

THE RADIO IN SPAIN: EUROPEAN APPEARANCE, FRANCO'S LEGACY

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Abstract

The democratisation of media depends not only on legal reforms and economic changes introduced into their structure, but also the biasing effect the dominant political culture can exert in this process. As seen in the Spanish radio industry, changes made since the beginning of the political transition period are purely formal because they remain deep traits inherited from the Franco dictatorship such as clientelism and political instrumentalisation. This article analyses the evolution of private radio and relates the survival of typical values of the dictatorship with the persistence of the political culture of Francoism, accepted and internalised by the new democratic regime.

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Introduction

The Spanish radio industry and the media system in general have undergone an intensive adaptation process that has taken place alongside the transition from a long dictatorship to a pluralist democracy; a process driven by the intention to be on an equal footing with neighbouring countries and join European organisations. In fact, in barely two decades, censorship, the public television monopoly and the dominance of the State as the main communication group have given way to a media system characterised by high levels of pluralism and freedom (Gunther, Montero and Wert 2000). With democracy, a “vigorous and competitive media industry” has been established (Sanders and Canel 2004, 198) in which the presence of foreign capital is increasingly significant, to the point of controlling or being present in the main groups.

In this general context, the evolution of the Spanish radio industry demonstrates a rapid adaptation to democracy and to the European standards of corporate operations but, at the same time, characteristics of the Franco political culture such as clientelism and political instrumentalisation remain. “As a consequence of this process, the principles of neo-liberalism and deregulation were assumed with minimal debate” (Bonet and Arboledas 2011, 41). European equivalence coexists with remnants of the Franco past because “fast-paced industrialization and spectacular market growth have failed to cut the umbilical cord that has traditionally tied media organizations to the state” (Papatheodorou and Machin 2003, 33). The strong political alliance held by the main conglomerates is one of the characteristics of the media system and is related to political clientelism (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Hallin and Papatheodorou 2002).

The transition and democratisation processes show that “neither law nor economic structure necessarily produces a media-led enlightenment” (Price and Rozumilowicz 2002, 256). A cultural change is also needed; a political culture of democracy and a different value system; but “politicians, civil society and media practitioners need time — measured in decades — to institutionalize the values and standards of consolidated democracy” (Jakubowicz 2008, 109). From this perspective, to understand the case of Spain, it seems relevant to relate the democratisation of the media system to the political culture promoted by the new regime. It involves verifying if the legal and economic changes recorded are inspired by democratic values or, on the contrary, if they correspond to the old clientelist practices of the dictatorship. In order to do so, the theoretical framework chosen is based on the traditional studies about the democratisation of the media, reinterpreted in light of the extensive scientific literature regarding clientelism and the political culture.

The aim of the present work is to analyse the evolution of the Spanish radio industry from the Franco dictatorship until Spain’s complete integration into Europe, and focuses in particular on the private sector to demonstrate that clientelism and political instrumentalisation are not only observed in public broadcasting, as is commonly thought.

The most appropriate research method is the case study (Yin 2009, 2): “In general, case studies are the preferred method when (a) “how” or “why” questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context”; in this case the chosen

object is radio. The dual Francoist model did not exist in Europe, except in Portugal, and radio is the only medium that has maintained into democracy a structure that is the legacy of the dictatorship, which also serves as a model for the authorisation of private television in which a certain clientelism and political instrumentalisation is also observed (Fernández-Quijada and Arboledas 2013).

We argue that the transformation recorded in this period is merely formal, and that the changes did not affect the latent structures inherited from the dictatorship on account of the dominance of the political culture of the Franco regime, a culture that managed to make the Franco regime a way of life of Spaniards (López Pina and L. Aranguren 1976).

Theoretical Framework: Democratisation of the Media

The relation between the media, democracy and democratisation is complex and interdependent. There is general consensus regarding the “important or pivotal impact” or the “vital role” played by the media in democratisation processes and in democratic institutions (Randall 1998; Jakubowicz and Süskösd 2008). The media are sensitive indicators regarding the nature of the changes adopted by political regimes (Sparks 2011).

In several empirical studies, certain common tendencies have been observed, such as a greater contribution by the media to democratisation in the first phase of transition and more ambiguous activity in the consolidation phase, which supports the thesis of different phases (Randall 1998). The phase model follows the proposal made from political science and is useful because it can be used to determine what types of reform are most useful for reinforcing democratic values (Price, Rozumilowicz and Verhulst 2002).

Sparks (2008; 2011) meanwhile considers that the traditional focus of political science known as transitology is in crisis because it assumes that transitions have a definite end, which is none other than to become democracies like the United States and the countries of northern Europe; and because it is only concerned with political change and deliberately excludes references to social change or socio-economic relations. Sparks proposes the alternative theory of the continuity of elites, a theoretical model that emphasises social continuity in transitions rather than assuming that they are all essentially democratisation processes.

Social change is also the focus chosen by several authors (Jakubowicz 2001; Splichal 2001; Jakubowicz and Süskösd 2008) to analyse the reform processes in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe (ECE). Adopting the “path dependence approach,” comparative models or the Tarde theory, these authors highlight that changes in media systems form part of a systemic social transformation.

Jakubowicz and Süskösd (2008, 35) sustain that “a socio-centric approach to the media is by far preferable to a media-centric approach ... to aid our understanding of why media system evolution and democratization in post-communist countries is the complex, multidimensional and prolonged process it is.” For these authors, what has happened in these countries is something more than a continuity of elites: multiple transformations and within them a certain degree of continuity of elites. In the media area, the reforms have followed three models: idealist (based on a radical view of direct and participative communicative democracy); mimetic (seeking to transfer the Western media system with its free press and dual radio-television);

atavistic (the new power maintains the control or influence over the media in a practically identical way to that of the past). In fact, what is observed is a mixture of both models: the mimetic predominates in countries where democratisation has advanced the most and the atavistic is most prominent in less democratic countries.

The gradual expansion of the mimetic model responds to such factors as the predominance of neoliberal arguments associated to globalisation and the European Union's pressure to accept new members. The mimetic orientation is linked to the theory proposed by Splichal (2001), which suggests that a change of an imitative nature has been imposed on the media systems of ECE countries and he adds: "The imitative nature of the newly emerging systems may represent an immense obstacle to the development of more democratic systems in the region" (Splichal 2001, 35). This author distinguishes a series of trends – denationalisation and privatisation, commercialisation, inter or transnationalisation and "cross-fertilisation" – that imitate western systems, and others – renationalisation and ideological exclusivism – that copy the past.

Cross-fertilisation or "Italianisation" shows that the new media systems in ECE countries share some typical traits of the pluralist-polarised or Mediterranean model described by Hallin and Mancini (2004): high political parallelism, major political instrumentalisation of the audiovisual media, bias in the press and weak professionalisation of journalism.

So, the desired goal of "Westernising" new media systems has in many countries ended up being more of a "Mediterraneanisation" (Jakubowicz and Süskösd 2008). This result explains why, in reality, there is no single Western or European model and why mere imitation is insufficient because the changes in media systems are only a part of systemic social transformations. The democratisation of the media requires an "enabling environment" (Jakubowicz and Süskösd 2008, 10) and this concept should be associated to a truly democratic political culture as an absolutely essential requisite.

Neither new laws, nor reforms to economic and political structures, are enough to democratise the media. New values, behaviours and attitudes are necessary. In short, a new political culture, although its maturation demands long periods of time (Jakubowicz 2001; Price, Rozumilowicz and Verhulst 2002; Jakubowicz and Süskösd 2008).

The literature on transitions places Spain among the countries where the media has exercised a favourable influence in the democratisation process (Gunther and Mughan 2000). "The press played an outstanding role in the Spanish transition to democracy. As a collective, the press gave decisive assistance to the political authorities in favour of peaceful reform of the system" (Montero, Rodríguez-Virgili and García Ortega 2008, 18) but the persistence of factors typical of the Franco regime places the new media system within the Mediterranean model.

Political Clientelism

Clientelism is practically a universal phenomenon as it has demonstrated a huge capacity to adapt to all types of political, economic and cultural contexts and to all types of regimes, from democracies to dictatorships. This multiplicity renders it a confusing and controversial term despite the numerous attempts to define and specify it. Originally, clientelism was used to describe the relations established in

rural and traditional societies between an individual of high social standing – patron – and his followers – clients. It was a dyadic, hierarchical, asymmetric, voluntary and reciprocal relationship (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Hicken 2011). This understanding proved to be inadequate when, from the nineties onwards, political science studies demonstrated the existence of clientelist relations in industrialised countries.

Since then an abundance of studies on clientelism and a restatement of clientelist practices has been observed. In the democratic context, clientelism is defined as a symmetrical, intermittent, rational-instrumental relation mediated by brokers (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). According to Hicken (2011, 297), “the current phase of scholarship explicitly aims to build and test generalizable arguments about the causes and consequences of clientelism.” Instead of the presence-absence dichotomy, these studies seek rather to understand the patterns of clientelist exchanges, a perspective shared by the present work. Furthermore, there is increasing literature on clientelism understood as an informal system compared to formal institutions. In this vein, clientelist practices tend to be related with corruption, nepotism and other practices that go against the essence of democracy and appear alongside other forms such as patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 2002).

In the field of communication, political-media clientelism is a specific type of exchange by means of which the political power provides goods in exchange for editorial support. Studies dedicated to specifically analysing clientelist practices in the media system are not abundant, despite Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) already highlighting the usefulness of this concept. Soon afterwards, Hallin and Mancini (2004) included clientelism among the elements defining the polarised pluralist or Mediterranean model and, since this work, there have been various analyses on those media systems in which clientelism appears as one of the distinctive or dominant elements (Fox and Waisbord 2002; Jakubowicz and Süskösd 2008).

In Spain, patrons and clients have played an important role since the 19th century. As several surveys have proved, clientelist structures have demonstrated their tremendous ability to adapt to all types of political regimes (Robles Egea 1996), and with the new democratic system a modern clientelism has developed (Cazorla 1992), present, for example, in the distribution of jobs and state resources (Hopkin 2001; Curto Grau et al. 2011) and which tends to be related to corruption (Máiz 2005).

Political Culture

In his analysis of clientelism, corruption and organised crime, Caciagli (1996) maintains that clientelism is a way of being in politics, a type of political culture. As occurs with clientelism, political culture is a controversial concept; used in different contexts and with various meanings, it has been subjected to continuous debates, criticism and restatements (Almond and Verba 1980; Lane 1992; Wilson 2000). According to Wilson (2000) there are two theoretical trends: that based on the individual and drawing inspiration from the psychological tradition and that which emphasises the group and is based on the anthropological tradition. Moreover, political culture has become a sort of border concept in the field of social science; originating from political science, the concept has facilitated new approaches in cultural studies and in history.

As Lane (1992, 364) points out, “what political culture has always implicitly promised was that it would help observers to understand what made Russians

behave differently from, say, the English.” From the field of history this concept – which is used as a reference for the present work – has been rewritten and expanded in such a way that political culture is not only a group of values, but it also includes philosophical principles, historical references, a general view of the world and a global model of society, forming a coherent whole that will last over time. Furthermore, this trend has confirmed the existence of a plurality of political cultures at a given time and in a specific country (Cabrera 2010).

The concept of political culture has had a notable influence in Spain. During the democratic transition it was already a relevant instrument in academic reflection and in the strategies of the heirs of the Franco regime and some opposition groups (Morán 2011). Since then, a dual-natured political culture is observed in which moderation blends with the aspiration for social change; a culture with a deep anti-political tradition and a high legitimacy of the new democracy; in short, a “conjunction of tradition and innovation” (Benedicto 2004, 292). These characteristics can also be observed in the socio-economic culture where a hybrid character prevails among the values corresponding to the liberal and statist models (Bericat 2003).

The Media System and the Model of Franco Radio

Censorship, the monopoly of television, and state ownership of dozens of newspapers, radio stations and other publications characterised the Franco dictatorship. The regime allowed private press and radio but guaranteed its control over the same by ensuring that the owners were proven loyalists to the dictator. It was a media system with few financial resources, closed to foreign investment and basically dedicated to propaganda.

Unlike the usual public monopolies in Europe, Spain developed a radio system based on the coexistence of public and private radio stations. For decades, the Franco regime formed this dual or mixed model by means of the juxtaposition of legislative and administrative rules, the discretionary granting of licences, favouritism and the control of property and contents. Franco distributed the radio stations between his loyal groups – the single party, the official unions and the church– and he did so by following one of his defining characteristics: a balancing act so that no-one would obtain sufficient support and everyone would depend on his figure. He even used his own family to create new radio stations and to counteract the power of those who may have felt more influential.

The Franco regime developed public radio and television as instruments of the political-propagandistic machinery and subjected them to strict control through censorship and the appointment of their managers, “as a business, radio was based on political criteria of influence and ideological continuity rather than financial criteria. This was the case for private and public radio alike, because the latter also thrived on advertising” (Bonet and Arboledas 2011, 41). This control of private radio continued until the democracy due to a decision made some months before General Franco died. In 1975 the State accepted the donation of a number of shares that made up 25 percent of the capital of the main private radio stations. Despite being deemed a “pure and simple donation,” there were previous negotiations between the government and the private companies affected. In short, this operation can be interpreted as a way of companies ensuring the continuity of business and of the political influence and as a guarantee of ideological continuity.

Media Reform and Democratic Model

Like the Francoist political institutions, the media system was gradually dismantled: the obligation to connect with public radio news broadcasts was eliminated in 1977 and the new radio and television law was passed in 1980; the dictator had died in 1975.

Other major reforms were the closure or sale of the state press, a process that ended in 1984 and left the press exclusively in private hands, the authorisation of foreign investments in the media in 1986, following entry in the EU, and the granting of private television channels in 1989, extending the dual model that already existed for radio. In this new context, the laws guaranteed press freedom and the right to rebuttal, and pluralism figured as the basic precept of the political system.

Democratic governments imitated the model of their European neighbours for since the seventies the idea had been imposed of Europeanising Spain as opposed to Francoist isolationism and autarchy. Thus, privatisation, liberalisation, concentration, deregulation and commercialisation were the principles that guided the reforms and that were already being applied in generalised fashion under the predominance of neoliberalism.

In turn, several Latin American countries also initiated their transitions through processes of privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation that favoured control over the market and the creation of large conglomerates, although the democratisation of the media was still held to be a pending issue (Fox and Waisbord 2002).

In summary, the democratisation process of the Spanish radio was confined to reorganising public radio stations and revalidating the distribution of licences handed down by the Franco era. The acceptance of neoliberal trends promoted the deregulation and concentration. "The final convergence towards a model based on private ownership and market logic cannot be understood without this process of reforms which, on the Iberian Peninsula, adopted its most radical formula: so-called 'savage deregulation'" (Arboledas and Bonet 2013, 220). Regulation also took place via a juxtaposition of rules and decrees. In addition, the distribution of political power between towns, autonomous regions and the central government – in an almost federal model – facilitated the existence of public radio stations in each of these political-administrative levels at the same time that it granted regional governments the power to award licences to the private sector.

The democratic regime implemented a model that left the control of public audiovisual media in the hands of the government and the parliamentary majority of the moment. The national and regional public radio and television stations are characterised by politicisation, political instrumentalisation, scarce professional qualifications and the lack of independence of the directors and the controlling bodies.

In the private sector, the democratic governments confirmed the Franco operators, and not only did they subject them to purges, but they granted new licences to old Franco families such as the Rato, Machado, Hervada and Ruiz-Cortina. At the same time, the abovementioned free transfer of shares, signed during the end of the Franco regime, was maintained until the mid-nineties and that situation was used to obtain a similar editorial line in the affected stations, as occurred with the UCD government (Unión de Centro Democrático, Union of the Democratic

Centre) and the main private company: Cadena SER (Fernández and Santana 2000). Like the Franco regime, the political parties used the formula of the administrative concession to distribute licences between friends, relatives and activists; they used figureheads and fostered the creation of shell companies to hide the true owners. In this context, radio concessions became an exchange currency between governments and media companies by means of typically clientelist relations. A brief chronological overview shows these practices.

First Concessions: Democracy Prolongs the Franco Regime

The granting of licences is based on the system known as “beauty contest,” a “comparative tender” that includes a committee which establishes criteria. A national technical plan is developed through which the number of available frequencies and their geographical distribution is established; then a public competition is called and the concessions are granted to the applicants in a discretionary manner. Licences were distributed in 1979 (300), 1989 (352), 1997 (350) and 2006 (886).

In 1979 the UCD government – composed of an amalgam of groups from the Franco regime and centre-right reformists – called a competition to grant 300 licences. The first frequencies were awarded in December 1981 and the government was highly criticised by the opposition who claimed a lack of transparency and parliamentary control, arbitrariness and string pulling, as high civil servants and staff associated with the presidency of the government benefitted companies that were considered to be close such as Antena 3 Radio, Radio 80 and Rueda Rato. The method followed by the UCD could be interpreted as a remnant of the dictatorship, especially when several high government officials came from the Franco era. However, at the end of 1982, the government of Catalonia, controlled by CiU (Convergència I Unió, Convergence and Union) – a centre-right nationalist coalition, led by a well-known anti-Franco activist, Jordi Pujol – granted 28 licences following the same model.

In 1984 the regional government of Andalusia, controlled by the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party), granted 37 licences. Almost one third of the total – 12 concessions – were distributed between figureheads, socialist supporters or members with the aim of creating a channel related to the PSOE, as opposition groups in the Andalusian parliament reported. These 12 licences ended up being incorporated into the Rueda Rato by means of the agreement reached between figureheads of the PSOE and the Rato family. Rueda Rato was founded through the concessions awarded by General Franco to one of the families who had supported him since the military revolt: the Rato-Figaredo family.

Those people acting as figureheads of the PSOE in the operation related to the radio stations were also linked to the purchase of several pro-Franco newspapers privatised from 1984 onwards. A high financial PSOE official in Andalusia, José M. Martínez Rastrojo, reported that a scheme existed around the newspapers and radio stations, protected by the socialist leaders and related to the funding of the party. More specifically, some of the people belonging to this web were condemned after the legal investigation regarding what was known as the “Filesa case,” illegal PSOE funding that was uncovered in the nineties.

Other Expansions: The Model Continues

The second expansion of Spanish private radio took place through the technical plan of 1989, which considered the distribution of 352 new FM licences. What is most notable about that competition was that the PSOE decided to use this plan to create a large related radio network, following the same methods used five years previously in Andalusia. It was known as “Operación Arco Iris” (Operation Rainbow) and was run by a group comprising financial PSOE officials and people close to the vice-president of the government at the time, Alfonso Guerra. This operation was also linked to the illegal funding of the PSOE through the Filesa affair.

The PP (Partido Popular, People’s Party), a formation uniting all the centre-right, won the general elections in 1996 and one year later approved the distribution of 350 new FM licences. The PP justified this expansion by the need to provide a plural and balanced offer, since in previous years phenomena of a concentration of radio stations had occurred. PP leaders had harshly criticised the concessions granted years beforehand by the PSOE but used the same procedure. An example was in Galicia where the PP government awarded 29 frequencies to related companies and individuals.

The PSOE won the general elections in 2004 and decided to expand private radio through the distribution of 886 new FM licences, claiming the need to increase independence, increase plurality and bring an end to the irregular situation of 1,600 radio stations without any concession. The allocation process had not ended in 2013. It is worth highlighting the case of Catalonia.

The awarding that took place in Catalonia is notable because, for the first time, the concessions were granted by an independent authority: the Consell de l’Audiovisual de Catalunya (Catalan Audiovisual Council, CAC) and not by the government of the time —in this case composed of socialists, former communists and left-wing nationalists. More than half of all the frequencies were distributed between three Catalan communication companies and the Catholic clergy in the Catalan sphere. State journalistic groups that had stood out for their criticism of Catalan nationalism were not included in the distribution. These media interpreted the CAC allocations as a punishment to independent communication groups and a reward for the complacency of other companies.

The use of radio licenses to benefit associate entrepreneurs or their distribution in accordance with biased criteria is a common practice in ECE countries. “Even the licensing of new broadcasting stations was often much more a party-political decision than the result of identifying the needs and interests of publics, e.g., through public hearings, as practised in some Western countries. Rather, channels were allocated based on the selection of the most appropriate (or highest) bidder” (Splichal 2001, 44); and also in Latin America, where Fox and Waisbord (2002, 10) coined the concept of “electronic clientelism” to describe the phenomenon.

The discretionary distribution of licences helped to create related networks and also influenced the definition of the media system promoted by the democracy. During the decade of the eighties, the radio was a link to private television for journalistic groups. The most notable case was that of Antena 3, which was founded as a radio channel but with the ultimate goal of entering into the television business, and in 1989 it obtained one of the three licences granted by the socialist govern-

ment, which distributed the other two to related groups. Successive governments have encouraged the concentration of broadcasters and the integration of radio in large multimedia groups.

The radio industry carried out this role due to the successive reforms of the limits to the concentration. In 1979 the UCD established that only one radio licence could be controlled in the same coverage area. The PSOE changed the law in 1987 and stated that two FM licences and one AM licence could be controlled in the same coverage area. In 2005 another PSOE government approved that up to five licences could be controlled in one same coverage area, a decision that was interpreted as a new case of favouritism towards the PRISA group, a traditional ally of the PSOE.

Discussion: Franco's Legacy in the Democratic Radio

According to Jakubowicz (2001, 72), the “de-monopolisation, autonomisation, decentralisation and democratisation of the media, and the professionalisation of journalism are required as a minimum for qualitative change in the media system, compared to the communist period.” Legal reforms, and changes to political institutions and economic structures, lead us to state that Spanish democracy complies with these requirements but, in actual fact, the mimetic orientation has veered towards the Italian model. Like in ECE countries, the system has been Italianised (Jakubowicz and Süskösd 2008); it is no coincidence that Berlusconi was the owner of the first Spanish television group (Mediaset), that there is a major presence of Italian capital in the other television group (De Agostini) and that RCS Mediagroup is the owner of the second most widely read national newspaper, *El Mundo*.

Meanwhile, and in reference to Latin America, Waisbord (2011, 109) sustains that “Western blueprint of media democratization awkwardly fits with the history of media politics in Latin America.” In his opinion, “there is a weak tradition of constitutional rule as countries have been subjected to cycles of authoritarianism and democracy. Instead, there is a strong tradition of unchecked government intrusion on media affairs, and the utilization of government-owned media as political patronage and propaganda.” A model that would be closer to that of Mediterranean media systems.

The arrival of left-wing leaders has opened a new reform process in the region inspired by the idea of democratising access and by the voices in the media environment, and which has been vehemently rejected by the major conglomerates (Kitzberger 2012).

Italianisation is related with the survival of factors associated to the atavistic orientation and that are not situated either in the legal framework or on an institutional level, but in the area of attitudes, values and behaviours, i.e. political culture. As sustained by Gunther and Mughan (2000), an interactive relation is observed between the macro-level conditions (institutional structure and formal regulation) and micro-level variables (values and beliefs). In ECE countries, meanwhile, as Jakubowicz and Süskösd (2008, 20) point out, one may observe “a typical regional blend being political elites using “mimetic” discourses, while engaging in “atavistic” actions of behaviour.”

The social transformation that facilitates the democratisation of the media requires:

the existence of civil society and an independent public sphere; an established role for public opinion in public life; a willingness to de-politicize important areas of social life; some accepted notion of the public interest, trust in and acceptance of public broadcasting regulation to serve public interest; and the emergence of journalistic professionalism based on a notion of public service (Price and Rozumilowicz 2002, 259-260).

In terms of public media, Jakubowicz (2008, 109) stresses that their independence “depends on the degree of consolidation of democracy and even more so on the concomitant political culture.” Political culture would therefore be a substantial element of the “enabling environment” that facilitates the existence of free and independent media. Jakubowicz adds that it takes decades to institutionalise this culture.

Spanish radio can be taken as a good example of the hybrid model that combines mimetic and atavistic orientations; where a formally democratic macro-level is interrelated with a micro-level in which certain features of the past still persist.

The theory of the continuity of elites defended by Sparks (2008, 2011) could help with an understanding of the democratisation process in Spain. The transition followed the model of agreement between the elites and essentially was a political reform to standardise the democratic regimes in Europe. The memory of the civil war between 1936 and 1939, the fear of a new clash and the aversion to any risk facilitated a national reconciliation policy reflected in consensus. The result was that the main civil and military institutions handed down by the dictatorship were not purged. This non-purge of the Franco elements was reinforced in the eighties with the handing over of the economic management to people who were already key figures in the economic policy during the last years of the regime (Elorza 1996). This process facilitated the close bond between political power and economic power and its transfer into the area of the media system. In Latin America, the social and economic arrangements of the dictatorship have survived into the democratic era; in these countries, political power and economic power are still mutually dependent whether under dictatorial or democratic governments. “We might call this relationship between political and economic power ‘political capitalism,’ in that there is a mutual dependency between the wielders of these distinct kinds of social power” (Sparks 2011, 33).

In those transitions based on incorporation pacts political democracy is only possible at the expense of restricting social and economic transformations. In fact, on the pretext of achieving the consolidation of the democracy as soon as possible, the political parties accelerated the institutionalisation of the new regime and excluded other social actors until they obtained a hegemonic role in political life (Pérez Díaz 1991; Benedicto 2008).

The continuance of old hierarchical and centralist political cultures in the parties, their oligarchic operation and the high degree of monopolisation that they exercise in political life, and the inexistence of a concept of public space – a remnant of the Franco culture – are factors that contribute to the dominance of a vision of the citizen that is very close to the idea of a subject, as occurred in the dictatorship. The consequence of all of this is the “politicisation” of the democratic institutions; this partisan occupation is relating with low quality democracy and corruption.

In this way, a society has been created in which citizens are mere spectators before the power of professional politicians and their partisan clientele; where the definition of the law is ambiguous and its application is erratic or discriminatory, and cheating becomes a normal social expectation; where decrees and rules adapt to the crossing between individual or partisan interests and where the resources of the State are distributed in exchange for votes. This is what Pérez Díaz (1991, 29) called “neoclientelism,” which is endangering the institutionalisation of democracy, a situation that this author relates to the operation of political parties; whereas, for Nieto (1997) the partitocracy that has become established over the years is a modern version of the former Spanish clientelism.

Since the first years of the transition a party clientelism (Cazorla 1992) formed which linked with the tradition of nineteenth-century patronage and the clientelist practices of the Franco regime (Robles Egea 1996). According to Elorza (1996), a continuity can be observed between the Franco regime and democracy in certain elements such as the links between politics and finance, the lack of transparency in public administration and the different ways of infiltrating into the power. The weak foundations of the political culture of the left in Spain (Benedicto 2008) and the replacement of revolutionary utopia with pragmatism and the conservation of power (Elorza 1996) resulted in a concept of the machinery of the State that did not differ greatly from the Franco regime. The result was a rapid replacement of the clientelist networks tied to political friends. This phenomenon was not new in Spanish history as something similar had already occurred after the civil war, when the former patronage infiltrated in the new Franco regime to maintain and reproduce its privileges (Cazorla Sánchez 1998).

Behind the politicisation and clientelism underlies a political culture that has formed the values and attitudes of various generations and could be interpreted almost as an extension of the dictator’s personality. “*Haga como yo, no se meta en política*” (“Do as I do, don’t get involved in politics”) is one of Franco’s famous phrases; a phrase that helps to understand the mistrust and wariness towards politics that still prevails in Spanish society.

In this authoritarian, paternalist and repressive regime, compliance, deceitfulness and fraud were fundamental; a lot of people found themselves forced into silence and servility, when not seduced by corruption (López Pina and Aranguren 1976). Corruption was a structural element of the Franco regime; protected by the power, it began with the post-war black market and gradually became more sophisticated and hidden behind large businesses of the capitalist development policy. According to Preston (2002), Franco thought that anyone could be bought and did not think that the notorious cases of corruption in his era were serious. It was worse to spread them via the press.

In this way, the democratic system has changed laws and institutions but a sociological and psychological Franco regime continues that can especially be detected in economic practices and social behaviours; for example, clientelist networks and their connection to corruption. The general contempt towards the Rule of Law and legal procedures (Ugarte 2006) and the systematic confusion among the public and private sectors that promotes the use of state resources under individual or partisan criteria also form part of this legacy from the Franco regime. A consequence is the occupation of the administrations from which recommendations, favours,

jobs, competitions or licences are distributed (Elorza 1996); daily practices of the Franco regime that the democratic parties apply in a widespread manner. Political clientelism and corruption are different phenomena although in many cases they are related (Caciagli 1996; Máiz 2005), as is the case precisely with the Spanish radio. Both cases involve practices that are so rooted and interiorised in society that they are widely accepted.

The configuration of Spanish radio during the democracy must be placed in the context of this political culture that is deeply rooted in Spanish society, a culture in which clientelism appears as a transverse element that pervades all types of relations, especially the close ties between the political power and the media system. During the transition the media supported the political elite that favoured the democracy. The scant development of journalistic professionalism can be related to this support. This complicity resulted in a network that was prone to the exchange of favours, and which contributed to partisanship to the detriment of autonomous and rigorous information. Furthermore, the successive governments – controlled by the heirs of the Franco regime between 1976 and 1982 and by the socialists between 1982 and 1996 – were more concerned about maintaining the control of the media than about democratising the structure left by the dictatorship.

Clientelist relationships were gradually woven between the political power and the communication groups and with time they acquired such a degree of affinity that the political-economic conflicts of the nineties were also to a large extent media wars. The parties even led these battles in defence of their related media to EU organisations (Miert 2000). These clientelist relations generate such deep bonds of affinity that even the journalists assume the ideological inclination and partisanship of their companies (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

Conclusions

Reforms to media systems cannot be understood without considering how they form part of broad and complex social transformations involving interaction between political, economic and cultural factors. The evolution of Spanish radio from the Franco dictatorship to democracy shows what an important role political culture plays.

The media democratisation process in Spain can formally be situated among the countries that have followed a “mimetic orientation.” The reforms have facilitated de-monopolisation, decentralisation and liberalisation but have been insufficient to achieve autonomisation, democratisation and journalistic professionalisation because, in reality, the “atavistic orientation” has been imposed. This is the Italianisation of new media systems, a phenomenon shared with a large number of ECE countries.

The successive governments introduced a legal and institutional framework that is equivalent to that of European neighbours but the daily practices follow the patterns inherited from the Franco regime. Clientelism and partisan interests have determined the configuration of the radio system in the democracy, following similar guidelines to those used during the dictatorship. This is so because the political elite has shared one same political culture; a dual culture where the remnants of the dictatorship are apparent on a daily basis because they are more than just a scale of values; they are a way of life (López Pina and Aranguren 1976).

Like in other countries that have come out of dictatorships, the Spanish democratisation process confirms that political and economic reforms are insufficient to reach the democratic ideal of free and independent media, since it requires modifying the political culture and scale of values. However, the oligarchic functioning of political parties and their activity in institutions and in political life not only facilitates the appearance of this new culture, but it encourages the continuity of old guidelines that are closer to the idea of subjects than of citizens. Democratisation also confirms that legal or institutional changes can take place in a short period of time but the modifications affecting the political culture of a country are much slower, to the point that four decades after the death of General Franco the marks of his regime remain in institutions and in the daily life of Spaniards through phenomena such as clientelism and corruption.

Lastly, the influence of clientelism on the configuration of the radio during the democratic period and the points in common with the infiltration of the former strong-arm networks during the first years of the Franco regime suggest the convenience of systematically studying the legacy of the dictatorship and its rather smooth integration into the structure that has been generated since the transition.

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