not go beyond the exhibition of singular experiences, thus avoiding articulating a debate on the public dimension of the issues concerned.

The Catalan station also stood out in this area because, without having any reality show on its schedule, it presented a longer morning chat show which addressed current-affairs issues that required reflection or a social debate because of their nature of a public problem. Similarly, the afternoon chat show *La columna* stood out from its Spanish counterparts because although entertainment continued to be the main goal, it chose more social and local content (fashion, television, film, etc.) to avoid gossip and the exploitation of the private sphere.

The other big entertainment genre was the fictional offer, which contributed to the creation of the stations' corporate image and provided an essential value for television programming, i.e., the promotion of viewer loyalty.

In the context of a season where innovation in fictional series was left to the private Spanish stations and which primetime premieres cornered, it was interesting to see the audience's response in favour of series with a consolidated trajectory (*Un paso adelante* on Antena 3 TV; *El comisario* and *Hospital Central* on Tele-5). This, together with the fact that they involved fictional series set in the health, police or education sectors, which acted as a source of inspiration, made them an essential reference point for analysing the construction of the public image of immigration in Spain.

Fiction activated a field of discursive strategies that enabled the establishment of logical links among actions shown and, therefore, readings and reflections on types of behaviour and attitudes represented with regards conflicts arising from the integration of immigrants in a narrated social context that resembled the real one. That is why the absence of immigration as an issue, whether through episode plots or regular characters, was especially significant in the only two inhouse series of the Spanish public station. At the opposite end of the spectrum was the Catalan station again, not just for a constant presence of the issue of immigration in its inhouse fictional programmes but because of its plural and diversified fictional offer.

As an overall conclusion to the comparative analysis of the programming strategies of the generalist stations in the 2002/2003 season, we could mention a clear disparity between the Catalan public station and the Spanish stations, regardless of whether they were private or public.

If we judge by the sensitivity, plurality and diversity of treatment and presence of the issue of immigration that was observed in the analysis of the 2002/2003 season, the constant effort TV3 made to meet the programming criteria that the station set in its public service condition was clear to see.

On the other hand, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV, in line with their commercial goals as privately managed stations, established themselves as active political and social actors through the editorial line of their daily news shows and fictional series. The latter became a clear element of relation between the station and the surrounding social reality, as it was framed in a context of television programming where reality shows and interview programmes and gossip content held sway and which thus prevented an active role on other fronts.

Finally, it is important to point out that TVE-1 opted for a position that was no doubt closer to that of its competitors at the Spanish level than its public counterpart in Catalonia. Its work as a social and political actor in such a burning issue as the problem of immigration in the context of the 2002/2003 television season was a long way from the firm, plural and diverse approach of TV3, and was reduced practically to an informational minimum, and its most significant feature was its absence.

In short, we found a clear divergence in the analysis of the

programming strategies of the Spanish and Catalan generalist stations, both in terms of opportunity or offer of possible places as in terms of discursive treatment of issues of public interest such as the problems arising from migration. These differences were what made it possible to assess their role as social and political actors in the construction of the public image of immigration in Spain.

Notes

- 1 The research project entitled "Television and the Construction of a Public Image of Immigration in Spain" was carried out by the UNICA Group at Pompeu Fabra University under Dr. Josep Gifreu.
- 2 See: J. M. Contreras and M. Palaus, 2001.
- 3 Flow or continuous programming to attract and maintain ratings throughout the television process is redefining the very act of programming as a strategy for constructing the television discourse beyond discreet units.
- 4 Television timeslots in Spain have been consolidated among the different stations into nine: early morning (7-9 a.m.) which marks the start of most people's school or work day; morning (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.); lunch (1 p.m. to 3 p.m.), when students and some members of the workforce return home; day primetime (3 p.m. to 4 p.m.); a long afternoon slot (4 p.m. to 7 p.m.), night access (7 p.m. to 9 p.m.); night primetime (9 p.m. to midnight), i.e., the time with maximum television viewing; late night, a slot that began in the 1990s (midnight to 2 a.m.) and finally the final slot, where viewing figures are not taken by Sofres in Spain, called dawn (2 a.m. to 7 a.m.) to close the cycle. [Contreras, J. M. and Palaus, M., 2001].
- 5 This was confirmed as a perception shared by people who study television programming in our immediate context, and as a significant demonstration there is the point made by the Catalonia Broadcasting Council in its 2003 Report (*Quaderns del CAC*, extraordinary issue September 2004, page 40).
- 6 The basic premises that delimited our study of immigration were the consideration of migrants from the EU or outside it in the context of contemporary Spain. We could add that we only studied television spaces that featured the explicit presence of immigration as a topic. For example, the appearance of an immigrant on the television palimpsest was not in itself relevant, except if his or her condition as an immigrant was the issue addressed in the programme.
- 7 The reference to this functional classification, adopted using strictly pragmatic criteria, can be found in the report entitled "*Inmigración y racismo. Análisis de radio, televisión y prensa española. Informe anual 2002*" ("*Immigration and Racism: Analysis of Spanish Radio, Television and Press. 2002 Annual Report*"), Ministry for Work and Social Affairs.
- 8 For a more detailed analysis of this perspective on the approach to fiction as an element of social construction as a story of a society for itself and of itself, see the reference work by sociologist Milly Buonanno published in Spanish (*El drama televisivo*. Barcelona, Ed. Gedisa, 1999).
- 9 A series set in a dance academy, aimed mainly at a young audience and which began at around the same time as the boom in the number of workplace-based series. But while *Policías, en el corazón de la calle* only appeared during the season as a repeat in the form of a made-for-TV film broadcast in the early hours of the morning, *Un paso adelante* (UPA) became the star fictional series of Antena 3 TV.
- 10 The programme featured personal conflicts (infidelities, family disputes, illnesses, cases of wife bashing, etc.) with the aim of providing examples, rather than reflecting on the field of the public sphere (i.e., it did not address questions of family structures, health, domestic violence, etc.) Although immigration was sometimes featured as a social issue, the dominant attitude in the programme was lack of seriousness and reflection and continual recourse to entertainment.
- 11 The goals of the Catalan regional station can be summed up in these terms: to be the leading station in terms of information, quality in terms of content and form, safety and the stabilisation of majority public consumption habits in each time slot and proximity in the cultural dimension. It also aims to stand out from the other stations in the configuration of a line of drama, entertainment and documentary programmes. It is important to point out TV3's backing of a sphere for Catalan audiovisual production, thanks to agreements to promote coproductions that set an annual minimum of made-for-TV films, documentaries and cartoon series, something which has allowed it to increase their

programming space in recent seasons. It is also important to recall that in the 2002/2003 season, as the Catalan public station, TV3 was governed by the policies of the government of Jordi Pujol, in what would be the final term for the Convergence and Union party in 23 years of holding power at the Generalitat of Catalonia.

- 12 These included: the growing presence of young Europeans working in Catalonia as nannies; the multiracial football team from Raval as a vehicle of integration; the adaptation of Maxi Rodríguez, an Argentinean player signed to RCD Espanyol in Barcelona; marriages of convenience promoted by marriage agencies between Catalans and Ukrainians; the integration of the Philippine community in Catalonia; a look at a Guinean student living with a Catalan family; the occupation of the Sant Andreu barracks and the coexistence of the 500 people who lived there, immigrants from different countries; and the integration of the second generation of Chinese immigrants, among other issues.
- 13 Over the course of the season, 30 minutes included issues such as the experience of the children of immigrants after the tightening of the Immigration Law, society's negative perception of immigration and the resolution of conflicts deriving from two cultures, the maternal and paternal one, on "Fills de dos mons"; and the problem arising from mass immigration in analysing the situation of risk of social conflict between different groups living together in the Badalona neighbourhood of La Pau, where 40% of the population are immigrants, in the report "Recuperar la pau".

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