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It is fitting that *The International Journal of Hispanic Media* publish an issue composed entirely of articles exploring the contemporary Spanish media situation. “Hispanic,” as a concept, has a long, complicated, and vexed history, especially in relation to Latina/o and Latin American Studies. This special issue of this journal aims to bridge this gap through research that illuminates the connections and flows between America, writ large, and España, itself a heterogeneous construct. Spanish media studies is a vibrant enterprise, with scholars producing innovative research throughout the country.

Recent developments in the Spanish academy that require the professoriate to publish in ISIS ranked “scientific” journals mean that faculty have to circulate their research beyond national borders, as other than the journal *Comunicar*, there are no other ISIS ranked communication or media studies journals within Spain. Members of the professoriate are assessed through a “sexenio” process that effectively makes them adhere to a six-year cycle of publications and academic output and activity. While “sexenio” is not exactly the same as the six-year probationary process of promotion and tenure in the U.S. academy, a positive outcome has important implications not just in terms of rank and status but also for access to research resources and travel funds.

In most countries, financial and scholarly productivity is concentrated in the major metropolises; this is also the case in Spanish media studies. For the Spanish professoriate, as is the case in many other countries, this publication requirement nearly by definition means that research must be published in English, mostly in U.S. and sometimes in U.K. journals. There are many problems with a requirement that forces faculty to publish beyond their borders in another language—issues of unequal academic power and resources combined with the dominance of English as the academic *lingua franca* are foremost in my mind. Translation of language is but one of the barriers to entry into the U.S./U.K. world of academic publishing. Ways of developing an argument, construction of sentences, networks of cited scholars, and paradigms of scholarly influence all impinge on the success of exogenous scholars to penetrate the rarified world so often entered through that appropriately named U.S./U.K. portal called “Manuscript Central.” The review process in our journals intrinsically discriminates against scholarship from other countries, as reviewers often demand a review of the U.S. and U.K. literature, with little patience for articles written through a review mostly based on scholarship written by national and regional scholars. It is as if reviewers were saying: “Our scholarship is universal while yours is particular” or “Reference and cite us, though we do not have to keep up or read your research.” For this and many other reasons, it is *imprecindible* that journals move beyond this Anglocentric perspective and welcome research by our colleagues throughout the world. This issue of this journal is one step in that direction.

As we proceed through the teens of this 21st century, media studies continues to illuminate on matters of policy, public sphere, “new” technologies, heterogeneous identities, and transnational flows. We have here a range of very different articles, all of them based on contemporary Spanish media studies. Our colleagues who write about Spanish Media Studies are located in a range of departments such as Journalism, Advertising, Communication Studies, Media Studies, and Sound Studies. All of these colleagues regularly attend a number of regional [within Spain], national, European, and global conferences such as ICA, IAMCR, and ECREA. Thus, their research is grounded in Spain in relation to a broad range of literatures and countries. Both their literature reviews and the topics of research have transnational dimensions. Communications research and mainstream media cannot be confined to a national space, and these articles demonstrate the

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1 This notion of “scientific” is used in a tautological manner—that is, a journal that is ISIS ranked and peer reviewed is considered a “scientific” journal.
necessity to account for global flows of research, population, and culture. For example, Porta has to analyze children’s television produced elsewhere—in Argentina and the U.S.—for that is part of the Spanish child’s television diet. Porta draws on children and media research from around the world. Similarly two of the other research teams—Sebastián Morillas and Martín as well as García Galera, del Hoyo Hurtado, and del Olmo Barbero—draw on social media research and advertising campaigns from around the globe in conversation with Spanish case studies of social media and advergaming, respectively.

Given the recent pressure to publish in “scientific” journals whose positivist bent remains the dominant paradigm, much Spanish media studies research is quantitative in method. However, contributors to this special volume demonstrate an ability to combine qualitative with quantitative approaches. As well, whereas all of the articles engage with empirical research, their range of topics is wide and exciting. Most of the papers are multi-methodological. Whether combining press analysis about the coverage of Latin American migrants to Spain (Retis); advergaming campaigns and interviews with key marketing executives (Sebastián Morillas and Martín); content analysis of children’s television shows with interviews of the children regarding sound (Porta); or a textual analysis of two Spanish movies representing sexual transition (Roig-Mora), the scholars in this volume extend themselves in method and approach. Unsurprisingly, most of the articles take into account the presence and influence of “new” information and communications technologies, as well as digital and social media platforms. For example, García Galera, del Hoyo Hurtado, and del Olmo Barbero explore the implications of Facebook and Twitter activism for local Spanish politics. At issue are the participation and contribution of youth to the many layers of political input necessitated by “la crisis”—how the devastating economic downturn which, in turn, has generated a crisis of confidence in the political system, is referred to in Spain. Porta explores an understudied element of the much-researched topic of children and the media: how children make sense of sound and how sound contributes to their affect, listening, attention, and comprehension. Despite the fact that most children’s television programming has notable music and sound dimensions, and—indeed—that musicals and musically inflected genres continue to be a staple of children’s television, there surprisingly is little research that explores the connection between sound and understanding. Trained as an educator of music, Porta possesses the ideal skills to carry out her lifelong project of understanding music in relation to media content and audiences. From quite a different perspective, yet still focusing on the Spanish situation, “new” digital media, and the cyclical success of new approaches in relation to “the crisis,” Sebastián Morillas and Martín explore the new advertising strategy of advergaming. Being careful to differentiate between advergaming and in-game advertising, the authors take a multi-pronged approach that examines the success stories in advergaming as well as relevant marketing executives’ opinions as to why this new approach is promising yet underutilized. Undeniably the convergence of digital gaming with advertising will come about, as that has been the history of commercialized mass media since at least the early 1900s. Retis draws on a wide range of media studies paradigms to explore the differential coverage of particular nationalities of Latin American immigrants to Spain. Her findings challenge the flattening of difference so often found in narratives about immigrants. Roig Mora draws on Foucault and science and medicine studies to analyze the construction of transgendered subjectivity as a medical and a cultural category and its presence in Spanish film. Roig-Mora’s research draws important connections between scientific approaches and filmic representation, although it is useful to remember that such Spanish films are amazing in treating an issue that remains rather absent from Hollywood film altogether.

Whether exploring children’s comprehension of televised content through musical backgrounds, the relative utility of advergaming for brands and advertising, the stereotypes used to construct narratives of different nationalities of immigrants from Latin America, the representation of transgender people in Spanish film, or the use of social media to cohere and coordinate collective responses to “la crisis,” this contemporary research highlights the importance of nation, identity, and technology in the contemporary transnational media environment.
Exploring the Way Children Perceive the Audiovisual

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Resumen
El contexto comunicativo ha sufrido un cambio sin precedentes en los últimos años con repercusiones en la comunicación, los estudios culturales y la educación. Nosotros contribuimos en este artículo a las investigaciones que exploran las repercusiones de la música audiovisual en la infancia. Nuestro objetivo es mostrar su peso y posibles efectos en una selección de audiovisuales infantiles. Para conocerlo se seleccionaron y editaron clips en tres versiones, que se aplicaron en entornos escolares. Se utilizó la evaluación experta para el estudio de los contenidos musicales y narrativos, y el análisis cuantitativo y de contenido en los cuestionarios y grabaciones. Los resultados muestran como la banda sonora proporciona elementos espaciales, temporales, emocionales y contextuales a la historia, contribuyendo a su significado y sentido. Igualmente se constata que los niños pierden interés cuando la música desaparece, y como la banda sonora es capaz de representar, sin apoyo de la imagen, valores, roles y grupos culturales. Este trabajo se interesa por la escucha, espacio de acceso privado y reservado, sensible a la oferta, que requiere de nuevos estudios que continúen la línea iniciada.

Palabras claves: Educación, latino, infancia, bandas sonoras, audiovisual, cine, televisión, efectos

Abstract
Whereas the context of communication has changed remarkably in recent years, we contribute to research that examines consequences for children. This study explores the significance and possible effects of music from a selection of audiovisuais for children. We selected three versions of three clips and presented them in school settings. Expert evaluation was used to study the musical and narrative content, and quantitative and content analyses were applied to questionnaires and recordings. Results show that soundtracks provide spatial, temporal, emotional, and contextual elements to the story, and significantly contribute to its meaning and sense. Findings also reveal that the children lost interest when the music was removed, and that music can represent values, roles, and cultural groups without the support of the image. This study centers on listening, a space where access is private and reserved, and sensitive to what is offered; further studies are needed to continue this research line.

Keywords: Education, Latinos, childhood, soundtrack, audiovisual, film, television, effects
Introducción y Revisión Bibliográfica

Cuando hablamos del entorno sonoro del niño, sin lugar a dudas podemos decir que la música que escucha en los medios de comunicación de masas es el resultado de los cambios producidos en la sociedad a lo largo de la historia y que han afectado a la cultura, la industria y las formas expresivas. Todos esos cambios se han precipitado a partir del último tercio del siglo 20 en materia audiovisual. El espacio de la escucha cotidiana vincula la música con el sonido, la imagen, la narración y el movimiento. La música utiliza un lenguaje en el que el sonido musical o tono está enmarcado dentro de escalas, contrapunto, armonía y ritmo (Reyes, 2006). Sin embargo, a lo largo del siglo 20, la música incorporó elementos hasta entonces ajenos a ella, como el sonido no musical, utilizado ampliamente por algunos de los principales compositores como Boulez (1995), Cage (1961) o Maurice Martenot. Los cuatro elementos sónicos—música, sonido, silencio y escucha—han sido explicados por la teoría del arte, teniendo un capítulo muy destacado en las vanguardias artísticas del siglo 20 (Hauser, 1963; Benjamin, 1936; Adorno, 1972; Reyes, 2006). Pero, éste no es un espacio reservado. Desde la cotidianidad hablamos frecuentemente del sonido difundido a través de los grandes medios de comunicación de masas como el cine y la televisión. Este nuevo espacio de la escucha cotidiana está vinculado a los medios, es de creación industrial, utiliza el lenguaje de la música adaptado al audiovisual, está relacionado con la imagen y la narración, e incluye artefactos sonoros, instalaciones, creación de ambientes, ruidos y aparatos. Su producción está sujeta a audiencias, publicidad y programaciones, así como asociada a productos y patrocinadores, y utiliza las estrategias de la comunicación y la publicidad (Porta, 2007).

El audiovisual se produce como una suma de lenguajes que se refuerzan, teniendo la banda sonora y la música una función importante. El sonido forma parte del binomio audiovisual aportando una parte del significado y también de la eficacia comunicativa. La música proporciona componentes emocionales y persuasivos, actuando de sutura en las escenas y facilitando la continuidad narrativa. A través de la música se anticipan escenas y desenlaces, se dibujan personajes y roles, y también se rubrican vencedores y vencidos (Porta, 2007). En la revisión de la literatura encontramos diferentes autores que se han pronunciado sobre sus funciones. Así, Cuéllar (1998) habla de la conexión con los sentimientos y la localización espacio-temporal audiovisual a través de la música, y Copland (1952) sobre la capacidad de la música de crear la atmósfera de época y lugar, así como reforzar reacciones emocionales e implicar elementos psicológicos. Muy interesante en el tema que nos ocupa es la mirada desde la permeabilidad social que propone Prendergast (1977) al establecer que la música subraya o crea apoyaturas psicológicas porque, dice, la música tiene la capacidad de cambiar la percepción de la audiencia sobre las imágenes y las palabras, además de ayudar a construir un sentido de continuidad en el film. De esta forma, añade, une un medio visual que está, por su propia naturaleza, continuamente en peligro de desmoronarse (Prendergast, 1977). En relación a la unidad del significado, Chion (1994) considera la producción audiovisual y la banda sonora como una unidad. Los estudios comunicativos, discursivos y semióticos de la música han sido considerados desde diferentes corrientes, entre las que destaca la Escuela de Frankfurt con autores como Adorno (1972), Benjamin (1936) o Gombrich (1979). En España encontramos trabajos destacables sobre el significado de Lozano, Abril, y Peña (1982), González Requena, (2006) o Talens y Zunzunegui (2007).

Nuestro interés se centra en el significado, y para comprenderlo debemos acercarnos a través de su propio lenguaje (Porta, 2007). La música tiene su base en una organización coherente entre sonidos y silencios, creando un tejido lingüístico y expresivo por la combinación de sus parámetros: la melodía, la armonía y el ritmo. La definición de estos parámetros no siempre es coincidente pero, en líneas generales, basándonos en autores con amplio consenso como Zamacois (1987), podemos decir que la melodía es un conjunto de sonidos y silencios que suenan sucesivamente y se perciben con identidad y sentido de unidad; la armonía tiene como unidad básica el acorde, y regula la concordancia entre sonidos que suenan simultáneamente y su enlace con sonidos vecinos; la métrica se refiere a la pauta de repetición a intervalos temporales regulares o irregulares en una composición, y el ritmo es el resultado final de los elementos anteriores, que podríamos definir de forma general como la capacidad de generar contraste en la música, provocado por dinámicas, timbres, texturas y sonidos. Por último, el timbre es la cualidad del sonido producido por un determinado agente sonoro. A esto añadíamos los matices, a través de los cuales varía la intensidad (márgenes dinámicos) o la velocidad (márgenes agógicos), y la estructura o forma musical.

Los Niños y la Escucha

La escucha de la banda sonora por parte del niño es un campo poco explorado en los estudios hispanos, especialmente en lo relativo a su significado y efectos; igual ocurre en la prensa internacional.

La escucha ocupa el centro de nuestra investigación porque, tal como indica Cruces (1998), la música opera no con “sonidos”, sino con la escucha. En particular nos interesa la escucha cotidiana que se produce a través del audiovisual en la infancia. El audiovisual es un espacio de alto impacto en cantidad e intensidad de exposición en la vida de los niños, muy superior al producido en el medio escolar y de forma mayoritaria en el familiar. Escuchar es un verbo de acción referido a la localización de algo que es captado por el sentido del oído. Etimológicamente proviene del latín auscultar e indica que la persona pone las facultades de su oído para oír. Según la Academia de la Lengua, oír es más general que escuchar. La psicología cognitiva vincula escucha con percepción auditiva, definida por Luria (1980) como atención selectiva, y la psicología evolutiva nos indica su desarrollo por estadios invariables (Piaget & Inhelder, 1997). Nuestro objeto de estudio es la escucha musical,
considerada sonoridad organizada en base a una serie de leyes, parámetros y estructuras. Sin embargo, a pesar de la especificidad del concepto de escucha con respecto a oír, cuando hablamos de la escucha audiovisual necesitamos adentrarnos un paso más. Esto se hará mediante “los modos de escucha”. El concepto “modos”, cuando se aplica a los estudios de cine y televisión, surge de la aplicación de forma separada de sus componentes—lenguaje, imagen, música, sonido, gesto y movimiento—y su consecuencia de que ese sistema no era bueno. De esta forma aparece en la teoría de la comunicación este concepto que Kress y Van Leeuwen (2001) definen como la utilización de varios modos semióticos que participan en el diseño de un evento o producto, y cómo estos modos se combinan, refuerzan y cumplen roles complementarios, estando jerárquicamente ordenados. De esta manera, dicen los autores, la música proporciona refuerzo, narrativa y jerarquía. Nuestra finalidad es comprender la escucha significativa y con sentido, por ello hablamos de modos y no de medios. Así encontramos los elementos que buscamos en el análisis: los comunes, que se superponen, o los que muestran las diferencias.

En el sistema multimodal audiovisual y sus modos de escucha, múltiples discursos se combinan por medio de diseños al servicio de una situación comunicativa particular. Indagamos en los modos de la escucha en los que predomina la adjudicación del sentido como principios básicos para la comprensión del entorno sonoro audiovisual. Nos interesa el significado y especialmente el sentido, es decir la presencia del sujeto en el discurso (Talens, 1995). Por ello queremos saber qué se escucha, cómo, dónde y cuándo se escucha, a quién o qué representa y qué efectos produce. El significado procede de un proceso constructivo, realizado desde el material inicial sonoro hasta su comprensión, que tiene la escucha como vía de acceso única para su desarrollo. Así, ese proceso indiscriminado de “oír” pasa al proceso perceptivo de la escucha, dónde la atención se dirige hacia el objeto sonoro o musical, dejando el resto de los aspectos contextuales en un segundo plano. Este terreno de la percepción actúa en un nivel no reflexivo, según una serie de leyes como son la unidad estructural, la constancia perceptiva y la percepción figura-fondo (Pinillos, 1986). De esta forma se crea la huella cognitiva sobre la que es posible construir el edificio de la comprensión musical y el sentido del mundo sonoro (Schaeffer, 1966). Así, y sólo así, se llega a la comprensión como un espacio que integra la experiencia con el conocimiento y el contexto, utilizando como elementos primarios en el proceso aquellos que nuestros receptores sensoriales nos permiten y nuestro medio ambiente, cultura y oportunidades nos ponen al alcance.

La Música Audiovisual

Mientras la construcción de la infancia se ve comúnmente como específica, los estudios culturales muestran como el capitalismo occidental y la modernidad han globalizado la noción de la infancia a través de los procesos económicos, la cultura mediática y las organizaciones internacionales como indica la Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos del Niño (Kehily & Maybin, 2011). Así, observan que existen imágenes dentro de los circuitos de la cultura (Hall & Du Gay, 1996) que codifican los discursos e ideologías dominantes (Kehily & Maybin, 2011). Por ello se plantean revisar y aprender de investigaciones emergentes en diferentes países, lenguas y disciplinas que cuentan en internet con cerca de 400 proyectos de investigación de calidad contrastada, mostrando que los jóvenes están a menudo en la vanguardia de la nueva adopción y uso de los medios (Livingstone & Tsatsou, 2009). Este artículo habla de los más jóvenes y de la necesidad de desarrollar la comprensión de la infancia como una categoría socialmente construida (Kehily & Maybin, 2011). Estos procesos de representación ponen de relieve su fragilidad como una categoría conceptual en evolución, geográfica diversa y contextualmente contingente (Burman, 1994). Con todo ello se observa la paradoja de un gran proceso que implica el artefacto de la selección y edición construida dando lugar a procesos de representación de la vida de los niños que es inevitablemente parcial e incompleta (Kehily & Maybin, 2011). Todo ello interpela a la televisión y al cine infantil como un discurso audiovisual controvertido y difícil de evaluar de una manera controlada.

Explorar el Significado de la Banda Sonora que Escuchan los Niños

Con todo ello se hace necesario el uso de tareas que combinen la reconstrucción, producción y control de los estímulos audiovisuales con investigaciones que ayuden a considerar el grado y naturaleza de la comprensión de los niños de la televisión (Gibbons, Anderson, Smith, Field, & Fischer, 1986). Sobre las relaciones de la banda sonora con el audiovisual, éstas aparecen controvertidas. Hayes y Birnbaum (1980) argumentan que los niños pequeños tienen una fuerte tendencia a “mirar y no escuchar”, lo cual da lugar a la etiqueta poco consistente de “efecto de superioridad visual” de la televisión. La explicación de la presentación audiovisual no puede ser clasificada en términos sencillos de dominio visual, aunque, para los niños pequeños, podría ser importante el mantenimiento de la atención a la narrativa en su conjunto (Gibbons et al., 1986), y añadiendo el factor “a mayor edad menor efecto y significación” (Pezdek & Stevens, 1984). En cuanto a las comparaciones en la memoria para el audio con y sin el video, utilizando descripciones en narraciones breves y precisas de las acciones visuales, no se encontraron diferencias significativas (Gibbons et al., 1986). Finalmente, hay que decir que todos estos trabajos consideraban la parte hablada del audio, pero no hemos encontrado ningún trabajo que estudie de forma específica la significatividad de la música en los audiovisuales que escuchan los niños.

Nuestro objetivo es explorar la presencia y posibles efectos en la infancia de la música de una selección de audiovisuales. Para ello es necesario encontrar una metodología que nos permita mostrar los elementos de significación y peso de la música en ellos. Para lograrlo, este objetivo general está dividido en tres específicos:

Objetivo 1. Conocer los audiovisuales favoritos de una muestra de niños.
Objetivo 2. Conocer sus características y la presencia hispánica en sus procedencias y repercusiones.
Objetivo 3. A partir de los resultados anteriores, conocer qué significado y sentido tiene la música en la serie Violetta y en un reportaje de National Geographic.

Se utilizó la evaluación experta para el estudio de los contenidos musicales y narrativos, y el análisis cuantitativo y de contenido en los cuestionarios y grabaciones. Para su realización se han utilizado dos muestras de niños de 11 a 12 años de educación primaria conocidos por los evaluadores.

Método

Nuestro objeto de estudio es la música cotidiana de difusión masiva en la infancia y la adolescencia, por ello el método ha de tener en cuenta todo aquello que se escucha, desde la producción del sonido en el audiovisual hasta la música y su relación con las audiencias. De ahí obtendremos los datos en forma de secuencias, textos o números. Cuando vemos un audiovisual y escuchamos su banda sonora, nada de lo que oímos es neutral, en primer lugar debido a la intencionalidad de la producción sonora, y después a las diferentes interpretaciones posibles del sujeto que lo recibe. La música no existe fuera del contexto social, cultural y personal, y con todo ello produce efectos variados y no siempre previstos en los estudios convencionales. La banda sonora por su componente mediático es multimodal, está creada para determinados contextos, utiliza diversas tecnologías y cuenta con formas de composición adaptadas al medio. En cuanto a su construcción sonora, utiliza músicas preexistentes o creadas para la propia película o programa en posiciones dentro del campo o fuera del campo que pueden ser diegéticas y no diegéticas (Porta, 2007). Por todo ello el método de análisis ha de contemplar el fenómeno musical de los medios como un discurso complejo que el análisis quiere desentrañar. El material de que disponemos es la banda sonora de un audiovisual con imágenes que cuenta una historia, por lo tanto con múltiples significados.

El desarrollo de técnicas de análisis sistemático de mensajes mediáticos es uno de los desafíos metodológicos que la música y la comunicación deben abordar en las próximas décadas. El análisis de contenido permite investigar con detalle y en profundidad cualquier material de la comunicación humana. Por ello constituye una herramienta esencial en la descripción ordenada de repertorios comunicativos y culturales. Seguimos a Cohen, Manion, y Morrison (2011) quienes dicen que se trata de un conjunto regido por reglas rigurosas y sistemáticas para la verificación del contenido. Por ello se reduce e interroga el texto en forma de resumen mediante el uso de las categorías y temas emergentes con el fin de generar o probar una teoría. En este trabajo se aplica, con intención de conocer los contenidos de la banda sonora, uno de los componentes del binomio audiovisual que está formado por imagen y sonido que en el caso de la banda sonora consiste en música, voces y ruidos sincronizados con la imagen.

En nuestro caso, aplicado al estudio de la música en los sistemas masivos de la comunicación audiovisual, nos hemos basado en la clasificación que proporcionan Cohen et al. (2011) sobre el análisis de datos cualitativos: 1) Establecer las unidades de análisis de los datos, lo que indica la forma en que estas unidades son similares y diferentes, 2) Crear un análisis de dominio, 3) Establecer relaciones y vínculos entre dominios, 4) Hacer deducciones especulativas, 5) Hacer un resumen, 6) Buscar casos negativos y discrepantes y 7) Generar teoría.
Para estudiar los objetivos se aplicó una metodología mixta, diferenciada para cada uno de ellos:

Para responder al objetivo 1, Conocer los audiovisuales favoritos de niños de 11 y 12 años, se utilizó un pequeño cuestionario con preguntas sobre sus audiovisuales favoritos en películas, series de televisión, dibujos animados y reportajes. El estudio de sus datos fue cuantitativo, ordenando los resultados por frecuencias.

Para el objetivo 2, Conocer sus características y la presencia hispánica en sus procedencias y repercusiones, se utilizó el análisis musical cuantitativo y cualitativo mediante expertos aplicando la plantilla 3.0 (Porta, Morant, & Ferrández, 2015). Este instrumento de análisis cuantitativo tiene por finalidad conocer las características de la música de audiovisual, consta de 13 categorías musicales y 68 códigos mediante los cuales muestra las características de la música seleccionadas en unidades de análisis, así como el análisis narrativo y musical (Porta, 2007, 2014). Participaron 10 expertos realizando el análisis musical por medio de dos acciones: la aplicación de la plantilla 3.0 y el análisis musical y de contenido a los audiovisuales preferidos. Posteriormente se indagó en los datos publicados de estos audiovisuales.

Finalmente, para el objetivo 3, Conocer qué significado y sentido tiene la música en la serie Violetta y en un reportaje de National Geographic, los expertos seleccionaron 14 secuencias por criterios musicales y narrativos que se editaron en tres versiones (sólo sonido, sólo imagen y todo). Estas secuencias y sus cuestionarios se utilizaron en la sesión de observación. Se ha utilizado el análisis observacional por medio de técnicas cuantitativas en las preguntas cerradas y cualitativo por análisis de contenido en las preguntas abiertas.

**Instrumentos**

Se utilizaron:
1) La evaluación experta para el estudio de los contenidos musicales y narrativos (análisis musical y de contenido) (Porta, 2007; Porta & Ferrández, 2009; Porta, Peñalver & Navasquillo, 2013).
2) El cuestionario C1 para conocer los audiovisuales preferidos en una muestra de 112 niños.
3) Grabaciones editadas y el cuestionario C2 para el estudio observacional.

Se utilizaron 24 series de clips editados de audiovisuales favoritos y el cuestionario C2 con preguntas sobre las tres versiones audiovisuales. La evaluación experta del análisis musical y estudio del C1 fue realizada por 12 expertos en educación musical; un experto evaluador, conductor de la sesión, y dos maestros de música de los dos colegios elegidos colaboraron en el procedimiento y desarrollo de la sesión del estudio observacional con niños.

**Diseño de la investigación**

**El primer cuestionario (C1): los audiovisuales favoritos**

El primer cuestionario (C1) sirvió para explorar los intereses infantiles en materia audiovisual. Este trabajo partió de una discusión del grupo investigador hasta la toma de decisiones y elaboración del cuestionario que finalmente fue aplicado a una muestra de 112 niños.

**Secuencias seleccionadas en versiones y su cuestionario (C2)**

El punto de partida fue la selección de 14 clips de escenas correspondientes a los audiovisuales elegidos como preferidos en Películas, Series y Dibujos Animados que se seleccionaron y editaron creando una colección de clips de escenas significativas por la historia y por la música (Tabla 1). A partir de esta selección inicial se procedió a editarlos en tres versiones (sólo sonido, sólo imagen y todo). Estos nuevos clips obtenidos por edición fueron agrupados hasta formar 24 series cada una con un audiovisual en versión sólo sonido, un audiovisual en versión sólo imagen y un audiovisual completo (todo). De estas 24 series hemos seleccionado las 19 y 20 en este estudio (Tabla 2).

**Tabla 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Código</th>
<th>Secuencia de</th>
<th>Duración</th>
<th>Codigo</th>
<th>Secuencia de</th>
<th>Duración</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Los Croods</td>
<td>1'52&quot;</td>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Doraemon</td>
<td>1'54&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>El Rey León</td>
<td>1'51&quot;</td>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Dragon Ball Z</td>
<td>1'54&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Oz, un mundo de fantasía</td>
<td>2'10&quot;</td>
<td>Se1</td>
<td>Violetta</td>
<td>2'28&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Titánic</td>
<td>1'31&quot;</td>
<td>Se2</td>
<td>La que se avecina</td>
<td>1'24&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Toy Story III</td>
<td>1'57&quot;</td>
<td>Se3</td>
<td>Buena suerte</td>
<td>0'50&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Los Simpson</td>
<td>2'35&quot;</td>
<td>Se4</td>
<td>I-Carly</td>
<td>1'02&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Bob Esponja</td>
<td>1'46&quot;</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>La Ciénaga de Buzanga</td>
<td>1'57&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D Dibujos, R Reportaje, P Película, Se Serie de TV

Posteriormente se prepararon los clips con el programa Pinnacle seguido de su codificación, y finalmente se editaron en tres versiones—“Sólo sonido”, “Sólo imagen” y “Completo”. Se aplicaron en entornos escolares mediante cuestionarios, grupos de discusión y entrevistas. De ellos hemos utilizado dos en este estudio de caso, realizados en dos colegios españoles, utilizando una serie latina de gran éxito, Violetta, y un reportaje de National Geographic. Las secuencias y versiones estudiadas fueron (Tabla 2):
Tabla 2  

Las secuencias y versiones estudiadas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serie</th>
<th>Película</th>
<th>Serie</th>
<th>Reportaje</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEC19</td>
<td>P3S Oz, un mundo de fantasía 21’0&quot;</td>
<td>Se1TVioletta</td>
<td>RT Ciénaga de Busanga 1’57&quot;</td>
<td>6’35&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEC20</td>
<td>P3I Oz, un mundo de fantasía 21’0&quot;</td>
<td>Se1TVioletta</td>
<td>RS Ciénaga de Busanga 1’57&quot;</td>
<td>6’35&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sólo Sonido, I Sólo Imagen, T Todo, D Dibujos, R Reportaje, P Película, Se Serie de TV

Los cuestionarios asociados

Se realizó un cuestionario “ad hoc” para esta parte de la investigación para conocer cuál era el significado de la música en la historia y la imagen de las secuencias elegidas como favoritas. Se creó un cuestionario (en edición) basado en seis categorías y 164 ítems: 1) Contextuales de tiempo y espacio, 2) De personajes e historia, 3) Música, 4) Sobre géneros audiovisuales, 5) Emocionales y 6) Valoración. Dicho cuestionario estaba dividido en cuatro apartados: datos sociodemográficos, versión sólo sonido, versión sólo imagen y todo. En este artículo nos centraremos en la serie Violetta y el reportaje de National Geographic, La Ciénaga de Buzanga, estudiando los aspectos, “valoración de la experiencia”, “sobre los personajes e historia”, así como en los resultados de la versión “sólo sonido” en sus aspectos generales, y específicos en musicales y emocionales.

Desarrollo de la Sesión

Se realizó en dos centros públicos de educación primaria de Castellón (España) el 12 de junio de 2014 y duró 60 minutos aproximadamente. Fue aplicado a 48 niños pertenecientes a dos grupos de sexto de educación primaria en el aula de usos múltiples de los centros. El primer centro tenía un alto índice de migración con niños de diferentes procedencias—España, China, Marruecos, Senegal y Rumanía—mientras el segundo era de un barrio de clase media de la propia localidad, hijos de comerciantes y profesionales especializados. Se repartieron los cuadernillos y cumplimentaron los datos iniciales. En la grabación se usaron una grabadora y una cámara de vídeo digitales, a las que los niños no dieron importancia. Se explicó la actividad, y se leyeron las preguntas, se habló sobre dudas y comentarios y, finalmente, se procedió al visionado de los clips, cumplimentación del cuestionario y grupo de discusión con cada uno—película, serie y reportaje—utilizando las versiones sólo sonido, sólo imagen y completo (todo).

Resultados

Objetivo 1. Los Audiovisuales Favoritos

El primer cuestionario C1 dio los siguientes resultados:
1. Películas. El ranking de posiciones en películas fue el siguiente: Los Croods (6,1%), Lo imposible (5,2%), El Rey León (4,3%), Oz, un mundo de fantasía (3,5%), Titánic (3,5%) Harry Potter (2,6%), Toy Story 3 (2,6%)  
2. Series de TV. Las 10 primeras posiciones fueron ocupadas por Violetta (12,2%), Buena suerte Charlie (4,3%), Código Lyoko (4,3%), Austin y Alie (3,5%), Big Time Rush (3,5%), Carly (3,5%), Jessie (3,5%), Física y Química (3,5%), Dragon Ball (2,6%), Los Simpson (2,6%), Shake it up (2,6%) y La que se avecina (0,4%)  
3. Dibujos animados. Los preferidos en la muestra fueron Los Simpson (24,3%), Phineas y Ferb (20,9%), Bob Esponja (8,7%), Hora de aventuras (6,1%), Doraemon (5,2%), El asombroso Gumbali (4,3%), y Dragon Ball Z (3,5%)  

Los niños encuestados no dieron títulos de reportajes; hablaron de que les gustaban los reportajes sobre la naturaleza, especialmente de animales. Por esta razón se seleccionó un reportaje de animales de National Geographic, La Ciénaga de Buzanga, por su contenido y calidad de la banda sonora.

Objetivo 2. Conocer su Procedencia y Características

Procedencia. Un estudio más detallado de los audiovisuales favoritos de los niños indica la importancia de la música. Para ello aportamos algunos datos sobre el éxito, recaudación y audiencias generales que tuvieran relación con la música. El estudio de las procedencias y músicas aportan datos relevantes. Las películas son cuatro americanas y una española (Lo imposible). Tres de ellas (The Croods, El Rey León y Toy Story) son de dibujos animados, destacando Disney como productora. Todas ellas son grandes producciones con recaudaciones que se sitúan alrededor de los $500 millones, llegando en algunos casos a los $900 millones, con premios importantes. En general disponen de buenas críticas y fueron estrenadas entre 1994 (la de mayor recaudación, El Rey León) y 2003 (Los Croods). En cuanto a las series, por procedencia se observa un predominio de las series de Estados Unidos (6), seguidas de mangas de Japón (2), y series de España (1), Argentina (1) y Francia (1). Sus temáticas oscilan entre historias cotidianas, fantásticas y de aventuras. Muchas son calificadas como líderes de audiencia, con una media de 6 millones de espectadores. En muchos casos tienen premios y cuentan con buenas críticas, son exportadas a diferentes países y cuentan con cuatro o cinco ediciones. Sus fechas de estreno oscilan entre 1984 (el manga Dragon Ball) y 2012 (la serie argentina Violetta). En dibujos animados las preferencias son por procedencia americana (4), japonesa (2), y británica (1) y con estreno entre 1974 (Doraemon) y 2010 (Hora
La música de las películas, las series de TV y los dibujos animados

Las películas preferidas tienen la música como uno de sus elementos destacados, contando con directores, compositores e intérpretes de éxito. Destacamos los Oscars a sus músicas y bandas sonoras obtenidos por tres de ellas, El Rey León (tres Oscars a banda sonora y canción), Titánic (dos Oscars a banda sonora y canción) y Toy Story (tres Oscars, dos para Randy Newman por “mejor canción original” y “mejor banda sonora”), al igual que sus presupuestos y recaudaciones millonarias ($951 millones, $2.185 millones y $362 millones respectivamente), y su procedencia mayoritariamente de Estados Unidos. En cuanto a las series y dibujos animados, la música forma parte importante del éxito, recibiendo premios por sus canciones y bandas sonoras en Violetta, Jessie, Hora de Aventuras y Dragon Ball Z.

Objetivo 3. Conocer qué significado y sentido tiene la música para ellos

El tercer objetivo se formulaba a partir de los resultados obtenidos en los objetivos 1 y 2: Conocer qué significado y sentido tiene la música para ellos, lo que aplicaremos como estudio de caso a la serie Violetta y a un reportaje de National Geographic, La ciénaga de Buzanga en dos grupos de escolares.

La serie ‘Violetta’ y el reportaje ‘La ciénaga de Buzanga’

De todas las series, Violetta es la que quedó en primer lugar, suponiendo un hito importante ya que constituye la producción latina de mayor éxito, con visualizaciones en YouTube de algunas canciones y escenas que superan los 50 millones. Actualmente se ve en múltiples países de cinco continentes. Esta coproducción argentina cuenta la vida entre Madrid (de donde parte) y Buenos Aires (a donde llega) de Violetta, una adolescente de clase media alta que siente pasión por la música y quiere ser cantante.

El clip utilizado en este estudio de caso representa el ensayo de una canción, en un plató de televisión, interpretada por la protagonista y un chico, en una escena en la que han de darse un beso. La música tiene dos partes, la primera es la interpretación de la canción durante el ensayo, con acompañamiento instrumental en playback. La segunda, es una música de fondo que actúa de cómplice de la trama en la escena del beso. Esta segunda música produce el clima emocional así como el efecto de tensión y expectativa. La primera música aparece como figura, utiliza instrumentos de la familia del rock y melodía cantada con voces de chico y chica alternadas. La segunda, en la escena del beso, es música de fondo, con un cambio súbito de los elementos musicales que pasa a ser instrumental con guitarra y piano acústico (Porta & Ferrández, 2009).

La secuencia utilizada de La ciénaga de Buzanga, producida por National Geographic, describe una escena de una manada de leonas que intentan cazar unas gacelas en la sabana africana. La música tiene tres partes, como la escena, en la que los planos sonoros del narrador y la música aparecen separados; cada uno tiene su lugar en la secuencia. La primera (la sabana) utiliza instrumentos de cuerda con sonidos graves sostenidos y pinceladas breves en diseños agudos. La segunda (la caza) utiliza todos los sonidos de la orquesta, teniendo un lugar destacado la percusión. La tercera (la huida) incluye sólo la voz del narrador (Porta & Ferrández, 2009).

Resultados por colegios, versiones y categorías

La aplicación del visionado de secuencias y sus respuestas a través del cuestionario muestran resultados por colegios bastante semejantes, observando diferencias en las variables temporales y más evocativas en las categorías 1 y 5. En la categoría 1, “Contextuales de espacio y tiempo”, se les preguntaba sobre orientación y situación y las mayores diferencias aparecieron en la percepción de las variables temporales a través de la banda sonora. La variable 5, “Emocionales”, tenía preguntas relativas a la implicación en la historia.

En este trabajo nos centramos en tres ítems: I. Valoración de la experiencia, II. Resultados generales de la versión sólo sonido y III. Resultados específicos en musicales y emocionales.

I. Valoración de la experiencia

Aquí se les preguntaba si se habían mantenido interesados, si les había gustado realizar la actividad, si había sido muy difícil, y si habían sido capaces de ordenar la historia que contaba la secuencia sin verla o oírla. Las respuestas:

En la versión sólo sonido. Mucho-bastante interés 83,3%, Me ha gustado la actividad mucho 64,6%, Nada-poco indiferente 54,2%, Nada-poco difícil 64,6%.

En la versión sólo imagen. Mucho-bastante interés 70,8%, Me ha gustado la actividad mucho 6,3%, Nada-poco indiferente 8,3%, Nada-poco difícil 83,3%.

En la versión completa. Mucho-bastante interés 100,0%, Me ha gustado la actividad mucho 62,5%, Nada-poco indiferente 2,1%, Nada-poco difícil 2,1%.

En los resultados se constata el interés por la actividad como indicador de la atención mantenida y el interés por comprender su significado y sentido. La versión “sólo sonido” mantiene puntuaciones
positivas estables en todos los ítems, y por encima de la imagen en cuatro de ellos, constatando el gusto en la realización de la actividad cuando sólo escuchan, en las entrevistas realizadas y grupos de discusión. De igual modo el colegio que manifestó mayor dificultad en la experiencia con “sólo sonido” obtuvo puntuaciones y valoraciones parecidas en el disfrute de la experiencia, manifestado tanto en el cuestionario como en las respuestas abiertas, las entrevistas y los grupos de discusión.

II. Resultados Generales de la Versión “Sólo Sonido” por Categorías

Contextuales de espacio/tiempo, con preguntas sobre si pensaban que en la historia era de día o de noche, y también sobre la percepción del paso del tiempo en la historia de manera continua o discontinua. En este apartado dicen que en la historia es de día el 79,2% y que se desarrolla en varios momentos el 62,5%.

De personajes e historia. En el cuestionario se les preguntaba sobre si pensaban que los personajes vivían una situación de peligro, y si se habían logrado introducir en la historia, o bien les había resultado indiferente. Los resultados indican que han percibido un lugar peligroso el 81,3%, han conseguido meterse dentro de la historia un 47,9% y no les ha sido indiferente al 70,8%.

Musicales. En este apartado se les preguntaba sobre la presencia de música y los instrumentos escuchados. Contestan que sí a la pregunta La historia tenía música el 91,7% aunque sólo el 54,2% recuerda si se escuchaban instrumentos, y muchos menos cuáles eran.

Emocionales. Se les preguntó sobre su relación empática con la historia que se percibía por el sonido, preguntándoles si les gustaría estar allí y sobre su sentimiento en esa situación. A la pregunta Me gustaría estar en esa historia dicen sí el 39,6%, estando la respuesta asociada al peligro (en el reportaje) y al género (en la serie, con rechazo en los niños). A la pregunta Me he imaginado como me sentiría yo, dicen sí el 47,9.

Valoración de la experiencia. En la versión sólo sonido, al 64,6% les ha gustado realizar esta actividad, el 54,2% dicen que no les ha resultado indiferente lo escuchado, ni difícil de realizar al 64,6%. Finalmente a la pregunta de Si estaba desordenado dicen que nada/poco, por audiovisuales: Película 52,1% Serie 66,5% y Reportaje 89,4%.

III. Resultados específicos en musicales y emocionales

Los niños y las niñas muestran diferencias en algunos de los resultados:

Categoría: Música

Por versiones, audiovisuales y género (Figura 1, Figura 2 y Figura 3) ítems seleccionados: Respuestas a las preguntas sobre si la historia era con música y si se escuchaban instrumentos.
Este artículo ha tenido como finalidad explorar la presencia y los posibles efectos de la música en la infancia a partir de una selección de audiovisuales con tres objetivos específicos: 1) Conocer los audiovisuales favoritos, 2) Conocer sus características y la presencia de lo hispánico en sus procedencias y repercusiones, y 3) A partir de los resultados anteriores, conocer qué significado y sentido tiene la música para los niños en la serie Violetta y en un reportaje de National Geographic. Para ello se ha revisado el estado de la cuestión y realizado el diseño metodológico.

Como respuesta al primer objetivo podemos decir que las preferencias de películas, series y dibujos animados de la muestra utilizada destacan en películas Los Croods, Lo imposible y El Rey León. En series Violetta, Buena Suerte Charlie, y Código Lyoko. En dibujos animados destacan Los Simpson, Phineas y Ferb, y Bob Esponja, y en reportajes, los de naturaleza.

La presencia destacada de la música es directamente proporcional al éxito de una gran mayoría de audiovisuales, medido por sus presupuestos, audiencias y recaudaciones en el cine y en las series televisivas, y este último en menor grado en los dibujos animados. La música de cine utiliza recursos orquestales, del rock y electrónicos, mezcla de sonido y ruidos, uso envolvente de la fuente sonora, hibridaciones, mezclas, superposiciones y bucles, empleando tanto música diegética como extradiegética y también música como figura y fondo. Su elemento central son las canciones que muchas veces comercializan y se convierten en grandes éxitos y premios internacionales.

En relación al segundo objetivo, como resumen podemos decir que estos audiovisuales preferidos son de dominio norteamericano, recrean aspectos de la vida diaria, relaciones entre niños y fantasía. La crítica suele serles favorable, suponen un magnífico negocio para las productoras, con un público potencial económicamente interesante por ser exclusivamente consumidor. La presencia no estadounidense es baja, con dos manga japoneses de 1974 y 1984, tres series y dos dibujos animados europeos. En cuanto a la presencia latina, en la muestra se encuentran dos series, un programa de dibujos animados y una película. Sus procedencias son mayoritariamente norteamericanas, con presencia hispánica sólo en dos series y una película. Las temáticas de las películas y dibujos animados son de aventuras y fantásticas, y las series reflejan la vida cotidiana, en ocasiones con toques excéntricos, musicales o fantásticos.

Destacamos también que las películas favoritas son grandes éxitos y las series tienen cobertura mundial en varias temporadas. Hemos tomado en el estudio de caso un reportaje de National Geographic La Ciénaga de Buzanga por la calidad descriptiva de su banda sonora, y la serie Violetta por ser una serie latina con enorme éxito con repercusiones internacionales en múltiples países de todos los continentes y cuyo hilo temático principal es la música, motivación principal de la protagonista, una adolescente argentina. Todo ello
con la finalidad de ver entre ambos productos audiovisuales las diferencias y similitudes musicales.

El estudio observacional realizado con niños de 11 años muestra el peso de la banda sonora, destacando la valoración en los resultados de la experiencia al escucharla sin imagen porque les permite—dicen—imaginar mundos, escenarios y ambientes, valorando la experiencia como muy interesante. Las respuestas sobre versiones muestran una mejor percepción de la música y los instrumentos que creen haber escuchado en la versión con sólo el sonido. La serie Violetta obtiene resultados ligeramente más altos, muy previsibles en el apartado musical porque el clip trata del ensayo de una actuación musical en un plató de televisión. La Ciénaga de Buzanga obtiene también una puntuación muy alta en percepción de la música en el reportaje, que supone una atención sostenida, selectiva y significativa. Finalmente los resultados muestran una mayor puntuación en ambos audiovisuales por parte de las niñas en la percepción de la música y en los instrumentos que escuchan. En la categoría emocional de las tres versiones, de nuevo, “sólo sonido” obtiene las puntuaciones más altas contrastando a la pregunta He logrado meterme dentro de la historia y mostrando en la versión “sólo imagen” un porcentaje mayor en la pregunta Cómo me sentiría yo. Por audiovisuales muestran en ambos items su implicación en la historia. En las respuestas abiertas los sentimientos que suscitan son, en Violetta, nerviosismo, y en el reportaje, miedo. Analizados por género, las niñas muestran una implicación emocional más alta en Violetta que los niños, que indican en las entrevistas, preguntas abiertas y grupos de discusión un claro rechazo.

Finalmente queremos destacar el fenómeno Violetta y sus canciones, que tienen entre sus seguidoras niñas de todo el mundo entre 6 y 11 años que quieren ser como ella. A partir de la serie se han producido conciertos multitudinarios en giras por todos los países, con traducciones de sus letras y líneas de productos a la venta.

En el reportaje, destaca su magnífica banda sonora, capaz de describir por sí misma la escena tal como nos han explicado los niños de la experiencia: “Creo que están al aire libre, son animales, es de día, empiezan a correr, están persiguiendo a otro que finalmente escapa”.

El estudio de los efectos de la música en entornos cotidianos de la infancia supone un gran reto en los estudios culturales, de los medios de comunicación, educativos y patrimoniales. La hibridación de los contextos, sus espacios y cambios constantes requieren ser considerados. La música es uno de los elementos mediadores y se instala en el discurso audiovisual consiguiendo efectos narrativos y comunicativos. Estos son espaciales, temporales y emocionales, como hemos visto. Su presencia muchas veces pasa inadvertida pero existe unida a valores, dominios y referencias constantes del “yo” y del “otro”. Este artículo supone una pequeña pincelada que esperamos completar en futuras investigaciones.

Nota. Los datos sobre los audiovisuales han sido tomados de sus productoras y páginas públicas de cine y televisión.

Glosario
1. Sonido no musical: Sonido no mensurable con parámetros musicales por pertenecer al medio natural o social.

2. Sonido musical: Aquel que permite discriminar y distinguir los componentes musicales.

3. Género musical: Composiciones musicales que comparten distintos criterios de afinidad.

4. Organización sonora: Referido a la organización tonal (mayor o menor) o modal de la música occidental.

5. Cadencia: Proceso de caída hacia un centro tonal. Se clasifican en conclusivas, si generan cierto grado de estabilidad o reposo, y suspensivas, si generan inestabilidad o tensión.

6. Modulación: Proceso de pasar en la música tonal de una a otra tonalidad o el resultado de este cambio.


8. Plano sonoro: Posición de la música como figura o como fondo en la banda sonora.

Referencias


Advergaming: An Advertising Tool with a Future

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Abstract
This article explores the differences between the meaning of advergaming and similar terms, such as in-game advertising, as well as the general lack of knowledge from advertisers about this new marketing tool. The reasons video games have become a new and attractive advertising medium for large brands are also discussed, along with the reasons advergaming is becoming part of communication strategies that aim for brand awareness. The situation of advergaming in Spain is studied, in conjunction with its efficacy and prospects in the video game market. All this to show how this new advertising tool can be extremely useful for advertisers, helping them to reach their target audience in a more effective way.

Keywords: Advergaming, advertising, in-game, video games, brand, gamers, smartphone
Introduction

The growth and development of smartphones with internet connectivity means that many users are now employing free or low-cost downloads to access advertising content developed by various brands in the form of video games.

According to a study carried out by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (2012), one in four gamers uses a smartphone to play video games, and 83% of gamers play online using free apps or downloads. This has led to a change in the way content is consumed and distributed. There is now a wider range of video games available, the genres have evolved, the consumer profile has been transformed, and the age of gamers has increased.

Video games have become one of the platforms most used by advertisers seeking new ways of getting their message across effectively, which is logical considering the efficiency rates reported by some studies. New advertising techniques experience a greater acceptance among users—a public that is tired of the lack of originality of older methods and that demands greater personalization of messages. As a result, advergaming—a term coined by Anthony Giallourakis in 2000 and then mentioned in the “Jargon Watch” column of Wired magazine in 2001 (Selva, 2009)—has become a tool used by advertisers to communicate brands, products or ideas in an effective way to a large number of gamers. Advergaming also offers the advertiser direct and continuous interaction between the brand and the gamer, achieving a level of brand retention far superior to that achieved by traditional media. Advertisers have been aware of advergaming for years, yet it remains a method employed by a minority in the industry. Opinions are divided regarding its effectiveness, although the majority coincide in emphasizing its potential. As a result, prominent advertisers in Spain—such as Mixta, Endesa, Famosa, Magnum, Movistar, BBVA and Telepizza—have backed video games as an advertising platform¹.

There is fear, as well as a lack of knowledge, among advertisers regarding this medium, and for that reason, many companies that use it risk the bare minimum, creating cheap games with a limited circulation. It could be said that the difficult economic situation in Spain has prompted the growth of advergaming, since it optimizes target-audience reach while requiring less investment than traditional advertising. Results from this study could help businesses to more effectively develop their communication and marketing strategies and develop new and better ideas. The future might see the creation of original and high-quality advergames that will rival any other video game. Various forecasts continue to show notable growth prospects.

To ensure greater effectiveness, a range of variables typical to this medium must be considered: game genre, target audience, creativity, playability, entertainment, etc. These factors will largely determine the success or failure of advergaming.

This article analyzes the importance of advergaming as an advertising tool in the Spanish market. But in order to build our theoretical and methodological framework, in addition to using the scarce scientific references on the subject of study in Spain, we will conduct a review of the existing literature in other countries to support and enhance our research. We will also explain the methodology used for the study in detail, and afterward we will focus on the current state of the video game sector in Spain. We will analyze the differences between advergaming and in-game advertising, as well as the evolution, importance, and effectiveness of advergames. We will end with the analysis of important case studies in the Spanish market.

Literature Review

In Spain, we can hardly find scientific publications that discuss the concept of advergaming, but we can find publications about the importance of video games as an advertising tool. In order to support our theoretical and methodological research, in addition to using Spanish sources, we have resorted to publications on advergaming in countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and some studies in Malaysia, Australia, and Germany. In all of these countries, as in Spain, there is an increased use of video games and of advergaming as an advertising tool by manufacturers.

Most studies provide an overview of advergames (Santos, Gonzalo, & Gisbert, 2007). Others analyze the evolution and impact of video games (Kretchmer, 2003), as well as the attitudes toward advertising that appears in games (Winkler & Buckner, 2006). The attitudes of the players toward advergames and the brand is another area of study (Taylor & Todd, 1995; Hernández et al., 2004; Winkler & Buckner, 2006; Wise et al., 2008), as well as the preferences of the players toward the brand (Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007). Another field of study involves the effects of the game on the brand (Peters & Leshner, 2013) and the impact of the brand on the video players by repeating the game (Cauberghe & De Pelsmacker, 2010). There are also studies that analyze the purchase intention and the buyer’s behavior toward the brand (Ing & Azaze-Azizi, 2009), as well as the consumers’ attitude toward mobile phone advertising (Okazaki & Yagüe, 2012; Tsang et al., 2004).

A different research question is whether advergaming can be the future of interactive advertising (Chen & Ringel, 2001). However there is little academic research on the effectiveness and fundamental characteristics of advergaming, such as the entertainment and irritation that a player might experience with the game that a brand develops (Wise et al., 2008; Ducoffe, 1996; Martí-Parreño et al., 2013).

All of these studies show that there is a growing interest from advertisers and advertising agencies in advergaming as an advertising tool. This is also revealed in a study by PQ Media (2015), in
which advergaming occupies a growing segment in advertising and marketing communications.

“At the same time advertising has been welcomed by casual gamers. The strong majority of casual gamers, 85%, would prefer free ad-supported (games) over paying for downloads. In a media world where audiences are becoming harder to reach, and consumers are gaining more control over the ads they come in contact with, casual games deliver a sought-out, ad-supported product to an engaged and active consumer” (IGDA, 2008, p.117)

After reviewing the literature in other countries on the attitude toward, effectiveness, and future of advergaming, we explain the methodology chosen for this research.

**Methodology**

This article explores advergaming as an advertising tool of the future. The main objectives of this research are to differentiate between the terms advergaming and in-game advertising in a clear and practical way; demonstrate how advergaming is an effective advertising tool for businesses; outline which advertisers are using advergaming in their marketing and communication strategies; carry out a critical evaluation of advergaming over the last few years up to the present day, using prominent case studies and detailed interviews with sector experts; and present the prospects for advergaming within the marketplace.

This article employs a qualitative research approach that combines review of the literature, both in Spain and in other countries, case studies and relevant practical examples of top brands, and in-depth interviews with four of the most prominent sector professionals and experts working in the most important advergaming companies in Spain.

We have selected the qualitative type of research for our study because it is considered one of the most complete data-collection techniques, including descriptions, observations, and dialogue about open issues (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2010).

We have focused on the in-depth interview to collect data, objective opinions, and subjective traits that emerge from observation (Bingham & Moore, 1973) because it is an effective and highly accurate tool (Sierra, 1998). We have used the semi-structured interview because it enables the interviewers to plan and develop a script to determine the information they wish to obtain. The questions formulated were open to allow the interviewees to add nuances to their answers and to provide additional value to the information offered. The questions asked ranged from the most general kind to the most specific ones, and were in simple language, conversational in tone, and understandable for the interviewees. While formulating these questions, a dynamic flow of conversation was sustained, notes were taken and the interviews were recorded in order to be transcribed at a later stage.

The experts selected for the study are four of the most knowledgeable professionals in advergaming in Spain. They have developed and participated in numerous advergames for major brands in the country, and their companies are pioneers and specialists in advergaming. So when doing our research, we saw the need to contact them, given they were the most suitable for our study. We got in touch with them by telephone and arranged a personal interview with each of them at their workplace.

The sample selected is not representative, but it is indicative of how and why brands choose advergames as advertising tools and whether or not they are as effective as other communication techniques. We could have selected more people for this sample, but currently in Spain there are no professionals that specialize in advergaming and we did not want to contaminate the results of the study.

This multi-modal methodological approach is advantageous in that collecting information from primary and secondary sources leads to more thorough and comprehensive research.

**The Spanish Video Game Sector Today**

The economic crisis that Spain is undergoing is one of the reasons that consumption has decreased within the video game sector over the last few years. However, this has not been the only factor involved. Technological development is another reason. All companies agree that 2012 stood out as a year of transition toward fourth-generation consoles and, on a technological level, a new era in the history of video games is emerging (ADESE, 2013a). Consumption in the Spanish video game sector reached a figure of 762 million euros in 2013, making it the number one industry for audio-visual and interactive entertainment in the country. These sales figures represent a decrease of 7.3% compared to the previous year, yet in terms of consumption, Spain continues to be in fourth place in the European market (ADESE, 2014).

![Figure 1](image_url)

*Note: Adapted from ADESE, 2014.*
Consoles make up the segment that experienced the biggest drop (-21%), followed by video games (15%) and lastly, accessories, with a decrease of 12% (ADESE, 2014).

![Figure 2. Video games, consoles and accessories market share in Spain (2012-2013). Thousands of units.](image)

Note: Adapted from ADESE, 2014.

This decline in consumption is reflected in the 2013 advertising investment figures, which are some 16% less than in 2012. For example, investment in television, which receives the vast majority of advertising euros in Spain, declined 14%, falling from €21,086,361 in 2012 to €18,049,717 in 2013. However, radio has experienced an increase of 22% compared with 2012, and this increase has been even greater in cinema, which saw a growth of 44%. During 2013, the video game industry invested €22,108,868 in advertising support (-16% compared to 2012) (ADESE, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>% Growth 12 Vs 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>€21,086,361</td>
<td>€18,049,717</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>€422,597</td>
<td>€328,413</td>
<td>-22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>€1,969,979</td>
<td>€1,137,598</td>
<td>-42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>€1,160,999</td>
<td>€789,117</td>
<td>-32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema</td>
<td>€373,820</td>
<td>€538,883</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor</td>
<td>€962,781</td>
<td>€975,236</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>€199,268</td>
<td>€242,145</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper/Supplements</td>
<td>€56,578</td>
<td>€47,758</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>€26,232,382</td>
<td>€22,108,868</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from ADESE, 2014.

The decrease in Spain is less than the average decrease experienced in the rest of Europe (-6.65% in the software and hardware segments), which is all the more surprising given that the Spanish economy is one of those most affected by the crisis and Spain is the main focus for illegal downloads on a worldwide level (ADESE, 2013b).

Although Spain is the fourth largest consumer of video games in Europe and the sixth largest worldwide, the rate of software development is minimal. Spain’s economic outlook and image needs to improve if large development companies are to establish themselves in the country. Video game production in Spain makes up 1% of the total market compared to the European average of 15% (ADESE, 2010).

Traditionally, video games have been associated with young people. However, in the last few years, there has been an important change in the profile of video game users. In Spain, perhaps as a result of the aging of the first-generation video game players, the age group that most plays video games is 25-34, followed by 35-44. Similarly, in Europe, the average fan is around 35 years old (ISFE, 2012). In the United Kingdom, the average age of gamers is 30 (ESA, 2012). Therefore, the aging of gamers is similar all over Europe, and the trend suggests that it will remain as such or continue to increase, given that another study demonstrates that 48% of adults over 50 play video games (ESA, 2013).

The video game industry is in a stage of transition, a “slowdown” fundamentally influenced by two factors: the arrival of fourth-generation consoles and the development of new business models in the online environment. Key to the development of the industry will be: the new generation of consoles, the development of online distribution channels, the multiplication of platforms, the maturity of advergames as an advertising model, and the progressive introduction of video games in multiple areas. All companies agree that we are entering a new stage in video game history, where the video game sector is aspiring to become a major force within the cultural and technological industries. The Spanish Entertainment and Media Outlook: 2013-2017 finds that video game businesses will experience sustained growth due to the arrival of fourth-generation consoles. Consumer spending on consoles is projected to increase by a 6.5% compounded annual growth rate from $63.4 billion in 2012 to $87 billion in 2017. Consumer spending on video games is expected to grow at an annual rate of 3.3% to $1.2 billion in 2017 (PWC, 2013).

Businesses are taking advantage of this new medium to ensure their messages reach the large number of people who play video games. A study carried out by Madvertise (a company specializing in advertising formats for mobile devices) confirms that when it comes to designing their mobile advertising campaigns, 30% of advertisers abandon traditional formats to create ad hoc video games with their product as the protagonist. Methods such as advergaming are not only ideal for transmitting brand values in a direct way, but also for increasing brand retention and recognition by up to 40% (“El 30% de los anunciantes,” 2011). Video game advertising, whether via the creation of advergames or the integration of advertising messages into video games (product placement, in-game advertising, etc.), needs to be considered as one of the options with the greatest possibility for growth because the industry is the leader in the audiovisual and interactive entertainment market, and player profiles are broadening. Adults, with greater purchasing power, are becoming habitual gamers and have spurred advertising methods to be more innovative and creative and less intrusive and more attractive in...
the eyes of the users, techniques that have been demonstrated to provoke a greater capacity for retention as well as having a greater influence on consumption habits. Such developments suggest that advergaming, product placement, and in-game advertising will become part of the advertising formula of the future.

Advertisers seek new ways of getting their message across effectively, and as such, advergaming is an option. If advertising is losing effectiveness, it is in a large part due to advertising saturation in legacy mass media. Zapping and audience fragmentation means it is more difficult to reach target audiences. Traditional advertising is often perceived as an invasive, annoying element that interrupts content and doesn't allow for the possibility of response. “The advertising industry finds itself in a red ocean, a very small space in which there is a lot of competition,” confirms Muñoz-Gallego (2007), founding partner of the technology development company Unkasoft, who adds that it is necessary to review current key advertising methods, as they are noted for their lack of efficiency, their intrusiveness, inappropriateness, incomprehensibility, and the lack of possibility for interaction. On the other hand, advergaming has the potential of being perceived as a non-intrusive method with which users interact. As such, “the main benefit of advergaming is its engagement in immersing the gamer in the story being told by the video game while they interact with the brand and its values” (Vizcarra, 2009).

Advertisers have started to venture into this new medium, mainly because more and more people are playing video games while the number of hours spent watching TV, reading the newspaper, or listening to the radio is decreasing. “Currently, a television campaign has a response rate of 1%; for press and magazines it is 0.75%, for radio it is 0.55%, and for advergaming it is 30%” (“¿Qué es el advergaming?,” 2009). It must also be considered that the time spent in front of a brand is greater in a game, which in turn facilitates retention: “Time spent ranges between 30 and 45 minutes on average. However, it is difficult to imagine someone being exposed to a spot, a magazine advertisement or a billboard for more than a few seconds” (Wordpress, 2008). To test the effectiveness of advergaming, a study was carried out in the United Kingdom called “Game On” in which 6,500 adults were interviewed. Users played one out of nine different advergames. After, 45% confirmed that they would buy the brand that they had played with. A third of participants in the study had already played an advergame, and 30% of them had provided a brand with contact information or had made a purchase as a consequence of participating in the game. Furthermore, the study confirmed that young people believe that these types of activities lend credibility to the brand (Hortelano, 2009).

Distinguishing Between Advergaming and In-Game Advertising

Recent developments seek to introduce dynamic and interactive advertising into video games. There are various methods (in-game advertising, advergaming, web advertising, virtual world marketing, sponsored sessions, etc.), each aimed at finding the most attractive and effective advertising formats using video games. As such, not everything is advergaming. However, a great majority of professionals confuse advergaming with other techniques, such as in-game advertising.

In-game advertising consists in integrating advertising into the video game, so that it forms part of the action scene. It is able to geographically locate players and tailor itself to them in various ways (Sebastián, 2013). For example, a virtual outdoor poster or billboard can be integrated into the video game. This strategy can be dynamic in that these advertisements can be changed or remain static; the advertisements can be updated by networked playing and can also offer options for interactivity. In product placement, the product is integrated into the action and the plot within the game. Here, advertisers find practically virgin terrain as far as advertising is concerned. The only inconvenience is that it is more expensive than other options, and it requires that placement be negotiated before launching. Console dashboard advertising reserves a place in the control for inserting advertising, whether it is via a video or a static image. There are other options. This is an area still to be developed, and advertisers are in the testing stage for alternatives, hoping to find ways of reaching players without being perceived as invasive. Until now, other experiences include that of the video game Deus Ex: Human Revolution (2011), which in its laptop version included advertising on the loading screen while the game was getting ready to start—a framed image on the lower right-hand side of the screen that provoked anger among users. In a few days, a solution for making the advertising disappear could be found online. For its part, in March 2011, the company Lynx announced that they would add QR codes to some of their games (Fight Night Champion and Need for Speed) that users could photograph while playing to gain access to the advertiser's website using their smartphones. This initiative also was abandoned soon afterwards due to its rejection by users.

In the majority of cases, in-game advertising is inserted into a video game created by a developer that has designated a series of spaces within the game. If these spaces are not contracted, they are filled with advertisements for fictitious products or brands. Many of the campaigns seen in video games use dynamic in-game publicity. At any time, this can be altered remotely from the ad-server via the console’s internet connection.

The process is as follows: On beginning the game (using either laptop, phone, tablet, or console), a connection is made with a server via the network and information is sent regarding the game (title, spaces available, etc.), as well as the player (location, local time, etc.). The game downloads the advertisements and inserts them into the specifically designated spaces. Once the game is over, the laptop, phone, tablet, or console sends information to the server about which advertisements have been viewed, for how long, from what angle, etc. This information can then be used by the advertiser to increase the effectiveness of the next campaign.
According to numerous studies, as well as providing a welcome income for digital gaming, in-game advertising also lends a certain realism to the game's environment. Matt Miller, the lead designer of City of Heroes (2004) notes: “We already had a lot of fake billboards in the game, and we really much prefer those to be real to enhance the immersion. The billboards we first included in the game are obviously fake and some are meant to be funny, but it makes sense for us to put real advertisements up to make the city feel more real and more alive.” According to NCSoft, the company responsible for the series, “The integration of advertising into the game will be done in the best possible way so as not to be detrimental to the users” (García, 2008).

However, in-game advertising has been met with resistance. A method that was expected to be a successful advertising formula a few years ago has yet to produce the expected results. It seems that advertisements inserted into games do not connect with the target audience. “There was a time when we thought advertising and sponsorship was a big opportunity,” explains Kotick (“La publicidad en los videojuegos,” 2011), chief executive officer of Activision Blizzard, before adding “but what we realized is our customers are paying $60 for a game and they don't really want to be barraged with advertising.” Advertising within video games is also beginning to be badly received by users playing subscription games. “They see themselves as paying for a premium service and the expectation is that they should be allowed to enjoy their game without interruption” (“La publicidad en los videojuegos”, 2011).

Thus following an era of many projects and expectations, in-game advertising’s boom has yet to happen. Video games, as is the case with most media, were not created to have advertising inserted into them; in fact, many games are incompatible with advertisements. However, there are some video games that can be adapted with much negotiation and planning. The majority of media and digital agencies do not understand the creation process involved in a video game, given that they are very different industries. Many advertisers are reluctant to interfere in the development of a game given their lack of knowledge about games. Additionally, video game manufacturers can earn huge profits with a very successful triple-A game, and so it would be disastrous for the industry if the advertising turned out to be an obstacle for players. Advertisements in games must be planned well in advance, something that is not usually done. All of these actions imply costs. As a result, in-game advertising has yet to bloom.

Although in-game advertising business is decreasing in the case of big games aimed at consoles (for the aforementioned factors: timescales, costs, sector knowledge, and negative response from players), it is growing in brand-created video games (advergames). Gamers are not as bothered by advertising when the game is free. For instance, the insertion of banners on the lower part of the screen continues to be one of the most direct solutions for reaching consumers, who confirm that they are not bothered by these messages as long as the game is free. This way of camouflaging a brand within a video game, rather than going undetected, actually increases the user’s curiosity by up to 25%, which is reflected in the exponential growth in traffic to the advertiser website (“La publicidad en los videojuegos,” 2011). The game has to be free if the user is to remain unbothered by advertising.

Advergaming

Advergaming consists in creating a game, available online through converged media use (a computer, smartphone, tablet or console), specifically for a brand. These video games ensure that the user is continuously exposed to the advertiser while brand values are simultaneously transmitted. The effectiveness of this technique can be seen in the increased contact times between the brand and the customer, which would be difficult to achieve with other media. A large number of gamers use smartphones to play video games, and a high percentage of them play online as well as with free downloads or apps. Motivated by the 2012 presidential elections, the North American NGO Rock the Vote decided to use video games to promote voting and combat abstention among younger voters. They did this using the Vote! app, a game made for Apple mobile devices (iPhone, iPad, and iPod). Created by the company responsible for the famous video game Infinity Blade, Vote! pitted the two presidential candidates, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, against each other in a cartoon duel (“Epic games,” 2012). Vote! demonstrated that advergaming serves not only to sell products or services, but also to promote values and get citizens involved.

Sports programming also uses advergames to inspire feelings, argues José Poveda, CEO of From the Bench, the company that developed the Fantasy Manager video game, in which users can experience the feeling of managing their favorite club. “When a sports club is capable of offering fans quality entertainment directly linked to the brand, it touches the heart directly, generating once-in-a-lifetime experiences,” (Berraz, 2011). His feelings are shared by Mauricio García, director of Kellogg’s Marketing Department, a brand that has used video game advertising to promote their chocolate cereal Trésor: “The user shares time and games with the brand while socializing with other users at the same time. As such, they don't perceive the campaign as pure and hard advertising, instead they consider the brand as a ‘gaming companion’ that provides them with fun and experiences” (Berraz, 2011).

Advertisers who want to attract customers while simultaneously inspiring loyalty could integrate advergaming and in-game advertising, since both activities are complementary. J.A. Muñoz-Gallego, chief business officer of Stelapps, explains that when a business aspires to attract a new audience, it should ensure that the brand appears to be integrated as much as possible into a successful video game. On the other hand, when it wants to reinforce ideas about the product or gain customer loyalty, advergaming is recommended (personal communication, April 8, 2014).

By being present in a yet unsaturated platform linked to entertainment, advergaming and in-game advertising have some advantages in common. Mónica Saldafia, digital account manager at Zenithmedia,
explains, “These games help to increase brand recognition and both typologies increase retention. Incorporating advertising messages into an environment where users claim to perceive advertising as something positive, in that it makes the game more realistic, helps to improve perception of the brand” (Berraz, 2011).

**Evolution, Importance and Effectiveness of Advergaming**

We now move to briefly outline the most successful cases of advergaming of the last eight years and analyze the importance and effectiveness of advergames in order to understand advergaming approaches beginning to take place among major brands. At the end of 2006, Burger King began to sell in its restaurants three video games that formed part of the so-called King Games pack: a multiplayer racing game called Pocketbike Racer, a bumper car simulator called Big Bumpin, and a crazy, plot-based game called Sneak King. In the latter, players have to spy on hungry people before surprising them with a hamburger. Released for sale separately at a price of $3.99, they went on to achieve outstanding sales figures. By establishing a price, albeit a low one, Burger King was sending the message to its customers that the games had a real value, unlike many disappointing free, online advergames that they may have played before. Burger King supported the launch with an advertising campaign that included publicity in *Saturday Night Live* and National Football League games (Microsoft Advertising, 2008). Burger King sold more than 3 million copies, and its games ranked among the lists of those most sold over Christmas 2006, directly competing with huge launches such as *Call of Duty* and *Gears of War* (“Publicidad en videojuegos,” 2007). The campaign won the Titanium Grand Prix at the Cannes Lions awards. Philip and Andrew Oliver, directors and founders of Blitz Games and veterans of the video game industry, spoke about the project that was entrusted to Blitz by Microsoft and Burger King:

> The expectations of Burger King in relation to the games changed substantially as the project progressed. If someone had told me, “You have eight months to create three Xbox games that must also run on the Xbox 360 but can’t be a simple adaptation, they should look better, even though the Xbox 360 hardware isn’t finished yet…” I simply would never have signed on. Having said that, I am delighted with how things turned out (“Case Study,” 2008).

During the quarter in which the games were launched, Burger King’s profits increased by 40% (“Case Study,” 2008).

As another example, in 2009, the Mini car manufacturer used mobile advergaming in a game called *Mini Jukebox* for iPhone. The video game consisted in traveling back in time, re-living the last decades by way of music. Playing was easy, requiring only that the screen be tapped in time with the music. There were also different difficulty levels depending on player skills (Unkasoft, 2009). Beverage and fast food companies were the first ones to choose advergaming, although currently every type of product and services makes use of these video games containing messages. Even Intermón Oxfam, a development NGO, found in advergames a formula for requesting greater commitment to the fight against poverty. The game titled *Rescue Plan* was created in 2010. The player’s task was to vigorously shake José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the Spanish prime minister, to force him to meet his commitments in relation to poverty. The application, developed by Unkasoft Advergaming (2010) for iPhone and iPod Touch, formed part of the Intermón Oxfam campaign, which was launched to coincide with the Spanish presidency of the European Union. The objective of the game was to remind people of the growing millions suffering from hunger worldwide.

A more recent case of advergaming is the 2012 game *Typical British*, designed by Territorio Creativo on the Tuenti social network for Openbank, the Santander Group’s online bank. The game consisted in identifying elements belonging to English culture in the least amount of time possible from four categories: history and geography, sports, language and literature, and art and entertainment. Users were able to play in stages in any of the categories, had to face different levels of difficulty, improve their scores, and compete against their friends. The top 20 players won a year-long online English course (“Acción de advergaming,” 2012).

The latest trends try to take advantage of social networks by using original games and designs. The internet has provided brands with a platform in which to develop custom games. For example, Unilever advertised Magnum ice cream via social networks. The campaign consisted of a simple game, *Pleasure Hunt*, integrated into the internet browser, which attracted sufficient attention and was entertaining enough to go viral. In the game, players had to control a young woman as she traveled through the internet (including stops at YouTube, a hotel website, and car company Saab’s website) while collecting chocolate sweets. Enormous exposure was achieved, and the game received traffic from 12 markets (Microsoft Advertising, 2013).

A study carried out by Mediabrix on the effectiveness of all advertising formats in video games found that these types of games achieve an average effectiveness rate of 20%, and social gamers claim to positively accept the advertising, especially if they receive something in exchange. These findings encourage brands to incorporate advergaming into their social media strategy (“La publicidad online,” 2013).

Méndiz (2010), explains that as an advertising format, advergaming provides advertisers with some very interesting advantages (pp.44-45):

1. High brand exposure. A motorway billboard, a magazine advertisement or a webpage pop-up barely manages to hold attention for one or two seconds and a TV spot for up to 30 seconds. A video game user can spend hours playing with a brand.
2. Maximum user attention. Faced with the passivity which is
usually generated by a barrage of advertising messages (in print media, radio, television, or internet), here the audience attitude is totally active and positive.

3. Positive predisposition on the part of the audience. The audience doesn’t “have to” pay attention, instead, because they are highly motivated, they positively “want” to pay maximum attention to whatever the brand is conveying in the game.

4. Brand integration. Based on this, the company information can rely on audience participation, rather than being perceived as “annoying advertising” in any way.

5. Audience interactivity. Thanks to the active participation of the audience, the game generates collusion with the users: They feel more involved in it; and, at the same time, the brand can collect all their online browsing information to later organize solid databases for establishing effective dialogue.

6. Memorability. It is easier for individuals to remember things when they have been involved in them.

7. Virality. Online video games are frequently shared among friends and contacts. When the recommendation (when it comes from a friend: someone who deserves attention and credibility) is also free, the proposal is even more attractive, especially when the game becomes an element for bonding or competition between the two.

Perhaps the most attractive benefit of advergaming for the advertiser is the contact time between the brand and the customer. In this way, the game is used to transmit product characteristics, to associate ideas and images with the brand, to achieve a higher rate of retention, to reinforce brand image and the purchase decision, to achieve greater impact, etc. All of this serves to strengthen the virality of advergaming, since users recommend the game to at least two out of 10 friends or contacts (“¿Qué es el advergaming?,” 2009). In addition to the benefits of time spent and word of mouth, various market research studies relating to brand retention mention that “people remember 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see and hear, and 60% of that with which they interact” (“¿Qué es el advergaming?,” 2008). As such, advergaming is a highly effective strategy for advertisers.

The majority of sector professionals agree that the main advantages of advergames are greater contact times with the brand; positive memory of, and inclination to, purchase the brand; a useful tool for obtaining user information; and lower investment than traditional advertising. Potential outcomes include the possibility that communities are created, making it easier to reach the target audience, and using a scoring system that engages users in repeated plays in order to surpass their own score, thus ensuring that the website receives more traffic. Theoretically, if these advergaming incentives work, the result would be increased product/brand awareness and a viral effect.

While conventional advertising seeks out the user, in advergaming it is the player who seeks out the game and approaches the brand. Advergaming potentially offers advertisers direct brand interaction with the consumer. This contact can be produced in three different ways: associative, illustrative, and demonstrative (Chen & Ringel, 2001), as can be seen in the following table, adapted from Chen and Ringel by Martí-Parreño (2010, p.81).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Integration</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associative</td>
<td>Tries to associate a brand with a determined activity or lifestyle.</td>
<td>Billboard placement with brand logo within the scene of a video game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrative</td>
<td>The brand or product employed performs a relevant role within the game.</td>
<td>Placement of brand logo or product that provides players with points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
<td>The player experiences the brand or product within the context of the video game.</td>
<td>Placement of a car model during the video game.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The making of a video game must be planned and appropriate to each client and situation. For this reason, advergaming is leading many advertisers to reconsider part of their strategies in favor of a new type of advertising, which Martí (2005) argues is “less intrusive and which rouses enough interest in the consumer to drive the consumers themselves to seek out these new advertising communication proposals which they believe offer them significant added value.” As obvious as it may seem, to achieve success in advergaming the video game should, first and foremost, be fun and entertaining. Only then will it manage to make a connection between the brand and the audience’s emotional side.

Case Studies: Advergaming in Spain

There are not many companies dedicated to creating advergames in Spain, partly because many advertisers are unfamiliar with this new advertising tool and because those who have heard of advergaming are still reluctant to invest in it. Among the few companies that stand out in this field are Bitoon, DevilishGames, and Unkasoft. Advertisers investing the most in advergaming in Spain usually belong to the telecommunications, automotive, beverage, and food and restaurant industries, and these brands are frequently associated with a young audience, although this association is usually erroneous (J.A. Muñoz-Gallego, personal communication, April 8, 2014). Other than these cases, Spanish advertisers are extremely afraid of producing something new, says J.A. Muñoz-Gallego, chief business officer of Stelapps, who explains that they have worked with brands in the USA that, in contrast, greatly value innovative approaches. In Spain, on the other hand, as long as no advertiser has developed an advergame, then other advertisers are reluctant to do it (personal communication, April 8, 2014). Only 30% of advertisers convert their mobile advertising campaigns into video games, which is a relatively small percentage, considering that Spanish users dedicate an average of 30 minutes a day...
to playing with their mobile telephone (“Las marcas descubren,” 2011). However this can also be considered a high rate, given advertisers’ fears of investing in new advertising formats. Advertising investment rates in Spain during 2011 grew from 0.21% to 0.27% in one year (IAB Spain Research & PWC, 2011).

Figure 3. Online advertising formats 2011.

Note: Adapted from IAB Spain Research & PWC, 2011

However, that growth was temporary. Actual advertising investment in 2013 decreased 3.7% compared to the previous year, from $10.8 billion in 2012 to $10.4 billion in 2013. The internet was the only medium to experience growth— of 1.8%. Together, advergaming, apps and others (within mobile marketing) represented a total of $25 million, a 17.2% decrease compared with the previous year (Infoadex, 2014). The economic crisis ravaged this sector as well.

As previously mentioned, digital gaming, including advergames, span a broad age range. D. Ferriz, director of DevilishGames, further expands the age range that advergames are capable of reaching, “From 3-year-old children playing their parents’ mobile or tablet to the elderly delving into the internet for the first time thanks to the ease and simplicity of tablets. It is possible to reach any type of audience” (personal communication, April 15, 2014). Other executives confirm this: “The brand has a business objective and designs a strategy based on this objective” (G. Muñoz, personal communication, April 9, 2014). Advergames are sufficiently adaptable as to attract attention from any age of audience, depending on the desired objective. Brands wanting to create an attractive advergame should be aware that objectives should be clearly outlined in order to define what is hoped to be achieved with a video game. The kind of audience to be targeted by the advergame, the values to be communicated, the message to be transmitted, and how the game design will influence brand retention among users are also important factors to consider. A company that follows these steps will select the type of game that can best be adapted to their general strategy. In this way, the video game will become an experience that clearly transmits the brand message and allows the user to interact with it.

Advergaming is within reach of most businesses with regard to the quality, development, production and costs involved. “A mobile advergame can cost between $1,000 and $90,000 depending on the content, platforms, whether it is national or international, etc.” (J.A. Muñoz-Gallego, personal communication, April 8, 2014). Advergaming should be of high quality and have its own identity as a video game. It should be creative and entertaining, independent of the theme and platform employed, whether it be laptop, smartphone, tablet, or console. Creativity is an important element when designing a video game, and many sector professionals agree that this is an unresolved subject. “There are advertisers that have realized that they need a video game, but what some of them do not realize is that creativity is also needed in the game” (“España está,” 2008). D. Ferriz recognizes the relevance of these qualities, but highlights another important aspect: “Along with taking care of the artistic, technical, and playable characteristics, one cannot lose sight of the fact that advergaming is, above all, an advertising model and a special emphasis must be given to transmitting the values of the product being advertised” (personal communication, April 15, 2014). It would appear that creativity in a game is not in conflict with emphasis on transmitting values of the product. In fact, this presents the main challenge for advergaming producers.

It is also essential that the brand be clear about its objectives, since there are times that advergaming will not achieve what the advertiser is looking for. In some cases, advergaming serves as an optional medium, though not necessarily the best one. F. Piquer, CEO of Biitoon, agrees that there are two challenges when it comes to creating an advergame: “fulfilling the promise of entertainment to the user, and fulfilling the promise to the brand that its message will reach the user in the way that they had hoped” (personal communication, April 23, 2014).

The price paid by the player is another element that must be considered in these video games. While those interviewed agreed that an advergame should either be free or available at an extremely reduced price—eight out of 10 players dedicate more time to playing free games than paid games (Santo, 2013)—as we have previously stated, the Burger King campaign suggests that paying a minimal price for advergaming generates increased interest. F. Piquer explains why advergaming should be free: “The user is paying to be exposed to a brand and as such, must be given a significant benefit, the most immediate being that no cost is involved. The player is going to spend time with the product and as such will be impacted by it, therefore this is the price that the user pays” (personal communication, April 23, 2014). Experts such as J.A. Muñoz-Gallego expand upon this: “Advergames have to be free, and if not, the price needs to be less than 5% or 10% of the actual value. A brand is being promoted and so the video game should not have to be purchased” (personal communication, April 8, 2014). Some video games introduce the option of micropayments, which allow players to access levels, assistance, or additional objects. The cost of these virtual goods is reduced and is sometimes offered by the brand as a gift in exchange for carrying out a specific action that helps to promote the game, something that users value highly.
Nowadays, advergames are mainly developed to function on smartphones, tablets, and on a lesser scale, personal computers. They are not created for consoles due to their high cost. D. Ferriz explains, “In the case of consoles, everything is much more complicated because it is necessary to carry out planning and development many months or even years in advance.” He clarifies that he does not believe consoles to be an ideal platform for advergaming (personal communication, April 15, 2014).

Advergaming has also been revealed as one of the most effective tools for obtaining user information. If a video game is free, easy to download to a smartphone or tablet, and users feel that it is worth it, they are usually willing to provide their details. However, D. Ferris is of the opinion that “users are generally reluctant to provide their details, so advertisers need to offer some kind of prize in exchange using competitions or draws within the advergame” (personal communication, April 15, 2014). Normally, information is collected because of the way the game is used, not because the user has provided it, as this may seem invasive. The type of information collected refers to the games played: the time at which they play, game duration, how many times they replayed, etc. Consumption habits can then be deduced from this information and used in other brand activities, such as a television advertising campaign or in below-the-line activities. For those reasons, F. Piquer emphasizes, “It is a very reliable way to see the impact a campaign has on users, and once the legal requirements regarding the type of information that can be collected have been fulfilled, it is a very useful tool” (personal communication, April 23, 2014). Moreover J.A. Muñoz-Gallego favors collecting user information, and comments that “segmentation data is collected, especially that which relates to brand objectives: the location of its target audience, how old they are, their economic power… whether or not their perception of the brand has improved or worsened once they have played the game, and whether or not they want to purchase the product” (personal communication, April 8, 2014). The importance of advertisers collecting user information based on campaign objectives is evident, and it is of no surprise, then, that companies show an interest in developing their own data collection technology. G. Muñoz explains, “We have our own data analysis platform. Data trackers are established in the games that send information to the platform. This tool has a cost to the advertiser, in the same way that the game design, the creativity, the music, etc., has,” (personal communication, April 9, 2014).

Indubitably, popular opinion on advergaming could be more positive. One reason could be that high quality products are hard to come by, from the technical and the playable aspects. These defects are usually due to a lack of time and budget. As explained by F. Piquer, “The time needed to develop an advergame is usually much longer than that of a television spot, but the advertiser wants it within a month. In a month, you do what you can. It is true that there is much resentment regarding the quality or the perception of what has been done. On the other hand, when time and resources are available, the producers in this country achieve genuine wonders. That is why there are more limited products and there are great products” (personal communication, April 23, 2014).

Other possible reasons for the creation of low-quality products can be the lack of knowledge surrounding this advertising tool, or the poor communication between the different parties involved in the process of creating an advergame. This is corroborated by J.A. Muñoz-Gallego: “Video game producers only produce, they do not contribute any kind of knowledge; digital agencies struggle to see the strategic side, and the brand doesn’t see any results because nothing specific is being measured” (personal communication, April 8, 2014). D. Ferriz, another expert in the field, agrees with Muñoz-Gallego and says, “It is an industry experiencing much growth, but it is still not as professional as it should be. Businesses specializing in advergaming practically do not exist, or rather, there are advertising agencies making advergames every now and then, and there are also video game developers creating advergames to earn some money and finance independent projects, but there are no specialized businesses that have advergaming as their only business model” (personal communication, April 15, 2014). Likewise, Diedierik Groesbeek, director of Xform Games, explains that the problem with advergames is that “the concept is not created by a video game specialist, but by a marketing company that sells the idea to its clients before it even contacts the studio that will develop it” (“Advergames: No es oro,” 2013). Groesbeek admits that he is not proud of receiving positive reviews and awards for an advergame with which he isn’t satisfied, such as Red Bull Formula Face, for which he won a 2012 Dutch Game Award in the Best Advergame category.

The game Red Bull Formula Face originated from a commission by marketing agency Buzzin Monkey for an advergame controlled by the facial expressions of the player. This decision not only required a huge investment in development, but the player also had to fulfill technical requirements in order to play. Xform Games insisted on an alternative option using the keyboard for those players who did not have a computer with the necessary features, but Buzzin Monkey refused to develop this second option. “The only thing that marketing companies are interested in, is that the game work on their laptop on the day they present it to the client. This results in an advergame in which only three out of 10 people who attempt to play it are successful in doing so,” comments Groesbeek (“Advergames: No es oro,” 2013).

Despite these problems, G. Muñoz recommends that advertisers use this new tool, and explains why using an advergame will give them interesting results: “First, there is a sector of the population that traditional methods fail to reach, and second, the perception of video games is very positive” (personal communication, April 9, 2014). To this he adds that, in general, advertisers that invest in advergames do so again in the future. Others agree. “Advertisers need to see that what they are doing is working, and as long as they see results, they will keep investing… Life itself is becoming a video game. Brands need to be present within this content in your life and they need companies that help them to do so” (J.A. Muñoz-Gallego, personal communication, April 8, 2014).
In Spain some major brands are choosing advergaming and achieving spectacular results. By way of example, various case studies will now be presented, including those of Famosa, Mixta, BBVA, and Endesa. Endesa is one of the companies that has achieved great results from advergaming. 2010 saw the launch of BasketDudes, created by Bitoon, a casual basketball game combining community, competition, and trading of objects. “It is a persistent multiplayer online sports game. Users can create a basketball team from our Basketball Federation in a World Basketball Clubs (WBC) league, in which they can revolutionize their club by signing up new players, buying virtual objects to improve their players: sports shoes, armbands, wristbands, etc. They can also play against other users in such a way that their teams get stronger as time goes by, and they can win virtual competitions, compete against work colleagues and friends, and play online for free with other people” (“Entrevista a David,” 2010).

In this campaign, players were presented with different ways of accessing the brand through advertising, product placement, direct e-mail marketing, promotions and the possibility of directly accessing the Telepizza website to make a purchase (“Telepizza incluye,” 2011).

In 2011, the in-game campaign launched by the companies iZ and Telepizza resulted in the online game Sports City, in which players could create and personalize their own sports city. In the city there were shopping centers where replicas of Telepizza restaurants could be found. Upon accessing them, players obtained virtual money and extra experience points, as well as special discounts and offers for real-life Telepizza orders.

In 2012, BBVA launched the game entitled BBVA Game. The objective was to strengthen ties with users of their website on the one hand, while attracting new clients on the other. According to Bernardo Crespo, “The relationship with web users is very important for BBVA, as it reduces office costs and strengthens customer ties, which at the same time prevents them from leaving” (“Anunciantes en OMWeek,” 2013).

In the game, players overcome a series of challenges to obtain points that can then be exchanged for prizes. The proposal worked so well that the challenges ran out prematurely, leading BBVA to carry out a survey in the form of a game to gather user opinions on how to improve the BBVA game. Consequently, more segmented
challenges were created, and the game was used as a means of attracting and communicating to followers on social networks.

Among the results obtained, according to Crespo, were a 24-fold increase in the number of videos views and a 22-fold increase in the number of Facebook fans. Databases were substantially improved and the average time spent on the website and the general satisfaction with the service were multiplied by 1.6 and 1.18 respectively (“Anunciantes en OMWeek,” 2013).

Table 4: Case Study. Liga BBVA Game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements:</th>
<th>Advergame to support the gamification strategy developed by BBVA Game.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target:</td>
<td>+4 year-olds (predominantly males).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product:</td>
<td>Free-to-play multiplatform game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client objectives:</td>
<td>BBVA aimed to strengthen the links between users and their website, while at the same time attracting new users to advance their process of becoming an increasingly digitalized entity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution:</td>
<td>Multiplatform free-to-play game in which users could demonstrate their ability and precision by choosing to be a goalkeeper or striker from five BBVA League teams either in single player or multiplayer mode. The game Liga BBVA Game offered the possibility of living out the BBVA League in another dimension: overcome 50 active challenges (with their corresponding prizes), obtain information table in the various modes of play, play and share Liga BBVA Game on Facebook and Twitter, or compete in world rankings as Iker Casillas, Andrés Iniesta, Cristiano Ronaldo, or Diego Costa, among others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Campaign results: | Launch, April 2014  
100,000 matches played in the first two weeks |
| Agency:       | Bitoon                                                              |

Note: Information provided by Bitoon.

Bitoon backs advergaming used in an efficient way. They have sought to integrate the brand into the game in order to present the user with a unique experience. Their work has earned them recognition—including a Gold award for best advergaming activity in the Festival Inspirational 2012 and Bronze in El Ojo de Iberoamérica and Festival El Sol in 2013—thanks to an online experience created by the Wink, BTOB and Bitoon agencies for Mixta entitled Mixta Fighter, an online fighting game that pitted the protagonists of brand advertising spots against each other.

Table 5: Case Study. Mixta Fighter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements:</th>
<th>Advergaming as a brand communication strategy support tool.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target:</td>
<td>Young people (aged 18-35) in Spain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product:</td>
<td>Online (web and Facebook) and physical (recreational machines in arcades) advergame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Objectives:</td>
<td>Support brand communication strategy, increase social network activity and the use of pin codes to drive consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution:</td>
<td>Develop a casual fighting game based on the legendary video game Street Fighter as well as the Mixta characters and settings to aid communication and improve brand engagement and participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Campaign results: | Engagement +25% Daily Active Users/Monthly Active Users  
Bronze award for advergaming, Ojo Iberoamérica 2013  
Bronze award for advergaming, Sol Festival 2013  
Gold award for best advergaming activity, Inspirational 2012  
Silver Social Media award, Inspirational 2012 |

Note: Information provided by Bitoon.
Unkasoft Advergaming developed an advergame called *Numbered with Friends*. It was similar to the successful international game *Angry Words* but with a numerical approach and with greater advantages since it broke the language barrier, making it possible to play in various countries as well as communicate with people speaking different languages, using the emo-chat feature. “Not only does advergaming have a future, but it is also a 100% exportable product with a really simple capacity for replication, and it is not necessary to build infrastructures outside of Spain in order to produce [outside of Spain]” (F. Piquer, personal communication, April 23, 2014).

The objective of *Numbered with Friends*, according to J.A. Muñoz-Gallego, “was to make a video game that would attract people and draw them into a large community.” It would seem that they achieved their objective, given that each user played an average of 10 games per day (personal communication, April 8, 2014). *Numbered with Friends* was a viral social, mathematical, puzzle game that sought to strengthen the creative, sensory, and intellectual ability of the users, independent of their age. The game achieved market visibility, gaining the attention of users, especially those of an older age group. During the week of its launch, it gained more than 1,000 active players and over 1,300 downloads (“La cuarta parte de los mayores,” 2013).

In 2013, the Spanish company DevilishGames developed a new advergame for web, smartphones, and tablets for the games company Famosa. The objective was to promote Pinypon products by launching two playsets, *Amusement Park* and *Aquapark*, in which children could play with Pinypon figures, placing them in different attractions (slides, bumper cars, etc.).

Table 6. Case Study: Famosa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advergame objective:</th>
<th>Introduce product and its possibilities, as well as the game’s virtual experience, to encourage users to play the physical version.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methodology:</td>
<td>A game mechanic was chosen that would involve all the individual playset activities while promoting engagement through the game’s evolution. As such, the following elements were elected:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management dynamic:</td>
<td>Users would control the Pinypon activities, placing them in the attractions as and when requested and before they run out of patience. For each Pinypon correctly placed in the requested attraction before they run out of patience, users receive a credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of the playset set-up within the game mechanic:</td>
<td>The game begins with a single attraction. With the credits received with each accomplishment, new attractions can be purchased to complete the playset. This increases complexity, game time, replayability and as a result, product engagement and exposure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versions:</td>
<td>Mobile (iOS and Android) and browser (via the advertiser’s website)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Game launch:
- Android version: October 10, 2013
- iOS version: October 18, 2013

Number of installations until 28th April 2014:
- Android version: 162,006
- iOS version: 9,636

NOTE: The web version of the advergame is not included, given that the users have already entered the product’s website when they access the game.

Note: Information provided by DevilishGames.
In 2014, Ono launched an online game entitled *Aquí no hay quien pare*, created and developed by Grey. It was aimed at communicating to current and potential clients the supposed advantages and benefits of having Ono online TV. This was done by way of some peculiar characters living in a five-story building through whom players discovered who lived on each floor and their television viewing habits. A weekly prize of $300 was offered to whoever ranked first, and participants were entered into a weekly draw to win devices. The grand prize consisted of $3,000, and the winner was chosen among all participants during the game’s activation period (“Advergaming de Ono,” 2014).

Despite the aforementioned success stories, advergaming in Spain has yet to be exploited to the maximum. The key reasons are fear and lack of awareness surrounding this new advertising method. Because of that, many of those companies that do use it risk the bare minimum by creating cheap games with limited circulation. However, they still manage to obtain results, so it is safe to project that they will develop new and better ideas. The future might well see the creation of original and high-quality advergames that will rival other video games.

Studies such as those carried out by Madvertise demonstrate that advergaming’s capacity for interaction contributes to brand retention and recognition by up to 40% (“Las marcas descubren,” 2011), a figure that justifies investing in advergaming in the Spanish market. “I believe the trend will continue during the next few years, given that most advertisers trying advergaming for the first time usually use it again” (D. Ferriz, personal communication, April 15, 2014). Ferriz added, “During the last three or four years, we have noted a considerable increase in the number of requests for advergaming and we are currently developing more than 20 advergames per year” (D. Ferriz, personal communication, April 15, 2014).

There is still much to be done in Spain, but the moment is ripe to venture into the potentially explosive combination of entertainment and advertising that portable devices is making possible; advergames should be part of that phenomenon. “It does not make sense to fight against change,” comments J.A. Muñoz-Gallego. “People will continue to use mobiles and tablets to play video games, and if brands want to be involved, they will have to invest in this content” (personal communication, April 8, 2014).

### Solutions and Recommendations

This article explored the challenges and opportunities presented by advergaming. Explaining the difference between the terms advergaming and in-game advertising, the article proceeded to pose the following question: Which of these marketing tools is more efficient and why? Whereas advergaming and in-game advertising are effective within their own context, advergaming potentially yields some new opportunities. While the economic crisis in Spain has negatively affected in-game advertising, experts anticipate the growth curve will resume once the economy improves. Some experts believe that in-game advertising is taking its time in producing the expected results and does not connect with the target audience, while others believe that it is simply a question of adapting to new trends.

By being present in a yet unsaturated platform linked to entertainment, both advergaming and in-game advertising have some advantages in common. Advertisers should integrate these two activities into their communication strategies, as they are not exclusive, but complementary. In any case, all experts agree that advergaming is being positioned as an advertising tool of the future, due to the advantages outlined in this study as well as the unstoppable use of mobiles and tablets in today’s society.

As noted, advergaming has not been frequently used by Spanish advertisers. The majority of experts agree that most media and digital agencies do not understand the complexities involved in creating a video game (a notion also shared by specialists in the field in other countries). Professionals agree that this lack of knowledge is a negative influence when it comes to creating an advergame, and it is also one of the main barriers to growth in the sector. These obstacles will be overcome once advergaming obtains better results. This, along with time, will ensure that advertisers acquire the necessary confidence to invest in new and better ideas that give life to original advergames of high quality.

### Future Research Directions

The future of advergaming as an advertising tool looks promising, although it remains a terrain yet to be exploited, and rarely forms part of strategic planning in the case of most advertisers. As a rarely used technology, it presents numerous and diverse lines of research, but all the experts interviewed agree that advergaming research is scarce. As such, one of the future lines of investigation should complement the qualitative analysis carried out in this study (bibliographic review, case study analysis, and in-depth...
Interviews) using more tools such as focus groups, as well as quantitative analysis interrelating behavior variables, consumption habits, lifestyles, attitude towards the brand, intention to purchase, etc., with genre, age, social class, etc. Another interesting line of research would carry out a comparative analysis of the advertisers using advergaming in Spain and other countries, to study whether brands are more regularly integrating advergaming into their planning strategies.

Conclusions

The growing interest in advergaming by advertisers as an advertising tool is clear. All the literature consulted, both in Spain and abroad, shows the increasing use of advergaming by brands to achieve their communication and marketing objectives. Despite the economic recession in Spain and the inevitable loss of revenue suffered by the video game sector, all the studies that have been done on the subject, and the methodology used for the research, point to the fact that it is establishing itself as the main source of audio-visual entertainment.

Video games have become one of the platforms most used by advertisers seeking new ways of getting their message across effectively. This is mainly due to the fact that the number of people playing video games continues to increase, and the average age of the gamer is increasing, not just in Spain but in the rest of the world. Key to the development of the video game industry in the next few years are the following: new business models based less on consoles and more on cloud content, the development of online distribution channels, platform multiplication, the maturity of the advergame as a progressive advertising model, and the introduction of video games as a technological tool in multiple areas of daily life (serious games).

In-game publicity and advergaming are the advertising formats most chosen by advertisers, as they are more innovative and creative, less intrusive and more visually attractive for users. Advergaming in particular is being positioned as the advertising tool of the future in the majority of markets. Advergaming is leading a large number of advertisers to rethink their communication strategies. If the capacity of video games to maintain contact between the player and the brand for a longer duration is very attractive, the player’s consumption habits are influenced, and they remember brands in a positive way. Moreover, the advertiser receives useful information about the user, the required investment is less than that of traditional advertising, and it favors the creation of a viral effect.

There are few Spanish companies dedicated to advergaming and those that are, are doing so with prominent projects. Among those that most stand out for the quality of their projects are Bitoon, DevilishGames, and Unkasoft. Spanish advertisers are reluctant to invest in advergaming due to fear and a lack of knowledge surrounding this new advertising tool. Those that most invest in advergaming in Spain normally include major brands from the telecommunications, automotive, beverage, and food and restaurant sectors. Advergames are aimed at a broad target audience and as such, the brand should definitely determine its marketing and advertising objectives if it is to reach its desired audience. In addition to transmitting brand values, advergaming must also pay attention to the creative, technical, and playable characteristics of the video game.

Advergaming is an advertising technique that is within the reach of many advertisers. Advergames are being created for mobile, tablet, and to a lesser extent, laptops. They are seldom created for consoles due to the high development costs. The majority of advergames are free for users, although there are also cases in which micropayments are made in order to obtain advantages or collectable elements in the game. Advergaming has also been revealed as one of the most effective tools for obtaining user information. This data refers to the games played: the time at which they play, the amount of time spent playing, how many times they are replayed, etc. Consumption habits can then be deduced from this information and the figures used in other brand activities.

Advergaming is positioned as a useful and very effective tool for brands, although few opt for this type of activity. However, it is evident that the advantages it presents to the advertiser are many: greater brand exposure time, impact upon a sector of the population that traditional methods are unable to reach, collection of users’ personal information, positive perception of video games by players, and less investment required for its activation and dissemination compared to other advertising formats. The key to success for advergaming lies in knowing how to make the most of technological trends while creating an experience that engages the gamer. There remains much to be done in Spain, but research suggests that the conditions are ripe for advergaming to become an economically successful venture for advertisers and brands.

References


NOTES

1 There are experts who claim that certain companies in Spain have perverted the true concept of the term advergaming by creating products of dubious technical quality, incapable of complying with the basic objectives of communication. This has been one of the main barriers to growth for the sector in the country, together with the lack of knowledge regarding the medium itself.

2 To be fair, this is the case with all forms of advertising.
The Portrayal of Latin American Immigrants in the Spanish Mainstream Media: Fear of Compassion?

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Abstract
This article explores the way that Latin American immigration at the turn of the 21st century was framed in mainstream media in Spain. The study reviews hundreds of news stories printed in three national newspapers, El País, El Mundo, and ABC, during 2001. Analyzing how major media presented the "Latinoamericanization" of non-European immigration in Spain, this article examines the 2001 political debate on immigration in relation to Ecuadoreans and Colombians. Through a comparative analysis, this study shows how news media discourse tends to decontextualize the transnational context of capital and population flows between Spain and Latin America, and how it influences public opinion. Moreover, this study shows the prevalence of a set of metaphors related to the emotions of fear and compassion in the news coverage of Colombian and Ecuadorean immigrants.

Keywords: Colombian, discourse, Ecuadorean, immigration, journalism, media, news, Spain
Introduction and Literature Review

Immigration has become a highly politicized issue, often perceived in a negative way despite the clear need for the diversification of modern societies and economies: “In spite of the revolution in communications, there are many people who have inadequate information on the magnitude, the implications, and the socioeconomic context of migration” (IOM, International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 8). In its sixth report, the International Organization for Migration argued that it is essential to have well-informed and clear debates in the public and political arenas. The risk of maintaining the status quo is threefold: 1) Continued politicized debate will only serve to foster sectarian agendas rather than promote broader national, regional, and international interests, 2) Negative attitudes and reactive approaches are likely to continue to dominate over positive attitudes and proactive approaches, 3) Both integration and reintegration efforts will inevitably be undermined unless migrants themselves become active participants, rather than the objects, in the migration debate. (IOM, 2011, pp. 8-9).

Until the turn of the century, Spaniards tended to collectively imagine Moroccans and North Africans as the face of non-European immigrants (Martínez, 2003). Although statistics showed a growing presence of Latin Americans, this phenomenon did not surface in the political debate and media discourse until 2001. During those years, several researchers analyzed how immigration in Spain was a collectively conceived social phenomenon resulting from symbolic constructions, and how news stories about non-European immigrants tended to be presented out of context, with a rather local scope and without delving into the phenomenon’s complexity (Bañón, 2002; Granados, 2002; Santamaría, 2002).

Trends in the news media portrayal of Latin American immigrants at the turn of the century developed in a pattern similar to those in other countries in the global North that are receiving immigrants from the global South. As critical studies have argued, there is an evident correspondence between media’s and audience’s agendas. Research has exposed that media tend to convey stereotypical portrayals of immigrants/minorities and to emphasize the problems and threats in news coverage (Cottle, 2000; Hegde, 2016; Van Dijk, 2000). Public opinion on Latin American immigration has been based mainly on information delivered through a media-distorted glass (Retis, 2006).

Public discourse on immigrants and immigration

When analyzing mainstream media in Spain, critical analysts have argued that media discourse is the socio-cognitive drive of social thought and verbal communication, and above all, that the mainstream press offers a formally structured internal coherence and vision of the world (Imbert, 1993). Comparative analysis of news reporting on ethnic minorities and immigration have demonstrated that mainstream media tend to collectively construct otherness as social problem. Rodrigo and Martínez (1997) examined the way the news related to ethnic minorities was treated in Spain (ABC and El País), France (Le Figaro and Le Monde), Italy (Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica), and UK (The Times and The Guardian). The content analysis found that the European elite press associates the information about ethnic minorities mainly with conflicts, whereas cultural attributes are forgotten. When comparing conservative versus progressive media, they found that there were more similarities than differences in the depiction of minorities in Europe. Benson and Saguy (2005) compared news media reporting in the US (The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, ABC, NBC, and CBS) and France (Le Monde, Le Figaro, Libération, France 2, and TF 1). They found that when French media raised concerns about immigrants, they discussed immigrants’ failure to do enough to “fit in” with the national community. Conversely, the dominance of market-based cultural repertoires in the United States led the US news media to emphasize the fiscal costs created by immigration for extra social services and education (Benson & Saguy, 2005, p. 244). In their analysis, Benson and Saguy categorized frames and news event types in US and French immigration stories as social problems for immigrants, cultural problems for immigrants, racial/ethnic discrimination, cultural problems created by immigrants, fiscal problems created by immigrants, positive cultural diversity, routine identical (such as a newspaper-sponsored poll or investigative journalism, in which journalists are both the news “promoters” and news “assemblers”), routine habitual (stories, in which government, business or academic elites with “habitual” and easy access to journalists promote media coverage of an event), and scandals.

Santa Ana (2002) analyzed the public discourse metaphors depicting Latinos in the United States. In his long-term and in-depth study, he found that the metaphors constituting everyday understandings of citizen, immigrant, language, racism, and English are linked together by way of the most prevalent metaphors of the concept “nation.” The main metaphors he analyzed were Nation as a Body, Nation as a House, and the extension of Nation as a City: “…these metaphors serve as overarching ‘umbrella’ metaphors, providing semantic source domains for a wide range of political metaphorization. By way of illustration, immigrant as invader and racism as a disease are both affiliated with these umbrella metaphors of the nation” (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 272). Santa Ana adds that through the metaphor of Immigrant as Animal, Latino immigrants continue to be dehumanized in contemporary discourse, which justifies inequity and discrimination against them (Santa Ana, 1999, 2002).

Discourse analyses of how media depict young immigrants have demonstrated similar trends in news coverage. Jefferies (2009) explored the major media output on questions of access to higher education for undocumented immigrant and found the prevalence of a set of frames related to meritocratic ideologies. He argued that meritocracy as an ideology of inequality served economically established populations to justify the segregation of new waves.
of immigration (Jefferies, 2009). Retis and García (2010; García & Retis, 2011) found that young immigrants tend not to appear in European mainstream media unless they are involved in an event related to social conflict. The comparative analysis showed how Spanish and French media framed these events by utilizing affective strategies of compassion and fear, fragmenting reality, and reconstructing collective emotions in media discourses. Young non-European immigrants suffered from double vulnerability since, on the one hand, they had little or no access to the public discourse, and on the other hand, when they finally appeared in news media coverage, they were depicted in terms of social conflict or moral panics, a classic finding of symbolic annihilation (García & Retis, 2011; Retis & García, 2010).

Media Construction of Emotions

In Spain, critical researchers examined how TV newscasts utilized affective mobilization strategies when covering stories related to non-European immigrants (Rizo, 2001), how Spanish TV news turned into an industry of induced emotions, and how news audiences participated in this activity, which is not only cognitive and rational but emotional (Rey Morato, 1998). Researchers have found that the study of emotional communication must analyze the media as constructors and transmitters of emotions (Rodrigo, 1992, 1997). Although traditional perspectives tend to attribute to the print media the sole function of “making readers know” (hacer saber) the news, it is crucial to understand that, in reality, what is involved is an “impure genre” that, as well as informing, entertains, and what is doubly relevant, “makes readers feel” (hacer sentir) the news through linguistic construction of emotions (Harré 1986; Rizo, 2001; Rodrigo, 1992). In this context, the discourse on immigration tends to induce mainly two types of emotions: fear, depicting immigrants as a danger that triggers emotional reactions of fear; and compassion, as it also tends to focus on their “pitiful” situation—their poverty—all of which triggers emotional reactions of compassion (Rizo, 2001, 2011).

Immigrants as Victims or as a Threat

In his comparative analysis of US and French immigration news, Benson (2013) found three main frames. First, in the Immigrants as Victims scenario, the “global economy” frame emphasizes problems of global poverty, underdevelopment, and inequality, of which the immigration from global South to North is only one symptom. The “humanitarian” frame highlights the hardships of immigrants, while the “racism/xenophobia” frame emphasizes systematic discrimination. Second, the Immigrants as Heroes scenario includes “cultural diversity,” which brings attention to immigration’s positive effects on society; “integration,” which recognizes immigrants’ efforts in adaptation; and the “good worker,” which highlights how immigrants do the work that others won’t do. The third scenario, Immigrants or Immigration as a Threat, includes the “jobs” element, which accuses immigrants of taking jobs from natives or lowering wages; the “public order” aspect, which emphasizes any law-breaking event; the “fiscal” element, which portrays the concern on taxpayers and the cost of services; and “national cohesion,” which portrays cultural differences as a threat to national unity (Benson, 2013, pp. 6-7).

This article examines how Spanish news media incorporated these frames when depicting Latin American immigrants at the turn of the century, when immigration reforms where a focal point of the debate between the main political parties. It focuses on three national print news organizations because they were echoing the political debate, turning news media into a virtual scenario for these confrontations.

The “Latinoamericanization” of Non-European Immigration in Spain

The evolution of Latin American immigration to Spain has been conditioned by structural and cyclical factors on both sides of the Atlantic (Colectivo Ioé, 2003a, 2003b; Pellegrino, 2004). Emigrations to countries outside the region increased in South America, particularly since the second half of the last century. Demographers identify these as the last links of previous population movements such as crossing national borders, and before that, displacements from rural to urban areas caused by the forces of early industrialization processes that led to the rapid growth of cities to the detriment of the agricultural sector (Pellegrino, 2003). In the context of international migration, although the United States has been the main destination, Spain became more important during the 1990s. During those years, Italy transitioned from sending immigrants to North Europe to receiving immigrants, and it was categorized as a latecomer and heir of the “European unease over immigration” (Arago, 2000, 2002). Some researchers identified Latin Americans as the “preferred of the 21st century” to explain that this migratory growth was due, among other factors, to the political will to favor them over other non-European groups, and to social preferences both in public opinion and in the business sector (Izquierdo, López, & Martínez, 2002). Other authors argued that this “preferential” situation was contingent on socioeconomic and administrative conditions when incorporated into the analysis, particularly in terms of labor insecurity and precariousness (Colectivo Ioé, 2003a, 2003b; Domingo, 2005).

By incorporating a comprehensive understanding of the contexts of reception as well as the socio-cultural factors and the collective strategies that immigrants develop, we can better examine the immigration processes of Latin Americans in Spain (Herranz, 1998; Retis, 2006). Transnational perspectives give us the opportunity of exploring beyond push/pull factors of international migration (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998). A review of the main processes on both sides of the Atlantic helps us understand how population flows occur along with capital flows, but in the opposite direction.
In the mid-1970s the process of democratization in Spain and its integration into the transnational economy attracted foreign capital, generating economic development that allowed its exit from its semi-periphery condition in Europe. Simultaneously, Spain started attracting immigrant workers. The demand for a new organization of production involved the accelerated expansion of the service sector and the concentration of economic activity in “global cities” (Sassen, 2001) such as Madrid or Barcelona. The demand for new labor created two types of immigration: for highly skilled and technical jobs, and for low-skill jobs in areas such as maintenance, courier services, hospitality, and services in general. This “first reception context” of immigrants coincides with the first flow of Latin Americans, the ones who arrived in Spain for political reasons. Most came from the Southern Cone, mainly from Argentina and Chile, but also from Venezuela. They were basically of urban origin, with a balance in gender composition, education levels higher than the Spaniards’, and with a higher tendency to self-employment than other non-European immigrants. Over time, Spanish workers increased their professional preparation and entered into the professional labor market, leaving other jobs exclusively for immigrants (Colectivo Ioé, 2003a; Herranz, 1998).

In the late 1980s, the deceleration of the economy in Spain resulted in an increase in unemployment. This is when researchers identify the “second reception context” of immigrants, in which foreign workers are mostly limited to low-skilled jobs, those that native populations reject (Herranz, 1998). Adding to the labor conditions, we must consider new patterns in the Spanish immigration policies. The incorporation of Spain to the European Union (UE) was preceded by the approval of the 7/1985 Law, which brought with it the European unease over immigration (Arango, 2002). The hardening of its application in 1991, with a quota policy and the tightening of border controls, created a much more difficult migratory environment. Until then, it was not essential for Latin Americans to have papers to work informally and accumulate some capital without fear of expulsion. The new visa requirements presented a new set of barriers (Herranz, 1998). The second flow of Latin Americans occurred during this “second reception context” of immigration and was driven by economic reasons.

In Latin America, critical researchers consider the 1980s as “the lost decade” due to the effects of structural adjustment policies, which raised the numbers of South Americans emigrating out of the region, primarily to the United States. The 1990s began an increase in emigration to Spain. As Figure 2 shows, during the early 1990s, immigrants from the Caribbean and the Andean Region, particularly from the Dominican Republic and Peru, joined those from the Southern Cone. Studies demonstrated that during those years Latin Americans arrived with high levels of education (Aparicio & Giménez, 2003). Their strong geographical concentration in urban areas and their incorporation in services sectors, especially domestic service and care of the elderly and children, led to an initial feminization in the early stages (Oso, 1998).

In 1996, the Partido Popular (PP) won the elections and established new immigration policies. It was the beginning of the “ Latinoamericanization” of the non-European immigration in Spain. The events in El Ejido4 influenced the negative perception of Moroccan immigrants, as was evident during the electoral vote for local administrative posts. During those years the most relevant political decisions were the processes of “regularization” and “documentación por arraigo” (temporary residence authorization for social rootedness): Compared with other non-European immigrants, Latin Americans obtained higher rates of acceptance and increased their numbers as legal residents (Izquierdo, López, & Martínez, 2002). Other indicators of the “preferential” position were the speedy process of obtaining Spanish citizenship (proceso de naturalización), a right for Latin Americans after two years of legal residence. During those years, Spaniards favored Latin Americans over other non-European immigrants in public polls (Figure 1). Until the turn of the century, Latin Americans were perceived with more empathy than other non-European groups, a perception that began to decline after their more frequent appearance in news media.

During the second half of the 1990s, two concomitant processes occurred. While Latin American countries suffered the effects of an economic and financial crisis, Spain began an economic recovery. Expulsionary migration flows from Latin America and pulling immigration flows in Europe, combined with immigration reforms in the United States—the main recipient of Latin American flows—resulted in a reconfiguration of Latin American international immigration processes (Retis, 2006). The end of the “Ecuadorean miracle,” the Colombian agricultural and social crisis, and the Argentine financial crisis known as the corralito, coincided geopolitically with the opening of a niche for non-European immigrant workers in Southern European countries such as Spain, Italy, and Portugal. Latin Americans moved with the flow of foreign international capital, but in the opposite direction: the “golden
decade” of Spanish investments in Latin America (Casilda, 2002) was coupled with the international emigration projects of the Latin American middle classes hit by the economic crisis (Retis, 2006).

At the turn of the century, Latin American immigrants found jobs in different productive sectors. In their settlement process, they began to concentrate in specific areas in Spain. Argentinians started working in service sectors in urban areas of Madrid, Catalonia, Galicia, and the Balearic and Canary Islands. Colombians started working in the areas of child and elderly care, hospitality, and various services in urban areas of Madrid and Catalonia. Ecuadoreans became the fastest growing group in this decade, and during those early years they settled in urban areas of Madrid and Catalonia, but also, to a large extent, in agricultural areas of Murcia (Retis, 2006).

Between 1995 and 2000, Latin American immigrants in Spain doubled (from 92,000 to 184,000). Between 2000 and 2005, they grew by more than 500% (reaching 986,000) and surpassed immigration from Africa. The regularization process of 2004 showed the diversification of origins. Those years saw immigration flows from most South American countries, with Ecuadoreans, Colombians, Argentinians, Peruvians, Dominicans, Bolivians, Brazilians, Paraguayans, Cubans, Venezuelans, and Uruguayans among the most numerous. The numbers continued to rise until 2009, when there were almost 1.5 million registered immigrants. The 2008 economic crisis in Southern European countries generated a slight decline in the numbers of Latin American immigrants with residence and work permits. This recent decrease in the number of visas and work permits shows some return migration, but also naturalization processes, as well as new migratory flows toward other countries in northern Europe (Retis, 2011). At the end of 2015, fewer than 900,000 Latin Americans were residing in Spain (879,000).

Throughout these decades, mainstream media in Spain has played a key role in presenting and (re)presenting the arrival, settlement, and return process of Latin American immigrants. For the last 10 years, I have been analyzing the portrayal of Latinos in Spanish mainstream media from qualitative perspectives. My studies have compared the specificities of how Latina immigrants have been portrayed in news media and fiction series (Galán & Retis, 2012; Retis, 2013). They have also compared how young immigrants are depicted in European media (García & Retis, 2011; Retis & García, 2010), examined how the need for self-representation has encouraged the creation of ethnic media in Madrid (Retis, 2008), and how cultural consumption of Latin American immigrants in Spain demands a transnational perspective (Retis, 2011). In this article, I specifically analyze what I consider the trigger moment when Latin American immigrants burst for the first time on the front pages of national print newspapers. A rapid review of current news coverage of Latin American immigrants could give us the perception that they have always been part of the discussion when, indeed, they haven’t. Extensive coverage didn’t happen until two events related to social conflict occurred. These two events coincided with the growing political debate on immigration reforms in Spain, the increase of racism against non-European immigrants, particularly Moroccans, and the perception of immigration as a problem for Spain.

What is presented here is part of a broader investigation that seeks to deconstruct the socially constructed public discourse and collective representations of Latin American immigrants that arrived mainly for economic reasons to Spain during the turn of the century (Retis, 2006). It seeks to examine transnational contexts of immigration flows and to contrast them with public discourses around this phenomenon. That larger study demonstrated how news media portrayal of immigrants has contributed to the construction of hegemonic discourses on segregation, even in the case of the ones considered “preferred,” such as Latin Americans. The media construction of emotions of compassion or fear towards non-European foreign workers has contributed to the public conception of immigration as a problem. These types of discourses served to justify the segregation of minorities. These trends are encountered when examining news media coverage of the arrival and settlement of Ecuadoreans and Colombians in Spain during 2001 (Retis, 2006).

Methodology and Research Design

This study analyzes how the political debate on immigration reform turned immigration into a topic of public interest, as well as how and when it was treated as one of the main problems for the country. Researchers have demonstrated how news media play an important role in setting the public agenda (McCombs, 2004; Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 2004). Mostly due to the choices they make on which events to highlight or ignore, media not only reflect social reality but actively shape it (Tuchman, 1978). In other words, media frames shape audience frames (Benson 2013; Iyengar, 1991).
When monthly opinion polls and media coverage are compared, the statistics show an increase in the general public’s perception of immigration as a “problem” between January and March 2001. It was considered the third most important issue, only behind terrorism and unemployment. By March and April, it significantly dropped to fourth place and kept falling until the end of the year, when it was considered the sixth main problem (Figure 3). The statistics showed, however, that immigration in Spain not only did not decline but continued to increase.

Why and when, then, did the perception of immigration as one of the country’s problems increase or diminish? A review of secondary sources that analyzes on a daily basis the news coverage of immigration in Spain showed that the peak in the curve coincided with the moment when the public debate on immigration received greater media exposure (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2000, 2001; Fundación Iberoamérica Europa, 2000, 2001, 2002; SOS Racismo, 2000-2002). Newspapers covered the political debate on the immigration reform with a greater focus on political parties to the detriment of alternative voices, such as the immigrants themselves, associations, or experts on the subject. The three mainstream media analyzed for this study utilized the terms El Problema de la Inmigración (The Problem of Immigration) as sub headlines in the majority of their coverage during those years. News media covered the presence of non-European immigrants mainly as a social conflict, not as part of the new need for foreign workers due to the expanding Spanish economy (Retis, 2006).

Most of our social and political knowledge and our beliefs about the world emanate from the information we read or hear every day (Van Dijk, 1997). Therefore, at the turn of the century, Latin American immigrants in Spain began to be known more through their presence in mainstream news media than through daily intercultural interactions. Spaniards began to hear about Latin Americans from news and feature stories and from interviews with sources that tended mainly to relate to their presence in social conflict (Retis, 2006). The idea of “Latin American immigrants” in Spain was built collectively, giving the entire group characteristics that did not represent their actual nature, but resulted in a symbolic construction that constituted an “imagined immigrant” (Santamaría, 2002). While Latin American immigration is the result of multiple factors operating at different levels, the crossing or intersection between local and global contexts is rarely acknowledged in the genre of news. A complex and heterogeneous situation is turned into symbolic representations of “them,” the Latin Americans, versus “us,” the Spaniards (Retis, 2006).

An initial search was used to identify which news stories made distinctions between the largest national groups of Latin American immigrants. Results confirmed that mainstream media concentrated their attention on Ecuadorian and Colombian groups when portraying Latin Americans. So it was decided to conduct searches with the terms “Ecuadorian” and “Ecuadorean immigrants,” and “Colombians” and “Colombian immigrants.” A selection was also made of news stories that included a thematic correlation with the country of origin. On this basis, a number of lists were drawn up for each national group and for each of the three newspapers under study. A total of 3,464 news items were encountered, of which 1,025 corresponded to Ecuadorians (246 in ABC, 311 in El País, 468 in El Mundo, and 100 in ABC).
This article presents part of a broader study (Retis, 2006) and centers the analysis on two events that generated the greatest press coverage at the turn of the century: the accident involving Ecuadorean workers in Lorca, Murcia, and the confrontation between Colombian immigrants in Madrid. A selection of the news coverage of those events is discussed in these pages. Within each news story, a content analysis was implemented to categorize the headlines, the characters involved in the news stories, how they are named in the narratives, and the language used to depict Ecuadorean and Colombian immigrants. This approach relates comparable methodologies used by frame analysis (Benson, 2013; Benson & Saguy, 2005; Jefferies, 2009), discourse analysis (Gee, 1996; Santa Ana, 1999, 2002) and critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1997, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). I analyzed mainly how linguistic choices are utilized to present the events, the characters implicated, and the main news sources, and how the articles framed emotions of fear and compassion towards immigrants.

**News Media Discourse of Compassion: Ecuadorean Immigrants in Spain**

During 2000, there was an intense political debate on immigration regulation, opened by the approval of the Organic Law 4/2000, the events of El Ejido, the electoral debate during the elections, the extraordinary regularization process, and the approval of the Organic Law 8/2000 that entered into force on January 23, 2001. The approval of this last law with the majority of votes from the PP and the opposition of PSOE generated a climate of confrontation. It is crucial to take into account this climate to understand why the events analyzed here generated a large volume of news media coverage.

The emergence of the Ecuadoreans in the discourse on non-EU immigration in Spain came about due to a shocking road accident in which 12 workers on their way to harvest broccoli in Lorca, Murcia, died on Jan. 3, 2001. The magnitude of the event and its coverage in the mass media fostered the opening of a social debate comparable only to two previous incidents: the accident of the Dominican immigrant Lucrecia Pérez in Madrid, which was considered the first hate crime in Spain7 and the events in El Ejido, which were considered the first racist confrontation in the country (Retis, 2006). The news coverage of the murder of Lucrecia Pérez brought for the first time in the news media the figure of Latin American immigrants arriving to take care of the elderly and of children in Spain. The debate on the increase of racist attitudes was echoed by the news media, but ended a few days later (Calvo, 1993). News of the events of El Ejido on Feb. 5 and 6, 2000, echoed the coverage of immigration as “a problem” and the idea that Spain was receiving “too many” immigrants, a narrative that “is not informative but connotative,” reproducing the metaphor of “the avalanche” and “invasion” of Europe by foreigners (“the new barbarians”), thus supporting the increase of “xenophobic” discourse (Calvo, 2000, p. 52). Until then, Spaniards tended to perceive mainly Moroccans and Sub-Saharan Africans as immigrants (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2000).

The accident of 12 immigrant workers in Murcia became a milestone in the discursive representation of Ecuadoreans in Spain. Until then, the image of Ecuadoreans in the context of non-European immigration had not been covered with such intensity, and news media had not particularly paid attention to the increased arrivals of Ecuadoreans. Moreover, until then, these stories had not generally occupied front pages or main headlines (Retis, 2006). The analysis of the media coverage seeks to understand not only the ways in which Ecuadoreans are depicted as Them, but also the ways in which Spaniards are depicted as Us. Such an analysis focuses on the ways that events and their participants were represented in the texts, and looks at whether the structures of the text convey a generally positive or negative opinion about Us versus Them (Van Dijk, 2000).

During the time period analyzed, news media covered public debates involving various characters: representatives of political parties, labor unions, machinists’ union, national/regional/local authorities, members of the Catholic church, NGOs, and immigrants themselves. The analysis demonstrated that access to media discourse favored mainly Spanish authorities and local administration rather than giving voice to immigrants (Retis, 2006).

From Jan. 4, a Thursday, to Jan. 7, a Sunday, the three national newspapers presented the events very similarly. The first day, a photograph of the train, placed on the upper left corner in a preferred position on the front page, offered a widely circulated visual. The headlines were very similar: “Twelve Ecuadoreans die run over by a train in Lorca” (ABC), “Twelve Ecuadoreans die by being run over by a train in Murcia” (El País), “Twelve Ecuadoreans killed as train hits crammed minivan” (El Mundo). The designations were the same: first, the word Ecuadoreans in the headline, highlighting the nationality, the others; second, the word “immigrants,” a form of designation first used in the early 1990s that involves a series of symbolic connotations: “those who come to settle in our country, probably without proper documentation” (Martin, 2003); third, the three news media outlets highlighted the information concerning labor inspection and the search for the culprit in this accident, delving into the more immediate and local perspective of the phenomenon, without extending this discussion to global conditions or explaining to the readers the relationship between immigration senders and receivers or the international division of labor (Granados, 2002). El País wrote: “Labor Inspectors investigate their working conditions” (El País). ABC presented two other epithets, “The tragedy has shocked the large Ecuadorean community in the region,” highlighting the designation of “others” as an “imagined community” (Santamaría, 2002), as “different.” and also “numerous”—an idea presented in the media discourse referring to immigration in the sense of whether they are “many” or “too many” immigrants in the country.
Moving from the front pages to the inside sections, the study found more similarities: photographs of dead bodies covered with blankets and visual graphics replicating the accident. The stories were presented as “the tragedy in Lorca, Murcia,” capturing the emotion of the event and centering attention on that region, and also in relation to “the problems of immigration,” as El País captioned. These trends are not unique to the Spanish press; it has been shown that European media generally tend to relate immigration with negative connotations, social problems, and crimes (Lowander, 2003), as the discursive dimensions of racism have a central meaning in Europe (Wodak, 2000).

News coverage frames immigrants as victims. In these particular stories, the “humanitarian” frame highlighted the economic, social, and political suffering of Ecuadoreans. The news coverage of the funeral exemplifies this aspect. El País published: “Relatives and friends of the victims followed the funeral from the front row, assisted at all times by a team of psychologists from Red Cross Civil protection. The 12 coffins, covered with bouquets and dozens of wreaths, were at the altar….” In ABC: “The 12 coffins, covered with bouquets and dozens of crowns, were at the altar … Relatives and friends of the victims followed the funeral from the front row, assisted at all times by a team of psychologists from Red Cross and Civil Protection…” As noted, the quotations are virtually identical and thus show a comparable version of the events.

The three news media outlets used the same sources of information. As a consequence, even if they are supposed to belong to diverse editorial perspectives, they reproduced the same quotes, almost in the same type of news stories. The (re)presentation of those involved in this debate is also indicative of how there is a consensus in the national press to polarization, i.e. positive self-presentation and negative representation of the other (Van Dijk, 1997). In this case, the “global economy” frame emphasizes the problem of poverty. Ecuadorean immigrants are presented as passive and exploited actors, also as undocumented, i.e. as violators of the law, highlighting the criterion of national origin as symbolic border of exclusion, utilizing the “legal” frame. At the other pole of representation, labor unions and political parties, as actors, were positively represented as those assuming the voice of protest over the working conditions of “others”—the “immigrants” in Spanish fields. “The 14 occupants were of Ecuadorean nationality, some of them allegedly undocumented immigrants, and the fact that they were traveling in an overcrowded wagon gave rise to protests from unions and political parties on the treatment of many immigrants who work in the Spanish fields” (El País).

News media outlets presented members of the in-group that look compassionately to Ecuadorean immigrants and seek those responsible for the accident. The “humanitarian” and “racism” frames are utilized to cover the presence, for example, of the representative of the national government: El País published, “The government delegate for immigration, Enrique Sánchez-Miranda, traveled to Murcia to comfort the relatives of the deceased immigrants. He refused to explain whether this is a new case of exploitation and undocumented workers” (El País). El Mundo highlighted, “Machinists blame the driver.” The “public order” and “legal” frames are utilized when covering confrontations between representatives of political parties. An example is this headline, which addressed how PP representatives are attacked by PSOE representatives utilizing immigration and other “social problems” in Spain: “PSOE brands as ‘slackers’ the government ministers [already] overwhelmed by immigration, leukemia and ‘mad cows’” (El Mundo).

The analysis of the characters involved and how they are named in the narratives, and the language used to depict struggles or tensions in the stories, showed an unequal presentation of government authorities and immigrants. In the three news outlets, Ecuadoreans tend to appear unidentified and their statements are never quoted directly: “In this regard, reports Europa Press, a com-patriot of the deceased, who declined to give his name, said that the only one who had regularized his situation was the driver of the van” (El Mundo). On the one hand, Ecuadoreans are presented as victims of the tragedy, of the working conditions and of the exploitation. In particular, the (re)presentation of the survivor of the accident—a 12-year-old girl named Nancy—denotes the configuration of the metaphor of poverty and suffering, which inspires the reaction of compassion. On the other hand, Ecuadorean immigrants are also presented as the least responsible for the accident; the treatment of the driver, Nelio López, is an example. They are depicted as victims or victimizers, but are still those “others” who inspire compassion or rejection (Rizo, 2001).

For the mainstream media, the girl symbolizes extreme labor exploitation, the miserable working conditions, the sadness, and the cry for compassion: “Young Nancy wanted to ‘help bring money home’” (El País, Jan. 4, 2001). On Jan. 5, the three newspapers highlighted a photograph of Nancy convalescing and with bandages on her forehead in her hospital bed. ABC highlighted this news in its summary; El País extended the size of the photograph and revealed the image of the mother and sister, highlighting the sadness in their faces. El Mundo moved the same EFE News Agency photograph to its front page, and highlighted in the caption: “An Ecuadorean girl injured in the Lorca accident.” On page 6, ABC did not show the photograph but highlighted Nancy in a headline: “Beware! The train is coming,’ shouted the 13-year-old girl injured in the accident.”

ABC published an editorial on Jan. 4 utilizing several elements of the “humanitarian” and “racism/xenophobia” frames in the tone of compassion and threat. The piece not only highlighted the appalling working conditions, but also presented the driver as “the other,” “ignorant,” and “inept,” a person who could not, or did not know, how to recognize the signs when crossing the train rails: “It was still at night. Fourteen people crammed into a seven-seat minivan were traveling to a nearby farm to pick broccoli. The driver, Ecuadorean, and probably little acquainted with traffic signs, did not see the level crossing without barriers … The most terrible
The analysis also showed the structure and strategies of these texts and how they are related to the social or political context. Some of them focus on local meanings, such as coherence or implications that construct semantic liaisons to conform metaphors of immigrants as victims but also as criminals. On Jan. 4, for example, ABC included in the same section a police report titled “The crime rate in Spain fell by almost 10%. The Civil Guard found 9,000 immigrants up to September 2000.” We noted that numbers are declining, but the fact that this story is placed close to the story on the accident of Ecuadorean immigrants reinforces the ideological relation of immigration with crime. On Jan. 6, the same newspaper published, “The entrepreneur who illegally hired the Ecuadoreans who died has been captured” and, in the same page, published this other story, “A jeweler dies after being docked by three Maghreb immigrants.” This type of thematic coherence implies news media coverage associating immigration with crime and delinquency.

The implementation of the reform of the Immigration Act on Jan. 23, 2001, generated a series of public demonstrations. These groups of immigrants, especially represented in the news media by Ecuadoreans, were referred as a new “avalanche” following the accident at Lorca. Thus we read a headline: “Ecuadoreans” without papers “in Lorquí start a third confinement” (El País, Jan. 18, 2001). Again we find the figure of “paperless” as a matter of illegality and confinement in protest by Ecuadoreans. The news story referred to the president of the Association of Immigrants of Lorquí, Lenin Duque, without reproducing his words, commenting that he “justified the decision to join the protests, which began in Lorca in the early hours of Monday, [by noting] the impact that the new Immigration Act will have on the immigrant community ‘in general.’” The reporter used quotation marks to highlight Duque’s statement emphasizing that there is another group of “general,” i.e., “legal” immigrants. The analysis demonstrated that the use of euphemisms when categorizing non-Europeans is recurrent in the news media discourse.

As researchers have demonstrated, metaphoric mappings are a major process of human understanding (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and when discourse analysis is implemented, one finds major and minor metaphors in a text (Chilton & Ilyin, 1993; Santa Ana, 1999). Santa Ana, for example, found that the dominant metaphor utilized by the Los Angeles Times depicted immigrants as animals, while less frequently a set of secondary metaphors included immigrants as debased people, weeds, commodities, and so on (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 198). In the present study, it was found that Ecuadoreans were depicted not only as “poor” in the sense of low-income condition, but also in the sense of lack of character. News media coverage tended to present Ecuadorean immigrants as exploited and living in sub-standard conditions. This metaphor is extended to the representation of the country of origin. The clearest image of Ecuador in Spanish news media was that of a country living through a stampede, battered by economic crisis and corruption. As a consequence, Ecuadoreans are presented as fleeing en masse, as the “avalanche” of new poor, “new conquerors.” On the other hand, Spain is portrayed as “El Dorado,” a paradise, the place where they come to seek fortune. Headlines published on Jan. 7 exemplify this pattern: “Ecuador, a country stamped,” and a subhead: “The US is no longer the only El Dorado”; “Spain is the escape hatch for 50,000 people” (El País); “The Ecuadorean ‘desert’; There are places like el Pueblo de las Mujeres Solas (the town of lonely women), where there are no husbands left because they have emigrated in search of fortune. Years ago they immigrated to the US; now Spain is the dream destiny” (El Mundo). “The conquerors of the 20th century” (ABC). “What are Ecuadoreans fleeing from?” (El País, Jan. 23, 2001).

Although the three newspapers in this study have diverse ideological affiliations, the analysis showed that coverage of news events was similar. Five key topics were utilized to frame the news media discourse: 1) the tragic accident seen as the ‘exposure’ of many other ‘social problems’ related to non-EU immigrants; 2) the surprising discovery of the recent increase in Ecuadorean immigrants in Murcia; 3) the precarious work conditions of Ecuadoreans in the Spanish agricultural industry; 4) the lack of inspectors regulating the temporary labor market; and 5) the corruption of Spanish employers recruiting immigrant workers by irregular means.

**News Media Discourse of Fear: Colombian Immigrants in Spain**

If the social debate on immigration during 2001 opened with the news coverage of the accident at Lorca, that year was particularly significant for the approval of the Immigration Act 8/2000, the group of immigrants who confined themselves as public demonstration of their rejection of the new legislation, accusations from the opposition political party that the new law was unconstitutional, as well as the control and treatment of immigration by the government and the approval of the law known as Royal Decree 864/2001. For Latin American immigrants in particular, there was another event presented in the public discourse with the “legal” and “racism/xenophobic” frames: the launch of the Ludeco Operation by the Directorate-General of the Police. This operation was publicized during mid-October 2001, emphasizing the battle against crimes committed by Colombian and Ecuadorean immigrants in Spain. The direct antecedent of this measure was the previous Operación Café (Operation Coffee), launched in September of 2001 in response to the death of four Colombians in the district of Vallecas, in Madrid. A series of events that occurred after the implementation of these operations was covered by mainstream media, presenting a thematic correlation of immigration bringing crime and delinquency from Latin America.

The link between crime and immigration is one of the pairings with the greatest presence in social debate in Spain (Wagman, 2002), which helps reinforce the criminalization of people for the simple fact of being immigrants (Aierbe, 2002). If the debate...
on immigration at the turn of the century was especially relevant due to the implementation of the Immigration Act 8/2000 and the Royal Decree 864/2001, also important to Latin Americans was the launching of the so-called “Operation Ludeco” by the Directorate-General of the Police by means of a pamphlet in which emphasis was placed on crimes committed by Colombians and Ecuadoreans.

According to the statistics published by the Madrid City Council, during 2001 Colombian immigrants almost doubled (from 22,000 to nearly 38,000). The numbers increased mainly due to the announcement that Colombians would no longer be exempt from visa requirements starting on January 2002, in the first attempt by the Spanish government to control and reduce Colombian immigration flows. During those years, a study by two universities in Madrid (Aparicio & Giménez, 2003) examined the main characteristics of Colombians in Spain: 63% were between 25 and 44 years old, 24.6% worked in housekeeping, 21.1% in construction, 15.8% in hospitality, and 10.3% in sales. (According to this survey, roughly 75% of Colombians were working, and four out of five arrived in Spain as tourists when no visa was required. The authors argued with these figures that Colombians should not be identified mostly as criminals and drug dealers, because so many (45,000 by then) were working legally and contributed 180 million Euros to the Social Security system.

Unlike the compassionate attitude towards the Ecuadoreans, the appearance of Colombians in news coverage of immigrants in 2001 was accompanied by an attitude of fear. On Jan. 15, 2001, the police arrested four members of a criminal gang. An analysis showed that, in the dispute over the police budget, each political group adopted strategic positions of confrontation, and the headlines the following day illustrated the difference between the editorial stance of each newspaper: “Police arrest Colombian gang who extorted money from a jeweler” (ABC); “Police bust criminal gang that tried to extort money from a jeweler” (El País); and “Arrested for swindling a jeweler” (El Mundo).

The media construction of fear in the face of the threat posed by the presence of Colombian immigrants offers stark contrast with the findings of scientific studies that indicate, among other things, the average level of education of Colombians residing in Spain was the same as, or higher than, that of the Spaniards (Aparicio & Jiménez, 2003). An analysis of the journalistic discourse on Colombians revealed a discursive metonymy; they were first branded as Colombian criminals, then the demonym was used as a synonym for crime: “Police convinced that Colombian violence will have a spillover effect on society as a whole” (ABC, Sept. 1, 2001). In the entire analysis, only one example was found that cautioned against applying this analogy to the collective as a whole: “Ansuátegui stresses that Colombian criminals are a minority” (El País, Oct. 3, 2001).

The media construction of fear toward Colombians was based on several frames that portrayed immigrants or immigration as a threat. The “public order” frame emphasized law breaking. As Benson (2013) argued, “the immigration lawyers who promote ‘victim’ coverage and the reporters who follow these leads do not perceive themselves as promoting anti-immigration attitudes, although it is possible that some readers predisposed to such attitudes will find evidence in such coverage to reinforce their worldviews” (Benson, 2013, p. 7). On the other hand, as Van Dijk (2000) argues, most Spanish readers have few daily experiences with minorities, and most readers have little alternative information about minorities. The media emphasize Us and Them polarization by focusing on various problems and threats for Us. Meanwhile, minority groups do not have enough power to publicly oppose biased reporting (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 37).

The depiction of Colombian immigrants as a threat was based on two main topics. On the one hand, the majority of the articles on these groups during the time analyzed were related to drug trafficking: “Police dismantle Colombian drug trafficking network operating on the Internet and making payments with emeralds” (ABC, May 29, 2001). On the other hand, a second topic appeared—news related to robberies and kidnapping: “Firemen rescue a Colombian kidnapped for 10 days” (El País, Jan. 18, 2001); “Hired assassins and dangerous criminals arrested in one of the biggest operations to date against Colombian gangs” (ABC, Nov. 25, 2001); “Police dismantle dangerous Colombian gang that raided more than 50 chalets and flats” (ABC, June 28, 2001).

Similar to what happened when analyzing the portrayal of Ecuadoreans and Ecuador in the Spanish press, this study encountered a thematic relation between the way mainstream media covered Colombian immigrants and the news media coverage of Colombia. As Reguillo (2002) argues, “For governments and the international press, Colombia has become the ‘metaphor of horror’ and this means chaos, lawlessness, excessive violence, institutions controlled by drug traffickers, institutional collapse” (Reguillo, 2002, p.63).

The linking of Colombian immigrants with the increase of crime in Madrid, and by extension in Spain, was mainly due to the greater coverage of the police as the main source of these news stories. While the information on the crimes carried out by Colombians was a recurring theme through the year, the exacerbation of “fear” to the “crime wave” coincides with the exaltation of international news coverage after Sept. 11. In this climate of fear, “the others” framed in global public discourse emphasized the figure of radical Islamists and, by extension, Arab immigrants. In the Spanish context and referring to non-EU immigrants and specifically Latin Americans, the study found a direct relationship between images of Colombians and immigration and fear of increased insecurity. The three news media outlets focused on the statements of the administrative authorities, representatives of unions, and official reports. The press echoed these statements, but also produced its own investigative reporting and exclusive interviews. In other words,
newspapers not only opened this framing of immigrants as a threat but also participated in this particular social debate.

In contrast to what happened with news coverage of Ecuadorians, the figure of the Colombian did not appear in the news as a surprise, but came as slow but constant reporting in which Colombian criminals were gaining prominence inside the newspaper, at certain times appearing in the front page of the “Madrid” section or in the sections devoted to “National” news or news of Spain—even sometimes on the front page. In other words, what the study found is the “logic of continuity.” One of the strategies used was the emphasis on “truthfulness,” that is, including official statistics in the news. The media tended to report on the number of immigrants residing in Spain, but also on how many were in prison and/or committing crimes: “Foreign mafias triggered the killings,” or “Police missing closure to 60 murders in Madrid, under the shadow of Jonathan,” or “Nearly half of the dead are foreigners and only 12 cases are pending” (ABC, Jan. 6, 2001).

The lead of the news story emphasizes the alarmist discourse on the presence of foreigners in Spain, highlighting that the killings “have skyrocketed” in Madrid, and that members of the police must work “to the rhythm of the heart,” and that “alarms are skyrocketing” because the result of accounting statistics reveals that half of the offenders are not Spaniards. This is one of the first items in the chronological analysis of how mainstream media portrayed Colombians. And it shows a trend that became recurrent in the media discourse on Colombians —the metaphor of horror— related to the country of origin. One of the paragraphs of this story, for example, is captioned with the phrase “When the city seems to be Bogotá.” The use of the Colombian capital presupposes that the journalist shares prior connotations with the readers. “Madrid is not Bogotá” implies that the Spanish capital should not have the same characteristics of violence and crime as Colombia. In the phrase, “Colombians, once more …” the sense of continuity of the “wave of violence” increases with the emphasis on the national category of Colombians. In the quote used by the reporter to illustrate the opinion of the researchers, we see how Colombians are not classified as international criminals, but that the crimes are attributed to a cultural difference: “The key is the appearance of organized criminal groups, which begins to take its toll on people’s lives. They claim unpaid debts, mostly related to drug trafficking and money laundering. Hiding part of a drug shipment, quarrels over its distribution, a betrayal… those things belong to cultures in which life does not have the same values as we do, researchers explain.” (ABC, Jan. 6, 2001).

The analysis of the media discourse on Colombian immigrants revealed classifications related to fear and aversion. First, the situation of immigrants was thematically related to violence in the country of origin: “Immigrants reporting a Gandía businessman fear reprisals. In Colombia, if someone threatens you, you’re dead” (El País, Jan. 21, 2001); “Border police at Barajas deny entry to 3,712 foreigners during the year 2000” (El Mundo, Feb. 12, 2001); “Colombia says that visa demands punish everyone and that drug traffickers are a minority” (ABC, March 28, 2001). Second, drug trafficking was a recurrent theme in news stories: “Cocaine seized in Vinarós would have a street value of 35,000 million pesetas” (El País, Jan. 14, 2001); “Police dismantle Colombian drug trafficking network operating on the Internet and making payments with emeralds” (ABC, May 29, 2001). Third, crime, violence and extortion was also a recurring theme: “Police bust criminal gang that tried to extort money from a jeweler” (El País, Jan. 16, 2001); “Firemen rescue a Colombian kidnapped for 10 days” (El País, Jan. 18, 2001); “Nine Colombians arrested for burglaries and murder” (El Mundo, Feb. 11, 2001); “Police dismantle dangerous Colombian gang that raided more than 50 houses and apartments” (ABC, June 18, 2001). Fourth, news about Colombia related to the guerrillas, corruption and extreme poverty: “ELN guerrillas kidnap Latin American motorcycle champion in Colombia” (ABC, Jan. 4, 2001); “Colombia, on the threshold of terror” (El Mundo, March 16, 2001).

The analysis showed that news media outlets tend to focus on homicides, clashes between criminals and gang showdows. Comparative analysis found that ABC is the newspaper that most uses the word “Colombians” in its headlines and reproduces the government’s official version of the story. El Mundo didn’t emphasize the nationality of offenders, although, in contrast, it favored play with more melodramatic strategies. El País used the national origin of foreign delinquents to a lesser extent in the headlines, although it tended to be collected in the stories and often using a confrontational tone by including statements from opposition sectors from both regional and national officials.

Conclusions

Many people still lack information about the magnitude, reach, and socio-economic context of migration. As a consequence, support for immigration has gradually decreased in Western countries, this being particularly evident from the mid-1990s onwards (IOM, 2011). This article focused on the central role played by the Spanish mainstream media in the symbolic construction of migrants as others. As demonstrated, there are clear trends in the forms of representation of Latin American immigrants. As non-European immigrants, they are perceived, generally, either as a problem or as a threat. News coverage sets symbolic boundaries geographically, tends to specify their nationality when reporting social conflict, extrapolates criminal conditions of a minority group in general, and ignores the positive aspects of their presence in the country. In comparative terms, there is evidence of a compassionate view toward Ecuadorians and of fear toward Colombians. Polarizing strategies depicting Others and Us are applied to the coverage of immigrants. These trends are not unique to the Spanish press, as they apply to most of the European media. Journalism professional associations recognize their shortcomings and have developed codes of conduct as guidelines for self-criticism of journalistic work, but there is still much work to do in order to overcome these trends.
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NOTES

1 In relation to the ‘early starters’ in Europe which, according to Arango (2002), were countries with a longer tradition of receiving immigration and who have experienced the process gradually and over the time.

2 Immigration in Spain has been distributed as follows: in the 1980s immigrants were mainly Europeans. In the 1990s, the first major group was Moroccans, and by extension North Africans. From 1991 to 2001 the weight of Latin Americans rose by four points (from 23% to 27% of immigrants) This increase was mainly driven by two regularization processes and especially a strong impetus from the political arena such as the signing of bilateral agreements with Ecuador, Colombia, and Dominican Republic (Izquierdo, 2003).
López, & Martínez, 2002)

In the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, the growth of non-European immigrants was led by Moroccans and other North African countries. On Feb. 5, 2000, a young boy stabbed a young woman in El Ejido, Almería (southern Spain). The event originated a confrontation between locals and agricultural workers from Morocco. It became the symbol of the rise of racism against Moroccans in Spain.

The review of the development and promulgation of legislative measures since 1985 demonstrated that the debate on non-European immigration during electoral processes became profitable for the political parties (Retis, 2006).


An initial approach to the print media sample at the end of 2002 made it possible to establish that not all Latin American nationalities appeared with the same assiduousness and frequency. The preliminary results always suggested the important role played by Colombians, Argentines, and Ecuadoreans throughout 2001. Accordingly, searches were conducted in digital archives at different stages of the study, using the same characteristics: in January 2003; in June 2004; lastly, the process was repeated in May 2005. This article includes news stories related only to Ecuadoreans and Colombians.

On November 13, 1992, four people killed Dominican immigrant Lucrecia Pérez in the neighborhood of Aravaca, in Madrid. Ten years later, news media outlets remembered this event as “An anonymous immigrant who became a martyr. Today is the 10th anniversary of the murder of Lucrecia Perez, a 33-year-old Dominican. A policeman and three youngsters killed her and committed the first hate crime in Spain” (El País, Nov. 13, 2002).
Social Networks in Spain: Twitter and Facebook During ‘La Crisis’

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Abstract
This article explores the use of social networks for political participation in contemporary Spanish society. Online social networking and the mobilization of thousands of people require leadership with the ability to respond quickly and make the multiple connections necessary for a purposeful organization to function. This hypothesis leads us to establish a classification of three key elements to consider when talking about participation through social networks: first, who calls for participation and who participates; second, what purpose is pursued with such participation; and third, how does participation take place. This article focuses on the context of Spain and the role played by Facebook and Twitter, two of the most relevant social networks. It analyzes data gathered in the 2011-2014 period, when economic and social crisis in Spain fostered several civic movements, two of which, M-15 and the Anti-Evictions Platform, will be analyzed in this article. These brief case studies illustrate contemporary political activism and outcomes connected to social networks in Spain.

Keywords: Economy, crisis, evictions, social media, social mobilization, Facebook, Twitter
Introduction and Literature Review

Who is on Social Networks?

The rapid development of mobile phones, tablets, and other technological advances have blurred the temporal and spatial barriers that limited individuals, allowing them to access, from anywhere and at any time, information flowing through the net\(^1\). Research suggests that one out of every two times we access the internet we log on to a social network (Carcar, 2015; García, del Hoyo & Fernández, 2014; Chen, 2011; García & Gértrudix, 2009). Spanish data documents this trend. The Observatorio Nacional de las Telecomunicaciones y de la Sociedad de la Información (The National Observatory for Telecommunication and Information Society) reported that 70% of Spanish households had internet access in the first half of 2014 (2014). According to Eurostat (2015), between 2007 and 2013, 66% (six percentage points below the European average) of individuals regularly use the Internet in Spain.

For its part, the 6th Wave of Observatorio de Redes Sociales 2014 (Observatory for Social Networks 2014), (“The Cocktail Analysis,” 2014), placed the use of social networks among Spanish internet users at 90%, and the 5th Annual Survey of Social Networks (IAB, 2014) notes that usage increased from 51% in 2009 to 79% in 2013. While these figures do not completely coincide with each other, they all point to widespread and growing use of internet and social media in Spain.

Online social networks allow users to create a personal profile, connect with other users, and browse profiles or contacts (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). These profiles allow individuals to have detailed information about other individuals on the network, including interests, musical tastes, life preferences, and an endless amount of past, present, and even future personal information. Users can also communicate with each other through a wide range of tools that include sending private messages, chatting, leaving public comments on users’ walls, and sharing photos, videos, or other content.

There are differences between the social networks that have emerged in recent years, mainly based on the specificity of their content. Although some figures suggest a slowdown in the growth of the major social networks, penetration numbers are still quite significant: Facebook, present in the vast majority of countries, with daily active users exceeding 600 million, is a network that facilitates the exchange of information on social relationships in real or virtual life across the world (Manzoor, 2016).

Twitter has 284 million users worldwide, and about 500 million tweets written per day (Manzoor, 2016). Despite being the social network (of the two analyzed) with the most posts, it is not at the forefront in terms of the number of users. One explanation for this could be that the peculiarity of Twitter seems to demand a higher rate of posts than other platforms, and it promotes freshness over preparation. In Spain, the two main football teams—Real Madrid and Barcelona FC—have the greatest number of followers on Twitter, exceeding 13 million in both cases. Pope Francis tops the list of public figures with nearly 8 million followers; Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy is at a considerable distance, with over 600,000 followers. Between these major figures we find a large number of artists and singers (whose presence represents the leisure aspect of this network).

Non-governmental organizations also inhabit the virtual environment to launch messages encouraging civic participation. Leading in Spain are Greenpeace, followed by Doctors Without Borders and UNICEF (the latter jumps to first place in terms of the number of followers at a global level, with more than 3.5 million). All of them seek the means that will enable them to take their message to more people, and find social networks to be a useful tool for social mobilization.

During 2014, photography-based social networks absorbed most of the growth in the number of active users: Instagram, which reflects how a picture is worth a thousand words, grew 25%; Tumblr, 22%; and Pinterest, 7% (Fundación Telefónica, 2015).

At present, specialists observe a shift from communication through social networks to instant messaging, making it possible for apps like WhatsApp to exceed 450 million users in 2014. In the first five months of 2014 alone, WhatsApp grew by 100 million. India, Russia, Brazil, and Mexico are the places where it has grown the most. In Brazil, it exceeds 45 million users. Spain, one of the places where it is used more actively, already has 25 million users. 700 million photos and over 100 million videos are shared worldwide on a daily basis through WhatsApp (El País, April 22, 2014).

This quantitative data helps us to map the major social networks and their capacity and ability to attract hundreds of millions of users from around the world in a very short time. No previous means of communication has been able to concentrate so many people in such a “limited” space—a small screen. Therefore, readers should take into account that they are dealing with a situation that is changing precipitously and whose future is, for this very reason, difficult to predict, even for experts.

Why Should We Be on Networks?

Even if the uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974) served as a reference for many years to understand and contextualize how traditional media was used and which gratifications the audience got from it, it seems that the appearance of a medium like the internet—and social networks with it—make it necessary to develop enhanced approaches to understand the uses of these media and the needs they satisfy. LaRose and Eastin (2004) propose that instead of talking about gratifications, the starting point should be the consequences of internet usage expected by users, as these become the factor that will help predict the kind of
Research on the role of social networks to date focuses especially on social relationships as a form of participation. Ellison et al. (2014) posit, for example, that social networks are a formula to increase the social capital of individuals. The technical process of adding new friends on social networks requires very little effort from users, and once a user has been added, there is no need to take any action in order to keep that contact “alive.” Nyland, Marvez, and Beck (2007) found that the ability to make new friends, be entertained, maintain social relationships, and organize social events were the main reasons for being in the networks. Similarly, Joinson (2008) identified a number of factors for using Facebook: social connections, sharing identities, photographs, content gratification, social research, and “surfing” networks. Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) explored Facebook and Myspace and specified that the most common reasons for users to use them were to keep in touch with current and “historical” friends, share photos, make new friends, and find old ones. Urista, Dong, and Day (2009) concluded, based on research conducted among young people through focus group discussions, that the main reasons for being in both communities were curiosity to learn more about others, popularity, and forming new relationships. Kahne, Lee, and Timpany (2011), though they include friendship or social relationships as one of the three predominant forms of online participation, establish another two as more important, political or civic and cultural or leisure.

At first, online social networks served the purpose of strengthening already formed networks among highly selective student populations in U.S. Ivy League universities, and as such, had a significant impact on their users’ social relationships. Some used the networks to find new friends with similar hobbies or as a means to extend face to face contact with members of their peer group through the virtual world (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). However, the effect of the role of social networks in everyday life does not stop there, as its value goes beyond the number of users or beyond the number of interactions per user that take place in a virtual environment. Besides becoming vehicles that facilitate social relationships, networks are becoming necessary contributors for collective social action.

Based on a review of the literature, conceiving the use of online social networks as a medium focused on social relationships is a rather reductionist way to approach this phenomenon. There are already different scientific approaches on ways to participate in online social networks that go beyond being in contact with a peer group. Information or citizen mobilization are other possibilities of social networks. Ito et al. (2009) have also shown that young people not only use social media as a tool for socialization, but also as a formula to learn and explore the world around them.

Motivations that lead to the use of online social networks include sociability, entertainment, status-seeking, and information (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). Cheung and Lee (2009) refer to a number of informational purposes that lead youth to join virtual communities: to gain self-knowledge through the social interactions promoted by networks; to gain social benefit from contact with others, such as friendship; and finally, to achieve the possibility of social improvement, which refers to the value that social network participants obtain by gaining acceptance and approval of other members, as well as improving their social position within the community because of the contribution of young people to it. Furthermore, Yang and Brown (2013) discuss the role that social networks play in helping young people adjust to new contexts or personal situations. Teenagers, as a group of the population, participate in Twitter to share information on their practices and work; to share information about their classmates and other students; to ask for help or suggestions on any particular issue or to offer such help or suggestions to anyone; and to participate with comments, among other reasons (Veletsianos, 2012).

Discussion

Participation in Collective Social Actions

We now ask what has happened with the political or civic participation outlined by Kahne, Lee, and Timpany (2011). In recent years, in a rapidly changing world, we have witnessed numerous social movements in which citizens have expressed, in more or less numerous ways, their reactions to certain measures. At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, Spain began to experience a recession, a devastating housing bubble, and an economic downturn that led to what many experts define as a “social crisis” (Costas, 2014), all of which has caused an exponential increase in political and social movements.

Following the recession and economic crisis, a greater number of groups have felt the need to go out and demonstrate for different reasons, and the reactivation of citizens’ critical awareness has progressed in parallel to the increase in the number of social network users. Young people, besides being the most present social group in networks, have been and still are one of the main collective voices involved in mobilizations (as Salvador Allende said in 1972 at the University of Guadalajara, “being young and not being a revolutionary may even be a biological contradiction.”)

There are also other reasons why young people are often present in, and even lead, many of the social movements of our times. Martínez, Silva, and Hernández (2010) see that youth participation lies in solidarity and empathy of the youngest with those who suffer from injustice, lack of human rights, and lack of real power. City of Madrid figures document 10,831 demonstrations held in between January 2012 and August 2014. This is just a sample of the number of events, meetings, demonstrations, actions of solidarity, protests, and other forms of mobilization that have taken place (Ministerio de...
M-15 is one of the most recognized Spanish social movements of recent years. Originating in Puerta del Sol in Madrid and elsewhere in Spain the week of May 15, 2011, a large majority of the protesters were young people, who form one of the groups most affected by the economic crisis and the lack of opportunities for gainful employment. Protesters participated not only due to political reasons but also because of the social crisis and the consequences of policies on budget cuts and on social rights. For example, between 2007 and 2010, the unemployment rate rose from 8.3% to 20.3%, and continued to grow until 2013, when it peaked. This situation resulted in an increase in inequality and poverty, especially among the most vulnerable sectors of society.

M-15 Movement
The M-15 movement originated the night of May 15, 2011, at the Puerta del Sol square in Madrid. After a mass demonstration called by a group called Democracia Real Ya (Real Democracy Now) to protest against the distressing economic situation in Spain and the discredit of institutions, some young people decided to extend their protest by installing tents and camping out in that symbolic location of the capital. Despite several attempted ejections, the camping lasted until early August of that year. Demands included changes in the democratic system as well as in the electoral system, access to decent housing, attention to the most vulnerable sectors and sharing the burdens of the economic crisis. However, and despite the fact that their goals still monopolize slogans on demonstrations four years later, lack of internal organization and clear objectives meant that the demonstrations did not achieve immediate results. The movement spread to most Spanish cities and revolutionized the social landscape of the country. At that time, social networks experienced an unexpected boom inspired by the role they had played in the Arab Spring. Within hours of setting up camp, pages on Facebook and Twitter had already emerged to support the movement whose members called themselves the indignados (the indignant ones). As many authors have described, this is the first mobilization that occurred in Spain in which social networks and the internet played a key role. Although Facebook became the network of choice in the Egyptian Youth Revolution (January 2011), launched four months before the events at Puerta del Sol, members of M-15 chose Twitter as the platform to demand political change. The hashtags that had greater impact on Twitter are evidence of the role they played and of what they wanted to symbolize. Thereby, “Twitter appeared in the eyes of #democraciacereal (real democracy now), #juventudsinfuturo (youth without future), #nolesvotes (do not vote for them) and #spanishrevolution as a more efficient tool to achieve their goals” (Martínez, 2013). Although the use of other social media was discarded, Twitter served to denounce the economic situation, make calls for popular demonstrations, and extend the slogans and include proposals to improve the economic situation (Hernández, Roble, & Martínez, 2013). Twitter became a vital tool to support the movement.

If the crisis has brought anything, it is the discrediting of political leaders, and with it, mistrust in political mediation (Reina, 2012). The crisis of faith observed in the main political parties and in politics in general has affected almost all Western countries. In Spain, as the book La Urna Rota (Galindo et al, 2014) explains, the arrival of the crisis, which also highlighted cases of corruption among high-ranking officials, encouraged citizens to blame politicians for the crisis. According to the authors, it seems clear that after the spring of the housing bubble comes the winter of discontent. All of these elements, or at least a substantial part, have caused a shift from national politics to local social action. These social movements prioritize targeted actions that seek solutions in a specific region. Activists find it easier and more practical to fight against local injustice than against world hunger. For example, the Anti-Eviction Platform has performed thousands of actions in Spain. It has organized specific local mobilizations over the past few years with the purpose of halting foreclosures of families affected by the mortgage crisis. Geographical proximity appears to be an incentive for youth to participate in collective social actions.

Anti-Eviction Platform (AEP)
After the collapse of the housing bubble in 2008 and the resulting economic crisis in Spain, many families have been unable to afford their mortgage payments. Consequently, foreclosures and evictions have been increasing exponentially. In 2013 there were more than 67,000 evictions (El País, March 28, 2014). Evictions have become a social problem that has awakened citizen solidarity. In this context, the Anti-Eviction Platform (AEP) was born in Barcelona in 2009, led by Ada Colau, who has since stopped hundreds of evictions and has given advice to those threatened by foreclosure. Over these years, the AEP has gradually opened offices in the main Spanish cities. Its internal organization is carried out through assemblies, and it has an apolitical ideology. AEP’s success in leading social mobilization against evictions under the slogans “Stop desahucios” (“Stop evictions”) and “Sí se puede” (“Yes we can”), lies in using social networks to extend their actions. AEP members, convened mainly through Facebook and email, protest in front of bank branches in order to ask for the handover of assets in lieu of payment (the handing over of a house to the bank in order to pay for the total debt), in front of homes to avoid evictions, or in front of politicians’ homes and party headquarters to promote changes in mortgage laws. AEP has prevented at least 1,135 evictions and managed to raise awareness among politicians about the extent of the problem. It uses Twitter to organize so-called virtual escraches (their name for their public demonstrations), which are online protest actions to express rejection of some of the statements made by politicians. Colau, the former spokesperson and founder of the platform, has hundreds of thousands of followers on Twitter, “126,000 piojosos” as the controversial journalist and talk show guest Alfonso Rojo called them on the TV channel Sexta in April 2014.
Besides the two factors mentioned above—crisis of faith in political actions and geographical proximity to social needs—pragmatism and proxemics as two prevailing attitudes in youth could also be added (González-Anleo, 2005). Youth pragmatism requires institutions to ensure practical results, and proxemics values proximity, closeness, simplicity, and openness of organizations and groups that take care of youth directly or indirectly.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other associations play a crucial role under these circumstances. These organizations have attempted to attract young people to mobilize in collective social actions aimed towards solidarity and justice. So-called “cause marketing” has made NGOs achieve more active communication—without losing visibility in more traditional media—contributing to making youth participate in such organizations (López & Roig, 2006).

Proxemics could be one of the main factors leading young people to join collective social actions promoted by NGOs or other associations and organizations. In short, as already mentioned, local and regional actions are usually the most successful. Young people in situations that require their active social participation depend largely on proximity, both in what we understand as geographical proximity and the so-called social proximity (García, del Hoyo, & Fernández, 2014). When it comes to showing an active attitude beyond social networks, young people tend to be more sympathetic to geographically close situations.

Furthermore, the influence of peers on youth tends to be high (Moreira, Sánchez, & Mirón, 2010). Their external image and their sense of belonging to a particular group can lead to participation in certain movements (Horney & Jetten, 2004). The existence of opinion leaders who reinforce their status by participating in social networks are a mobilizing factor that should be taken into account as well (Morris & Staggenborg, 2004). In particular, the influence of the mobilization for participation should be highlighted. Generally, organizers of collective social action employ every possible tool to mobilize the highest number of people. As has already been stated, social networks not only allow young people to be informed about these actions but also to actively participate. New information and communication technologies and social networks have made this task easier (García & del Hoyo, 2013).

When Participation Remains in the Network

Many movements and social participation fronts have had their online version, although social networks have not always been their driving force. As seen in M-15, young people are often the main protagonists of some of these citizen movements, since they are also the main users of the internet and all of the information and communication technology (Jenkins, 2016). Therefore, the question is: What are the motives that inspire them to participate in any type of mobilization?

Let's save Excalibur
The first case of the Ebola infection outside Africa occurred in October 2014 in Spain. A health care assistant, Teresa Romero—who had taken care of two Ebola-stricken missionaries repatriated by the Spanish government and who subsequently died—became infected, and health authorities activated the protocol against Ebola in Spain. The infected assistant and her partner had a dog named Excalibur. When it was made public that Excalibur was to be euthanized in order to avoid contagion, considerable controversy arose over the decision, made by the Comunidad de Madrid and backed by the Juzgado Contencioso-Administrativo No. 2 (administrative court). The decision was justified by the lack of medical knowledge regarding infection between animals and humans afflicted with Ebola. Despite the fact that the assistant’s partner posted a video urging authorities not to euthanize their pet, the court ordered it. Subsequently, a crowd of people gathered in Alcorcón (Madrid), in front of the couple’s house, to try to prevent Excalibur from being taken. Animal welfare groups and the Partido Animalista Contra el Maltrato Animal (Animal Rights Party Against Animal Abuse) mobilized, using social networks with the #SalvemosaExcalibur (Let’s save Excalibur) hashtag. Although the dog’s sacrifice could not be avoided, this initiative was supported by over 150,000 followers on Facebook and became the first trending topic on Twitter on the day of his death (August 10, 2014). Furthermore, many people initiated and supported several initiatives through the website www.change.org. While thousands of people had been killed by the disease in Africa, and no Ebola-related social movement had taken place in Spain, this unusual mobilization occurred in order to save an animal, with hundreds of people taking to the streets in order to demonstrate in front of Teresa Romero’s home.

At first, a distinction can be made between two types of participation: the one that is only expressed in virtual networks and the one that is expressed in real life. While participation through social networks and new information technologies only involves, at first, armchair activism or clickactivism (García & del Hoyo, 2013), active offline mobilization means a far greater commitment than the one practiced from the solitude of the computer or mobile device. Answers to the mystery about factors that cause mobilization through social networks can be found in their immediacy and interactivity (García, del Hoyo, & Fernández, 2014). These two factors help understand the attraction of social networks and how the possibilities that information and communication technologies offer have generated a change in communication paradigms. This so-called revolution has expanded opportunities to actively participate in social movements. Some studies suggest that youth believe that networks have almost unlimited capabilities (e.g., Bescansa & Jerez, 2012) so that they feel that communication skills have been extended by new online tools. New forms of organization and decision-making have been developed as a result of the better and easier communications made possible by the internet (López & Roig, 2006). These developments theoretically suggest that an increasing number of young people will mobilize to participate in events or demonstrations regulated by the “We-intention” concept (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011) used by philosophers (Bratman, 1997; Tuomela, 1995) prior to the existence of digital media. The concept expresses that “we together can achieve X,” in which X represents a joint action. While the “I-intention” is explained on the basis of individual reasons to take a given action, the “We-intention” can be explained when individuals see themselves a part
of a social representation when participating in group action (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). “We-intention” exists when individuals believe not only that they can be a part of a joint action, but also that they, along with other participants, can carry out this action and are likely to succeed.

Social networks are a starting point for mobilization of campaigns such as Greenpeace’s “Save the Arctic.” More than 6 million people have signed online for this cause. Social networking has changed the traditional methods of getting support and multiplied their effects. Social networks’ multiplicative effects probably contribute to the success of organizations like change.org in terms of the number of followers of their causes in Spain. As Greenpeace advertises on its website, it is the “world’s platform for change.” Greenpeace has become a reference platform for active social mobilization offline, getting thousands of signatures for their causes.

Social networks are visible spaces to an undetermined amount of users in which many young people try to weave their social relationships. But there is the possibility that so-called online activism becomes a way to “save face” and does not involve a real commitment. Basic online participation is so simple that it is possible for a user to publish or share his or her compliance with collective social actions in response to social pressure or in order to achieve greater approbation from his or her peers. The possibility of anonymity that the Internet offers to remote causes facilitates mobilization in Spain provides a number of findings. First, the accessibility of space-time compression facilitated by digital technology to bring people together, especially but not exclusively youth, toward social and political goals. As with previous media, it is the agent—such as an NGO—reaps the benefits (support, money, etc.) offline, to accomplish or help its social justice goals and potentially transform the reality that transcends the organization in which it is immersed. As such social networks take advantage of space-time compression facilitated by digital technology to bring people together, especially but not exclusively youth, toward social and political goals. As with previous media, it is important to remember that people and leadership are the agents for technology-facilitated activism.

**Eviction of Juana Vacas Pancorbo**

Juana Vacas Pancorbo, known as Juani, a 74-year-old widow, is the mother of a woman who was murdered by her former husband in 2011 in a case of domestic violence. A few months after the murder, when Juani accepted the inheritance from her daughter, she unknowingly took on numerous debts that the ex-husband and murderer had contracted in previous years. The bank notified Juani of the mortgage foreclosure of her daughter’s flat in order to pay off mortgage debts. After great public pressure through www.change.org, which gathered 175,000 signatures, the court from Jaen annulled the acceptance of inheritance and recognized that Juani was not fully informed about its consequences. Eventually, the foreclosure was also annulled. The case of “The legacy of the murderer”—as the Diario Vasco titled it in November 2012—generated a support campaign across many types of media. On this occasion, social mobilization was organized through Facebook, with the profile “Todos con Juana” (Everyone with Juana) and through Twitter with the @todosconJuana profile and #todosconJuana hashtag.

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### Conclusion

This overview of recent activism generated by social networks in Spain provides a number of findings. First, the accessibility that the Internet offers to remote causes facilitates mobilization of people, but curiously, networks have not caused the abandonment of local and proximate causes. In fact, online contributes to the vibrancy of local and regional activism. Second, the crisis in Spain has brought political disenchantment and criticism of the ruling classes, but it has aroused at the same time a renewed interest in public and social commitment. Volunteering and other forms of citizen activism find in online social networks the most appropriate means for its extension and development. Third, simplicity and immediacy for participation provided by social networks facilitate online commitment, but these two features also facilitate the conversion of online commitment into offline engagement, so that users participate online and the “mobilizing” agent—such as an NGO—reaps the benefits (support, money, etc.) offline, to accomplish or help its social justice goals and potentially transform the reality that transcends the organization and in which it is immersed. As such social networks take advantage of space-time compression facilitated by digital technology to bring people together, especially but not exclusively youth, toward social and political goals. As with previous media, it is important to remember that people and leadership are the agents for technology-facilitated activism.

### References


NOTES

1 This is the case in Spain, though we acknowledge that there are still pockets and even entire countries—such as Myanmar, North Korea, and Cuba—whose population do not have access to the internet.

2 Unemployment reaches 26.9% in 2013, banks cut credit to businesses and individuals, and, as of 2012, government deficit exceeds 100 billion euros. The EU urged Spain to take action in order to avoid a bailout like Greece’s.

3 This slogan is borrowed from the United States Farm Workers social movement for living wages and safe harvesting conditions.

4 In case of defaulting on the mortgage, the current Spanish law allows banks to be able to own the property and also to force the owner to keep paying the mortgage (even when the property no longer belongs to the owner but to the bank and the owner doesn’t have access to it). The aim of the platform was to fight for a law that would force banks to eliminate the mortgage once banks own the property.

5 Meaning literally, “lice-infested people” but often used in Spanish as “scum” is used in English.
Dear Ladies of the Transition: Transsexuality in Spanish Films During and After Franco

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Abstract
This article compares two movies featuring transsexual protagonists made during the last years of Spain’s fascist dictatorship, Mi Querida Señorita and Cambio de Sexo. Both were presented to the censorship board, but while the former got released that same year (1972), the latter had to wait until after Franco’s death (1977). By comparing both movies and their treatment of transsexuality, this article locates the emerging new paradigm that was being defined at the time following Harry Benjamin’s work, while at the same time highlighting the limits of sex, gender, and sexuality transgressions under fascist censorship. The article explores the differences as well as the similarities between both texts in relation to their representation of people undergoing sex and gender transitions in order to understand the ideological transition that was taking place at the time in the public sphere of cinema in Spain.

Keywords: Sex, gender, sexuality, Spain, film, transsexuality, censorship, transition
Introduction

The Spanish dictatorship of General Francisco Franco (1936-1975) saw the country change under a regime in which national cultural production was limited by institutionalized fascist ideology. Aware of the influence of media, Franco created a censorship institution (Junta Superior de Censura in 1937) and used state-controlled cinema newsreels called Noticiarios y Documentales or NO-DO (News and Documentaries) from 1943 until 1981 to “explain” the world to Spaniards from the regime’s point of view. Spain had only one state-owned TV channel, inspired by the Third Reich, from 1956 until 1966, when a second channel was launched (Palacio Arranz, 2002). Franco used his media and information control to weed out revolutionary ideas and foment a project of exaltation of Spanish folklore, an ideological return to a pre-war country and a nationalism exemplified by the motto “España, una, grande y libre” (“Spain, one, great and free”).

Under such control, not only were all mentions of communism and socialism obliterated (or in some cases presented as the evil conspiracy endangering the country), but also all sorts of topics, such as divorce, gender discrimination, or resistance to authority were banned from the screen. Foreign films had to undergo a severe process of censorship until they were found suitable for Spanish audiences—even when it meant changing the script, the ending of the movie, or cutting entire scenes. Spaniards never saw Janet Leigh in the shower scene in Psycho; Some Like It Hot never made it to the screens for introducing homosexuality; and even Breakfast at Tiffany’s was considered “pornographic” (Gil, 2009). All in all, Spanish audiences were thus protected from pernicious ideas that could go against the regime, which was firmly based on Catholicism and labeled “dangerous” any expression of non-heterosexual, reproductive love or sex.

Along with forbidden topics such as divorce, sex out of wedlock, and homosexuality, the dissonance between sex and gender was also off limits, something that radically changed after the dictator’s death and the inception of La Movida Madrileña, a countercultural movement that featured all these sexual dissidences in a prominent role. This change toward openness in the presence of sex and sexuality in culture has captured the interest of academia as a site for exploring the country’s change of mentality, but while Spanish cinema dealing with the LGBT community has been largely explored in specialized literature, such as Alberto Mira’s comprehensive volume Miradas Insumisas (2008), especially concerning the representation of gay and lesbian characters, transsexuality remains much less explored.

There has been a lot of attention devoted to the work of internationally famous filmographer Pedro Almodóvar and his queer characters (Epps & Kakoudaki, 2009; Edwards, 2001; Smith, 1994) but only one recent book focuses explicitly on transsexuality in Almodóvar’s films (Poyato Sánchez, 2014). Transsexual characters in Spanish cinema have gotten much less attention and their presence in academic research is mostly reduced to specific examples in broad sections dealing with other LGBT issues (Richmond Ellis, 1997; Perriam, 2013) as well as analyses of gender performance (Marsh & Nair, 2004; Pastor, 2006), with only a few exceptions (Garlinger, 2003). However, there is no archival work done in compiling the legacy of transsexuality in cinema, and much less an entire book dedicated to the topic. Indeed, most of the work on transsexuality has been done in the field of sociology (Nieto, 1998, 2003, 2008; Mejía, 2006; Soley-Beltrán, 2009), psychology (Beccerra-Fernández, 2003), law (López-Galiacho Perona, 1998; Bustos Moreno, 2008), journalism (Hernández, 2007) and a more theoretical/philosophical approach in the work of Preciado (2002, 2008) and other queer theorists (Córdoba et al., 2005).

This article is a first step toward addressing this academic gap, adding a new incursion into the topic of transsexuality in Spanish cinema, which can not only tell us more about acceptance of non-normative sexualities, but also about the ideological regulation of sex and gender through the culture. This article compares two productions, released before and after Franco’s death, in order to highlight the changes that took place in the representation of the topic. The movies under analysis are Mi Querida Señorita (henceforth MQS) (dir. Jaime De Armiñán, 1972) and Cambio de Sexo (henceforth CdS) (dir. Vicente Aranda, 1977). Both have been chosen for being fiction movies featuring a protagonist who transitions from one sex to another and for being produced during the 1970s. Both are mainstream movies as well, having been produced and released through mainstream channels for mass audiences. MQS remains the sole film dealing with gender transitioning released while Franco was still alive. Other films of the decade, like Un Hombre Llamado Flor de Otoño (henceforth CdS) (dir. Pedro Olea, 1978) or Ocaña, Un Retrato Intermitente (dir. Ventura Pons, 1978) have been excluded for their focus on cross-dressing rather than transitioning, and El Transexual (dir. José Jara, 1977) for being an exceptionally rare and experimental movie that never reached wide enough distribution. Ignacio Iquino’s sexploitation movies (La Tía de Carlos en Mini-falda 1967 and La Basura Está en el Ático 1979) have also been excluded for not belonging to mainstream cinema.

What makes these movies representative of the late years of the regime, and perfect candidates for comparing them, is that both were originally going to be released around the same time (1972), but while MQS’s release was allowed by the censors, CdS had to wait five more years, until after the death of General Franco. What are the differences that permitted the former to be shown to the masses? How did each project deal with the issues of gender and sex, and where is the line that censors felt was crossed? By looking at both movies closely, we will see the shift in ideology before and after Franco’s death, as well as the different paradigm of representation that each movie uses when talking about transsexuality.

Furthermore, transsexuality has long been the site for looking at the limits of sex and gender at a given moment, since it represents the ultimate transgression of the gender and sex binaries. By looking at
the representation of this phenomenon, we question the understanding of these limits in a given society and can learn more about the predominant ideologies that were at work. Moreover, since it was after the decade of the 1970s that legislation on the issue, as well as medical regulations, started to change for transsexual people in Spain, together with an implosion of LGBT characters on screen, the 1970s themselves are a critical cultural time that must be analyzed to understand the subsequent years, up to our present moment, and these two movies capture the crossroads of this concrete topic (transsexuality) during and after the dictatorship and, as we will see, pave the way for the hegemonic understanding of transsexuality in the years to come—one crafted around the medical and pathological definition of transsexuality.

For both films, I explore two main themes: the way the movie presents the characters and their own concerns with identity, transsexuality and sex/gender/sexuality; and the relationship of the characters with other people, the character’s socialization, and the role of institutions in that socialization, such as medical institutions, state, family, school, police, etc. Through those two axes, the article explores how sex, gender and sexuality are represented and intertwined in the two movies, revealing underlying ideologies that change from an avoidance of the topic in the earlier film to the medicalized process present in the latter.

Context and Theoretical Framework

After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) General Francisco Franco established a fascist dictatorship in Spain that would last until his death in 1975. Already during the war, the fascist bloc had started to take control of radio and press, but cinema was disregarded for its frivolity (Cabrerizo Pérez, 2007). However, in the last years of the war, the Department of Propaganda created the National Department of Cinematography (1938), dedicated to the production of audiovisual propaganda, control of foreign production on the war, and control of national distribution of movies. Indeed, Franco understood the power of media in influencing ideology and, drawing on Mussolini and Hitler’s approach, created the longest-lasting censorship institution in Western Europe (Higginbotham, 1988). Censorship lasted until the last days of fascism, and the regime treated cinema and other media as influential state apparatuses.

Media are part of what Althusser (1971) defined as “state apparatuses” in his re-reading of Marx. For Althusser, the way the state exerts its power is through Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). The former use violence to enforce society rules under its regime—the clearest example being the police and the military—while the latter work as enforcers of ideology. The concept of the ISA seems an essential frame from where to look at filmic texts, conceptualizing them as part of those apparatuses. Media become powerful tools for regulation and conforming of the self and function like subtle tools to enforce “normality” and separate “abnormal” minorities. While this “normality” became the hegemonic view (and was celebrated by the regime), Spanish censorship worked hard to remove all mention of abnormal minorities. Minorities are “defined by their deviation from a norm that is white, male, Christian and heterosexual […] [they] share a common fate of relative invisibility and demeaning stereotypes” (Gross, 2001). Constructing minorities as “abnormal”—by not including them in the “normal” public space of media representation—media participate in a process of othering and denial of such minorities. Minoritized communities find no voice to their identities and lives in public culture in general, and mainstream media in particular. Franco’s regime wanted to make sure that such communities disappeared from popular culture so they could not permeate and establish themselves in society.

Nevertheless, the ideological work of media goes far beyond a visible/invisible dichotomy (where visible equals good and invisible bad): The fact that a transsexual person is put onscreen does not mean such depiction is empowering, and casting him or her as deviant, criminal, or ill can do more harm than invisibility itself, for some of those concepts might remain ideologically attached to transsexuality. In 1974, Stuart Hall analyzed the construction of deviance and the role of media in perpetuating and enforcing such concept. Hall addressed the emergence of new political movements and their classification between “[being] legitimized publicly within the ‘political’ category, or de-legitimized by being assigned to the ‘deviant’ category” (1993, p. 66). Notwithstanding, Hall also noted that “[u]nder certain circumstances, legitimate political minorities are subjected to severe ‘status degradation’ ceremonies, and are lumped with the more marginal groups. They are then subject to quite different forms of public opprobrium, stigmatization, and exclusion. They have been symbolically de-legitimized” (1993, p. 66).

While the number of movies dealing with any type of sex transition during Franco is reduced to MQS—whose status as an anomaly makes it an excellent text to analyze—Spain witnessed a proliferation of such films in the late 1970s and 1980s, a frequency of films with a transsexual protagonist that has never been reached afterward. However, the emergence of transgender issues in the cinema is not solely due to Franco’s death and the end of censorship. Other contextual developments were taking place roughly during the last years of the dictatorship that also fostered the social debate on the issue later on, such as the legal recognition of sex confirmation surgery in the Penal Code (1983) and the appearance of a diagnostic that validated transsexuality as a legal and medical matter in the American Psychiatric Association’s manual, DSM, which was and is the diagnostic reference for psychiatrists in Spain.

The issue of transsexuality (and the possibility of gender confirmation surgery) started having a huge media presence through the case of Christine Jorgensen, the first American transsexual woman who had gender confirmation surgery in Denmark in the 1950s. Despite Jorgensen’s mediatization, and the efforts to legitimize transsexuality and transsexual people by endocrinologist Harry Benjamin, who published The Transsexual Phenomenon in 1966, Spain under Franco remained fairly impervious to such influences.
News media was controlled by the regime (and did not mention such advances), and even if some Spanish doctors had access to international specialized literature and were able to read Benjamin’s recommendations, sex reassignment surgery remained illegal until 1983.

The close relationship of transsexuality with its representation in visual media—stated explicitly in Benjamin’s work—is also pivotal in a national article explaining the first legal recognition of a gender transition in Spain in 1977 (Gradillas, 2003). In both cases, the medical practitioners and authors state that the presence on screen of such cases, as well as their visibility in the public sphere, are necessary for their acceptance and understanding. Also preoccupied with this link between science, power, and discursive formations of identity, Michael Franklin in his dissertation, Spectacles in Transit: Reading Cinematic Productions of Biopower and Transgender Embodiment (2011), exposes, precisely, these same interactions of visibility and the creation of medical/scientific categories. Franklin suggests that there is an active relationship between the media in that transgender people are “a minority group whose constitution via medicine and mass culture has animated their negotiation of social belonging” (Franklin, 2011, p. 6). He adds that since there’s a social fixation on the stripped-down body, and especially genitalia, as naturally evident truths about that person, and as validation for scientific observation, a visual representation of transgender people as well as the medical definition of a transgender person are pivotal for constituting transgender identity (p. 20).

Looking at how Franco’s censorship accepted a certain way of transgressing the gender binary while rejecting another is important for understanding what ideological regulations the regime was trying to convey to its citizens. According to Michel Foucault (1971, 1973), it is the scientific gaze, and the visual representation of science, that creates scientific “knowledge.” This knowledge is then used in the management of life in society—Foucault’s “biopower” (1986, 1991)—and is the basis for societal control and rendering the bodies docile to the state. A Foucauldian approach to the two case studies—focused on the medical discourses being created around transsexuality—will unpack the interactions of science/medicine, cinema/visibility, and the regulation of sex and gender in Spain.

Analysis

Mi Querida Señorita was released in 1972, around the same time Cambio de Sexo was turned down by the censors. MQS features the famous actor José Luis López Vázquez in the role of Adela, the “dear lady” of the title, who lives in a small town and starts to feel jealous of her maid’s flirtations with guys and in discomfort about her abundant facial hair, which she needs to shave. After Isabelita (the maid) leaves her due to her jealousy and mood swings, Adela decides to go to the doctor and ask about her problems: “I’m a brave and strong woman, doctor; tell me what I have.” “You are brave and strong, indeed, but not a woman.” From that scene, we cut to Juan—Adela’s name after transitioning to a man—arriving in Madrid and trying to look for a job. In Madrid, he meets Isabelita again, but she does not seem to recognize him. They start a romance while Juan faces the hardships of finding a job without any training—just like Adela, he only knows how to sew. When he gets thrown out of the pensión where he’s staying, he returns to the village as Adela, but starts coming out to some people as a man. He finally returns to Madrid, and he and Isabelita end up together in a happy ending that had one last sentence censored: the one where Isabelita implies that she had known the whole time that Juan was also her “dear lady.”

Cambio de Sexo was first named Una Historia Clínica1 with the intention of avoiding censorship (Roca Sastre, 1977) and presenting the movie as a real and educational story about transsexuality. It did not convince Franco’s censors and had to wait until after Franco’s death to be released in 1977. It narrates the story of José María, an androgynous boy who is bullied by friends and family alike for his mannerisms and effeminacy. His father takes him to Barcelona in a trip to fix his masculinity, and although José María never consummates the sex his father wants him to have with a prostitute, that trip is crucial for his personal journey of discovery. That night he sees, for the first time, Bibi Andersen, a transsexual woman who captivates audiences in a cabaret bar with her feminine performance and male genitalia. José María, much as Juan in MQS, will escape to the big city and start living gradually as María José. Under Bibi’s mentorship, she will piece together who she wants to be and, after a few heartbreaks and disappointments—which means coming back to her parents and trying to live as José María for a while—she will find love and get surgery to become the woman she “feels to be.”

Both movies have some parallelisms in form: They set up the characters and then make the spectator start a journey of self-discovery, accompanying the protagonists to the big city (Madrid and Barcelona, the biggest two in Spain) where they can live and be their “new” selves; both will have to return to their hometowns and mend the wounds of their lives in the city, but will soon realize that there is no going back; finally, both decide to try again and finally succeed in their personal and sentimental goals. However, they also have asymmetries, especially regarding their status as transgender people: whereas José María will slowly and gradually “become” María José, the change from Adela to Juan is immediate and happens in an ellipsis between two shots; the difficulties in the city on their first arrivals are more related to performing masculinity successfully for Juan as much as it is a biological and corporal issue for María José, since her body does not “match her mind”; their return home is almost liberating for Juan, who has the opportunity to come out to some of his former neighbors, while María José goes back as José María to be under the father’s wing—and violence; MQS has an easy, happy ending, as Juan’s love story with Isabelita is the central plot in the movie. On the other hand, María

1 The title means “a medical record” but it plays on the word “historia,” which can be used as “record” or ‘story’ in this context.
Jose will have to give up her friendship with Bibi to achieve her happy ending, as well as go through cosmetic and surgical procedures that are the focus of the final segment of the movie.

Characters and Transsexuality

In the credits sequence of MQS, we can see actor José Luis López Vázquez’s face in the vintage pictures, as a baby, a girl, and a woman. The credits establish the femininity of the main character, which is necessary given that López Vázquez, as a successful actor, was already a well-known face for Spanish audiences. The movie did actually improve the actor’s reputation for his versatile acting and elegant way of treating the “issue” and got him recognition in Chicago (Comas, 1996; Galán, 2003). He embodies the character of Adela/Juan. Adela is a middle-aged, conservative rural lady who is integrated and respected in her small-town community. We see her interacting with different people in town, even kicking off the local football game. Her main problems are, on the one hand, her growing “lesbian” attraction to her maid, which leads to jealousy, and on the other hand the growing hair she has in her face and body—she shaves in one of the first scenes, hidden in the toilet but as a habitual thing. She does not look concerned about her gender identity, but the feelings for Isabelita trouble her to the point of seeking first spiritual guidance—confessing to the priest—and then medical advice following the priest’s guidance. It was precisely Adela’s homosexual desire that bothered censors at the time, not the fact that she becomes a man in the movie. In fact, turning Adela into Juan was the way that homosexuality was kept out of the plot. Censors only asked for the removal of the last sentence in the movie—“You don’t have to tell me, señorita”—which implies that Isabelita knew who Juan was, thus validating the earlier lesbian attraction.

After her transition, Adela becomes Juan, a middle-age man finding it difficult to fit in society due to his lack of manly expertise and talents. He has the experience of a middle-aged bourgeois rural woman, so he needs to find a job that suits his abilities, leading him to lie about a sick sister at home in order to get some sewing work. He never really identifies with the other gender—not once do we see Juan missing being a woman, nor Adela longing to become a man. There seems to be no big issue in transitioning—apart from some hardship in finding a job—and Juan has no problem in “passing” as a man. It is also worth noticing that this is the only story focused on a female-to-male transition in Spanish cine, which speaks to the invisibility of trans men (Kellaway, 2014). However, we cannot be certain that this is a case of transsexuality, since the details of the medical intervention and Juan’s biological body are not revealed to us. This has led some authors to group MQS among movies about intersex people (Estrada López, 2012), which would explain the facial hair, the socialization as a woman and a new gender diagnosis as an adult. Nevertheless, the fact that there is indeed a medical “change of sex” that is not entirely explained, nor shown, allows us to reflect on the importance of the body and biology to validate a medical diagnosis, which we as the audience cannot fully make. This article, then, considers Adela/Juan within the “transgender” category, as in the presentation of the main character, MQS speaks more to the fragile binary separation of the sexes and the performativity of gender than it does to the fact of being a transexual.

CDS, on the other hand, is completely focused on explaining to the audience what a diagnosis for transsexuality looks like. It should be noted that the movie itself is formally framed and introduced by two lines in the credits: first, it adds “the presentation of Bibi Andersen, a star of Cadena Ferrer,” which introduces the fact that there is a transsexual actress in the film playing herself as a cabaret artist; second, there is a warning that “the authors have based this film on a real story.” Scriptwriters Joaquim Jordà and Vicente Aranda (who also directed the film) said in an interview that they researched and talked with transsexual people before making the movie (Ripoll Freixes, 1977; Roca Sastre, 1977). It is not surprising, then, that having consulted the available literature on the topic, they reproduce Benjamin’s “true transsexual” (1966) almost point by point in the movie. In doing so, they add in the interview, they wanted to present the topic in a serious and even educational manner, which is precisely what the critics of the time said about the movie (Hernández, 1976; O.M., 1977). This is made clear on screen through, for example, a sequence made up of graphics that depict the process of gender confirmation surgery, or the diverse symptoms and situations that translate from the APA diagnosis of transsexuality onto the screen.

This “real story” is centered around José María, a young androgynous boy played by a young and unknown Victoria Abril, who is presented to us as male through his father calling him “son.” This certainty about the main character’s gender will not last long, because in that same scene, a client will call him “nena.” From the beginning, the spectator is made witness to the problems of José María as a boy: through the interactions with his father and classmates, we will learn that José María does not feel, indeed, like José María but rather like María José. Unlike Adela/Juan, this

2 In the censorship document of MQS, preserved in the National Archives in Alcalá de Henares, “lesbianism” is the main concern for all the agents involved in the “censorship dossier” of the movie. Once the last sentence (in which Isabelita acknowledges that she knew Juan was Adela) was removed, censors granted the permission for the movie to be released.

3 Cadena Ferrer was an enterprise of cabaret and night entertainment famous at the time for bringing long-forbidden erotic shows to Spanish stages.

4 In his book The Transsexual Phenomenon (1966), Benjamin separates the definitions of the terms “transvestite” and “transsexual,” so as to be able to address each differently. In the case of Benjamin’s “true transsexual” (which only contemplates female transsexuals), the gender feeling is that of being trapped in the wrong body (total psycho- sexual inversion); they may live as the gender they identify with, but dressing is not enough, they desire intensely relationships with “normal males”; and the medical indications for them is hormone treatment and surgery, all of which are present in the movie.

5 The equivalent of baby, but in an unequivocal feminine gender.

6 Note: The inversion of two of the most popular names in Spain denotes the difference in gender of the person named.
time the character is presented as Harry Benjamin’s “true transsexual,” fitting perfectly the clinical definition of transsexuality (which is consistent with the original title of the movie, *A Clinical Record*). The three characteristics posited by Benjamin are present in the movie, and medically construct the character of María José. However, this understanding of transsexualism excluded (and continues to do so) gender variant or gender-queer people, since there needs to be an investment in the gender binary and heterosexuality in order to get the recognition.

María José is born an effeminate boy who soon feels trapped in her male body, starts dressing privately as a woman with stolen clothes (the fascination with feminine underwear and clothes is present in three different sequences) and finally gets gender confirmation surgery. Her story of transitioning to a woman is paralleled in the movie by the other main transsexual character, Bibi Andersen. In Bibi’s presentation scene, she is prefaced by the introduction of her show: “A mystery of nature, the biological enigma of our century, suspense in the flesh.” This mysterious character will become a sort of godmother to María José after meeting her in a hair salon (still as José María), and will help her to understand transsexuality. Bibi also helps the audience read both her and María José as transsexuals, highlighting the pre- and post-surgery moments for both her—showing her penis at the beginning, telling María José how she went to Casablanca and had the surgery—and María José (who has an entire long scene dedicated to her transition). In opposition to the subtlety that dodged censorship in MQS, *CdS* and Bibi are explicit and visual about the transsexual body, biology, and participation of an essentialization of transsexuality. For example, in Bibi’s introduction (“biological enigma”), or after the show, when José María’s father comments on Bibi’s penis, asking, “Is that glued?” to which his stripper friend responds, “The tits are glued, those are his and his parents” evoking again the role of biology.

After watching Bibi’s show, which José María’s father intended to be educational for his performance of masculinity, José María steals his first feminine clothes and decides to go to Barcelona and present himself as María José for the first time, although only in the street and in an anonymous way—he will still be José María for his patrons, his landlady, and even Bibi. María José’s transition is shown through two main scenes: one that is more psychological and another one devoted to physical changes. The first one happens in the motel, when the landlady leaves and José María takes some women’s clothes, dresses herself, listens to a radio program aimed at housewives and starts watching a romantic movie—she will later repeat some of the lines to her first lover. It shows how María José is learning to act like a woman, performing femininity through feminine role models and indications. She is practicing what she tried for the first time in the street, and as we see in subsequent scenes, she quickly learns how to “pass” as a woman.

The second transformation scene is radically different, in that it presents feminization as a physical process. It happens later in the movie when Durán (Lou Castel) takes care of María José and decides to “make her” a woman. Both he and Bibi speak to a still frame of her face, voices overlapping, telling her what to do, while the montage shows different jars with hormones, waxing, depilation, hydrotherapy, exfoliation of the skin, ear piercing, lipstick, facial masks, electrode treatments, etc. All is shown very hygienically and almost surgically. This time, the body needs changing after she has tried living, working, and socializing as a woman. This parallels the process established by psychiatry for transsexuals in Spain (and most of the Western world), in which the person wanting to have a change of sex acknowledged by the law needs to first get a diagnosis and go through “the real life test.” This test implies living as the desired gender for a period of time in order to make sure of the person’s will to live as such before the operation. This test has also been reported to be a very vulnerable stage for transsexual people, leading to transphobic discrimination and aggressions, since in most cases the body has not been modified, and “passing” as the other gender is very difficult (Markman, 2011). We see this happen with María José’s first boyfriend, who beats her when he discovers she still has male genitalia.

Finally, it’s worth commenting on Bibi’s slightly different take on surgery from María José’s. Despite being the first of the two to undergo the procedure, Bibi is much more critical of surgery, and she declares at first that she doesn’t want to do it. Bibi Andersen, the actress, not the character, also declared in interviews of the period that she was waiting to be really sure about that step (Torres, 1977), arguing that it’s irreversible and lethally dangerous. For both the actress and the character, surgery is a very important decision that might lead to regret or death, and she comments as well on her lack of work after surgery, because she’s no longer “special.” In fact, the relationship between work and surgery has been noted in other Spanish movies featuring a transgender protagonist, like Antonia San Juan in Almodóvar’s *All About my Mother* (1999) or Rossy De Palma in *20 Centimeters* (dir. Ramón Salazar, 2005). Especially in the field of porn and sex work, being a transgender person pre-surgery has recently gained its own space (the so-called “shemale”) and taken it away from post-surgery transgender people (Escoffier, 2011), making more difficult the decision of undergoing surgery, which is also very expensive.

Overall, both characters are presented under a very different light and have a different relationship with their own sex and gender identities. Whereas Juan/Adela reflect more metaphorically on gender differences and the correlation (or lack thereof) between sex, gender and sexuality, María José is constructed following the medical discourse of the time, and used as a poster-child for Benjamin’s “true transsexual.” This signals the fact that Franco’s censorship allowed a non-explicit transgression of gender (which, as I explain, helps avoid homosexuality in the film), whereas the new discourse after the dictatorship would bestow the power to decide who was deemed appropriate for transition to the medical institution. With this in mind, we can see how the freedom to talk openly about transsexuality on screen did not per se bring a subversive and radical way of empowering transsexual people for what they
are, but rather pathologized transsexual people as a means to “explain” the unbeknownst phenomenon to the public.

Socialization and Institutions

Since Adela has no adaptation problems in her community, her transition is not an escape or the result of internal discomfort with her sex/gender correspondence, but rather in accordance with her homosexual desire. The first part of the movie shows Adela as an important member of the town where she lives (as opposed to the trope of the marginalized transsexual that so often populated films in the following years).

There are two main characters with whom she maintains a relationship in the movie: She is courted by wealthy Santiago (Antonio Ferrandis), the town’s bank manager, a representative of the rural bourgeoisie that surrounds Adela. However, the true love story in the film is that between Adela and her maid, Isabelita (Julieta Serrano). Isabelita is seeing the young town florist, and he brings Isabelita and Adela carnations, and compares the two ladies to the flowers, which both of them like. Later on, we see Adela being less and less comfortable with having him around, throwing the carnation away when she sees Isabelita flirting with him. After the boy leaves, Isabelita notices Adela’s irritation, apologizes, and promises she “will never marry.” The audience can already see here that there is something going on between the two—which is precisely what bothered the censors about the film. After a big argument, Isabelita tells Adela she’s leaving the house. While Isabelita packs, we can see Adela’s lusty gaze observing Isabelita while she gets dressed to go, which will prompt the “dear lady” to go see her priest.

Adela keeps pushing Santiago away, using her problems with facial hair as a justification for her fear, while she also complains about “never having been loved”—to which Isabelita answers, “Men are idiots.” Although Santiago, a widower, doesn’t seem to care—and tells her that he has “always been attracted to her” and that “beauty is not everything” in response to her excuses—it is precisely Adela’s rejection of “heterosexual” love in the first part of the movie what protected the whole project from being censored. Indeed, her lesbian desire, turned into heterosexual love after the transition, was tolerated. But what if Adela, whom we later discover is a man, falls in love with another man? Could Juan be at risk of falling in love again with another man? Most probably—and considering that just a sentence from Isabelita acknowledging Juan’s past as a woman was enough to set off the alarms for the censors—the idea of having actor José Luis López Vázquez play the part of the protagonist having had homosexual desires would have been too much.

In the second half of the movie, we encounter Juan’s difficulties in socializing with others: He has problems at the unemployment office for not being able to show his ID card; he needs to lie about a handicapped sister at home so he can get some sewing work; he needs to hide his past to the landladies at the pensión, who eventually discover Adela’s clothes in his suitcase and end up kicking him out. Problems in the job market and in housing do resonate heavily with the lives of many transgender people, and Juan’s socialization is cleverly used as well as a critique of gender discrimination and the difficulties women face in the job market. Precisely because of the lack of interest in the process of transition, MQS’s cultural work is done at the level of sex and gender, denouncing unfair inequalities with which many minorities can identify. However, MQS still has some conservative views about compulsory heterosexuality (Wittig, 1978) that aligns sex and gender with sexuality and pleased the censors.

CdS is again fairly different in the treatment of the protagonist’s human interactions. School is not a safe space for José María, who is bullied by his classmates and called “faggot” by the entire class in one of the opening sequences. Not only this, but he finally gets expelled by the principal, who wants to “prevent putting his classmates at risk of perversion.” When the principal implies to José María’s mother that the boy might be queer (by comparing him to the rest of the classmates, who are “normal”), she corrects him and defends her son: “How dare you call him abnormal?!... He’s docile and delicate.” The principal agrees. The problem, then, is not José María’s sexuality (which has not been shown or explained to the spectator) but that he is too “tame and delicate”... for a boy. When José María tells his sister, the only member of the family who looks actually concerned for him (not because of him), she tells him not to worry, because “it’s not his fault.” He responds, “Don’t you want to understand? Even if it’s not my fault, I’m their amusement. If I try to talk like them, it’s worse, because they think I’m imitating them. I want to die.” This is the first time—but not the last—that he expresses his desire to die. However, what’s revealing here is how the story puts the blame of José María’s suffering on what others do to him, not on him. This highlights transphobia, not transsexuality, as the cause for suffering, something that is taken into account in the last revision of the DSM (American Psychiatric Association, 2013b).

The sister will also be the first to see José María as María José, who decides to present herself as a woman and have a sisterly night out. The sister likes her much more as a woman, and thinks she’s more confident like that. However, sexuality is also one of the difficult parts of the process for María José’s sister to understand:

- What do you feel when you dance with a man?
- Same as you do.
- But that can’t be! I am a woman!
- I, too, feel like a woman.
- But you are not.
- Then what am I? (Sister starts sobbing).
Still in the process of finding her own identity, María José lacks an answer to her sister’s question. She fulfills Benjamin’s three axes: hatred for her genitalia is repeatedly shown and mentioned every time showing genitalia on stage is part of a conversation, and she will try to cut her penis off herself half way through the movie; she also expresses in many occasions that she “feels like a woman,” and shows no desire for other women. Presented as an embodiment of a true transsexual, José María has many socialization problems as a boy, whereas María José passes perfectly as a woman and feels even more confident. The narrative of CdS, in contrast to MQS, is that of self-discovery in order to improve the initial situation, and in the words of the protagonist, become “normal” again. Bullied at school, battered by her father for not being manly enough, and expelled from school by a moralist principal, María José faces as many problems and direct consequences of discrimination as José María, but only one instance of violence as María José—when the first boyfriend beats her upon finding out she’s not a “real woman.” Being a woman, rather than preventing her from achieving goals, is the goal itself, and comes with the advantage that she feels more at home in femininity.

As noted before, her relationship with Bibi is central to the story, and Bibi will become her transsexual mentor, one step ahead of her during the entire process. She is the one who visits at the hospital when José María tries to cut his penis off, the one that will get María José a job, and the one who will introduce her to her future husband. However, there is a mounting competition between the two (other workers in the cabaret compare them constantly), increased by Bibi’s lack of work after surgery, which will end their friendship when Bibi finds out that María José and their boss are romantically involved. Although the movie does not give importance to Bibi after they fall out, removing the character from the plot, she remains a central character for María José’s transition. There is another ally in the movie for María José’s transition. There is another ally in the movie for María José’s transition.

Far from the mostly positive rapport between Adela/Juan and the institutions, CdS highlights instead the problems with all the institutions that the transsexual character encounters. School and education seem to be part of the problem rather than the solution. Family is a source of support (sister), a source of violence (father), and resignation to suffering (mother). After José María’s expulsion from school, his father goes as far as to say that he is dishonoring the family: “I will fix you, or nobody will. And if I don’t fix you, I will kill you.” He will try to mend his “broken son” by making him work hard with his body (cutting wood, in construction, etc.). He will, as well, show him how to socialize properly as a man, taking him to see a prostitute, talking about manly things like getting girls pregnant, and giving him money so he can tip people and feel in charge, all components of a very traditional view of masculinity.

We have briefly mentioned María José’s relationship with her first boyfriend, who beats her for having male genitalia. The other love interest, her boss Durán, will see her as an employee first, then start flirting, at some point abandoning her and calling her “nothing more than a transvestite,” and finally taking care of her and paying for the surgery in order for the two to get married. As we can see, María José’s relationship with men is problematic: On the one hand, she is punished by men for not having “completed” the transition, while on the other hand, it is a man who will secure a job for her, as well as sustenance and the money to surgically change her body. This dependence on surgery to be accepted, and dependence on men to physically become who she is, also references the difficulties of being independent as a woman and adds the cost of surgery as another burden for transsexuals. If we add to this hardship the difficulty of finding a job that is not highly feminized as José María (who starts working as a hairdresser) or linked to show business (making profit out of their weirdness rather than their talent), we can read in the movie a desolating landscape for the realities of transgender people.

Hardships at work seem to be a commonality between the two movies, but the relationship of each protagonist with the institutions of our society is fairly different. In MQS, Adela is connected with the most important institutions in Franco’s Spain. She is an active member of the local church (the bells toll for a funeral in the opening scene; she confesses to the priest, looking to stop her lesbian desires) and the economic establishment (the bank manager is courting her). She even participates in the public leisure sphere, and she is invited to start the local soccer game as an integrated and respected member of the community (we cannot forget how powerful soccer is as an institution in Spain, as well as the importance it had for the regime). However, medicine has a shockingly minor role. The presence of medicine is anecdotic and appears only as working in consonance with the church to regulate citizens’ sex and gender. It is the doctor who tells Adela that she is actually Juan, and it is through the doctor that the movie establishes a bifurcated division of body and mind that together conform identity, much as Harry Benjamin did in his book. As the doctor says: “One cannot have a sick mind without the body being sick, too. It is not a dependence or interrelation, is about a total and complete identity.” 7

7 “Franco had seen the positive effects of football through the exploitation of the sport by Mussolini and Hitler, and saw it as a perfect way for Spain to regain some positive global attention and also help him consolidate his rule at home. He also wanted to use it as something which could divert people's attention from his regime” (Mehrotra, 2014).
gery are well researched and similar to the ones asked in real-life situations. The transformation of José María into María José is not possible without the intervention of science, and the doctor is represented as an absolute gatekeeper of the process. Overall, we can see two very different socializations: one in which the problems and frictions come from living in a “new” gender in which we are not trained to perform, and another one in which the problem is the correlation between sex and gender.

Another looming institution in both movies, one that problematizes the ways in which transsexuality is presented, is that of marriage and heterosexual love. In both movies, transsexuality is presented almost as a solution for homosexuality, not unlike the case of Iran8, where prohibition of homosexuality is avoided by the state through the financing of half of the cost of sex reassignment surgeries for those who want it (and always from man to woman). In MQS, the change of sex and gender of the protagonist satisfied the censors as a solution to the lesbianism present at the beginning of the film, and the sole mention of gender ambiguity in Isabelita’s final sentence was removed. Cds is no different in that regard, as marriage is the “happy ending” that the protagonist receives for becoming a woman through surgery. By portraying marriage and heterosexual love as the centerpiece of both endings, the movies reinforce the idea that surgery (and sex transition) is a means of reinserting the person into society, normalizing their bodies. Through the medical institution, the possible transgression of sex and gender becomes re-absorbed by the gender binary, which remains intact and even reinforced by the power of medicine and science.

Conclusions

After analyzing both movies, we can see how the possibility of explicitly addressing transsexuality on screen brings forth a medical paradigm to understand the phenomenon that is based on Harry Benjamin’s work, substituting a more metaphorical approach to the topic—one forced by the censorship. This new pathological framework becomes a new way of explaining transsexuality in Spanish cinema that will coexist with other criminalizing discourse during decades, and is still reproduced in more mainstream movies like 20 Centimeters (dir. Ramón Salazar, 2005), and especially in documentary films like El Sexo Sentido (dir. Manuel Armán, 2014).

The analysis shows a palpable difference between the way the two movies present the issue of transsexuality, both at the level of the character and of their socialization with others and with institutions. Whereas MQS is very ambiguous in the depiction of Adela/Juan and does not specify that the character is transsexual, Cds reproduces very thoroughly the features of Harry Benjamin’s “true transsexual.” However, both movies offer an account of gender transitioning through their main characters and highlight the instability and mutability of the supposedly fixed and monolithic gender binary, while at the same time reinforcing such categories. Not unlike Foucault’s claim that homosexuals became a “species” (1986) when medicine created the term to define same-sex desire, what we witness in Cds is the apparition through explicitness of the transsexual as a medical subjectivity.

MQS uses a more metaphorical approach to gender difference, underscoring the differences of living as a man or a woman and the difficulties and inequalities that it entails. On Cds, however, we see a more explicit representation of a medical discourse that is focused in the difficulties of living as a woman for a biological male or, in short, the transsexual experience, but it fails to subvert the binary that medicine inhabits, reinforcing through diagnosis the gender binary and its stereotypes. Furthermore, it seems that MQS’s plot is constructed around Juan and Isabelita’s love story—which also transitions from a forbidden lesbian love to an accepted heterosexual couple. Instead of focusing on transsexuality (which got Cds banned by the censors), MQS solves the great problem for Franco’s censorship—lesbianism—through Juan’s transition.

The intent of each movie is also debatably different, opposing the critique to gender inequalities of MQS and the pedagogical intention of Cds, highlighted by both the scriptwriters and the critics. While the former presents the different institutions (church, bourgeoisie, sports, etc.) as supporting and encouraging Adela in the beginning, and accepting Juan in the end, Cds is more interested in making the difficulties of transsexual people known. José María/María José has problems with her family, school, love interests and the workplace, and it is not until she completes her transition that she is able to leave all that behind. María José will find peace in the world of entertainment and, avoiding established institutions and meeting other transsexuals, she will finally assert her feminine identity and will become “normal” again, deserving of love and a wedding in white.

The role of medicine is important for both, but while in MQS the presence of medicine is almost anecdotal—and humoristic—Cds is deeply invested in portraying medicine (psychology and surgery above all) as the enabler for a legitimation of María José’s identity and transsexuality. Even so, both movies are doing cultural work in their approach to the topic, which is in itself unprecedented in Spanish cinema. Both question the logic behind an impossible-to-trespass border between the two sides of the gender binary (although they don’t question the binary itself), and both give voice to a very small minority that was, at the time, forming its own identity through diverse discourses. For their rare treatment of the topic, as well as for their elegant depiction (one that does not fall onto blaming/criminalizing the characters, or making fun of them for their situation) these movies are a perfect site of interrogation of the limits of sex, gender, and sexuality, and the ways of understanding any deviance, or lack thereof, from their heteronormative alignment (male/masculine/heterosexual and female/feminine/heterosexual).

I want to dedicate also some words to more recent critiques to the medical paradigm on transsexuality (American Psychiatric
Association, 2013a)\(^9\) and the implications that being a transsexual—wishing for gender confirmation and experience transsexuality in Benjamin’s terms—has regarding gender normativity. First, it needs to be acknowledged that the medical classification of transsexuality opened the door for science and the law to recognize and set the parameters to legitimize gender non-conforming people. These parameters are not immutable, and there exists an international movement against trans pathologization—asking to remove transsexuality from the DSM—that has pushed for change in many countries and is trying to redefine what being transgender means. There have also been revisions of the the legal system in many countries that have gone from not including the surgery as a requirement (as in the United Kingdom in 2005 or Spain in 2007), and even ignoring the psychiatric diagnosis requirement (Argentina in 2012, Denmark and Malta in 2014, and Ireland in 2015). Despite these changes, the medical discursive formation of transsexuality has been instrumental in granting health coverage to transsexual people, protecting them legally, recognizing their transitions and even allowing them to coalesce around the transsexual identity for improving the rights of the community.

Finally, I want to address the critiques that attack transsexuals for their reinforcement of gender stereotypes, because of their simplification of the complicated structures at play. If the one discourse on transsexuality (“man/woman trapped in the wrong body”) is so pervasive, the legal and medical frameworks that force and privilege this unique narrative are, at least partly, to blame. Recent research on the topic shows how some trans people have used the narrative as “strategic essentialism” to be able to access the necessary treatment to live up to their gender identity (Missé & Coll-Planas, 2010). In the same book, the authors overview as well the different strategies used by activists in Spain to resist the normative understanding of transsexuality and the struggle for transgender de-pathologization. Ignoring those acts of resistance, which also come from within the transgender community, and the social pressure to conform to the “true transsexual” narrative is, indeed, reductive of the myriad different ways of living a transgender identity. With all the different ways of being transgender (one of which is medical transsexuality) and of transitioning between genders, one can only hope that Spanish cinema will continue fulfilling its task as facilitator in these social negotiations of what is acceptable or not. Hopefully in the future we will be able to see other new (and coexisting) discourses on the issue emerge in the public arena of the media, so the social understanding of deviation from the sexual norm becomes more inclusive, tolerant and open to changes—which history tells us, is unavoidable.

\(^9\) In the last revision of the DSM, the previous diagnosis on “gender identity disorder” has been changed to “gender dysforia,” which “is the presence of clinically significant distress associated with the condition.” This was done to reduce the stigma attached to mental “disorders” while shifting the focus of the diagnosis from the features of the patient to the suffering this condition causes, if any. De-pathologization movements have criticized this step as insufficient. The debate is ongoing due to the limits to the access to healthcare and surgery if there is no medical condition to back the patient up.