UNCIVIL DISCOURSES AND POLARISATION ON PRIME TIME POLITICAL TALK SHOWS.

Discursos incívicos y polarización en las tertulias políticas de prime time.

Javier Pérez-Sánchez.
Universidad Europea de Madrid, España.
javier.perez@universidadeuropea.es
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5571-9835

Àlvar Peris-Blanes.
Universidad de València, España.
alvar.peris@uv.es
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2323-2766.

RESUMEN

Los talk shows políticos han sido una de las herramientas más relevantes en la comunicación política desde su irrupción en la televisión estadounidense a finales del siglo XX (Baum & Jamison, 2006). El auge del «infoentretenimiento» (Thussu, 2007) en aquellos años provocó una alianza entre información política y entretenimiento que tradicionalmente se había abordado por separado (Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001). La necesidad de partidos y dirigentes de acercar su mensaje a amplios sectores de la población y la voluntad de las cadenas de televisión de buscar formatos baratos que reportaran buenos resultados de audiencia, ha hecho que, desde entonces, estos espacios se hayan consolidado plenamente en la mayoría de las cadenas alrededor del mundo, contribuyendo a dar forma a lo que se ha conceptualizado como «política pop» (Mazzoleni & Sfardini, 2009) e incluso como «polientretenimiento» (Berrocal, 2017).La conclusión más relevante del análisis es que La Sexta Noche y, en general, los tertulias políticas emitidas en la televisión española, como consecuencia de sus características formales, se convierten en actores decisivos en la promoción de la polarización social y política, así como potenciadores de un debate emotivo y agresivo sobre los asuntos públicos y el sistema democrático que no debemos subestimar.

Palabras claves: Tertulias políticas; televisión; polarización; discursos incívicos; toxicidad.

ABSTRACT

Political talk shows have been one of the most relevant tools in political communication since they burst onto American television at the end of the 20th century (Baum & Jamison, 2006). The rise of «infotainment» (Thussu, 2007) in those years caused an alliance between political information and entertainment that had traditionally been addressed separately (Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001). The need for parties and leaders to bring their message closer to broad sectors of the population and the willingness of television networks to look for cheap formats that would report good audience results, has meant that, since then, these spaces have been fully consolidated in the most networks around the world, contributing to shaping what has been conceptualized as «pop politics» (Mazzoleni & Sfardini, 2009) and even as «politainment» (Berrocal, 2017). The most relevant conclusion of the analysis is that La Sexta Noche and, in general, the political talk shows broadcast on Spanish television, as a consequence of their formal commitment, become decisive actors in the promotion of social and political polarisation, as well as an emotional and aggressive discussion on public affairs and on the democratic system that we should not underestimate.

Keywords: Political talk shows; television; polarisation; uncivil discourses; toxicity.

INCIVILITY, POLARISATION AND MEDIA

Incivility, though expressed in very different ways, has been present in political interactions throughout history (Shea & Sproveni, 2012), but recently there have been numerous studies confirming a growing colonisation of public discourse by such practices and behaviours (Gervais, 2017; Mutz, 2015; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011). This is basically due to the massive use of the Internet and social networks as the preferred places for participating and exchanging opinions on matters of a political nature (Rossini, 2022; Frischlich et al., 2021; Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021; Gervais, 2015; Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014; Borah, 2012). In a way, these studies indicate that, on the one hand, social networks have encouraged deliberative, horizontal practices that have broadened the extent of political participation (Dahlgren, 2005), but on the other, the anonymity they provide, among other reasons, has enabled very high levels of incivility, which brings with it a high degree of dissatisfaction among the participants. There has been an increasing online aggressiveness that can be seen among the political and media elites, especially among those that embrace populism (Ernst et al., 2019; Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017), as well as among citizens and in everyday life (Kenski, Coe & Rains, 2020).

However, incivility is a "notoriously difficult term to define" (Coe, Kenski & Rains: 2014: 660), since there are certain conceptual discrepancies that have yet to be cleared up (Gervais, 2019). If we understand civility to be a communicative practice (Benson, 2011), there is a broad consensus that incivility can be interpreted as a transgression of the communicative norms that such civility is based upon (Kenski, Coe & Rains, 2020; Mütz, 2015; Papacharissi, 2004).

From that perspective, deliberative theory has understood incivility to be a lack of respect and cooperation towards another participant or their arguments in a discussion (Habermas, 1996) and more recent research has defined incivility as a discussion in which a tone is used that is unnecessarily disrespectful towards the forum in which it takes place and towards its participants or topics (Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014). Doubts arise, however, when defining which norms are being transgressed. Muddiman (2017) distinguishes two types of transgression: communication that goes beyond norms in the personal and individual sphere that are related to correctness and courtesy, and communication that attacks collective agreements related to public and democratic values. The author suggests calling the former "offensive discourse" and the latter "hate speech", in that it is an extreme form of anti-civic communication.

Based on these parameters, incivility has been measured in various ways (Sydnor, 2018; Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014). Most studies have conceptualised it as a violation of a discussion and social norms, indicated by the tone of the messages (insults, vulgarity) or how they are expressed (shouting, condescendence). Gervais (2015: 171-172), for example, has categorised it into three big areas: insulting language, where we can find personal attacks or a condescending attitude towards the opponent, among other variables; extreme and hyperbolic language; and histrionic and emotional language, which would include vulgarity. Furthermore, like other authors (Otto, Lecheler & Schuck, 2020), he warns that incivility is found in both linguistic and non-linguistic interactions.

These are valuable attempts to scientifically approximate a concept that is mostly understood as a situational communicative practice, since the norms that determine what is ac-

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas,Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

261

ceptable and what is not are flexible and depend on the context (Rossini, 2022; Otto, Lechler & Schuck, 2020; Muddiman, 2018; Schuck, Vliegenthart & DeVreese, 2016). As a result, an interaction is perceived as uncivil according to the cultural and social environment in which it occurs, to the person who has uttered it (Schmid, Kumpel & Rieger, 2022), the type of expression and even the topic it refers to. To sum up, "incivility is very much in the eye of the beholder" (Herbst, 2010: 3).

Taking these variables into account, the academic debate is set out mainly between authors for whom incivility is not incompatible with democratically relevant political discussion, and those who believe that incivility basically brings with it negative effects for democracy. Among the former, Rossini (2022: 399-400) points out that informal political discussion is a vital component in the everyday life of democratic societies and that, in this sense, there may be expressions or interactions that may be offensive or disrespectful, but in no way do they pose a challenge to pluralism and coexistence. On the contrary, rude and emotional exchange in certain contexts raises attention and interest towards political issues and increases citizens' participation in public debates (Bjarnoe, De Vreese & Albaek, 2019; Brooks & Geer, 2007).

Moreover, according to this stance, such practices in social networks allow citizens to escape from the echo chambers that foster polarisation and social isolation, and can even be seen as entertainment (Sydnor, 2018). For Rossini, however, it is necessary to differentiate between uncivil and intolerant expression, the latter being unacceptable within political discourse because it is contrary to democratic values (2022: 405). Xenophobia, racism, hate speech, threats of violence, homophobia, religious intolerance, offensive stereotypes, attacks on gender, sexual preferences or eco-nomic status, to name a few categories, are such intolerant expressions, which are much more offensive and less susceptible to interpretation than uncivil ones (Gibson, 2007).

As for those who believe that incivility entails negative effects for democracy, they maintain that the widespread lack of civility in public debate today represents a crisis for the free, respectful exchange of ideas and opinions that has been a part of the democratic ideal since the ancient Greeks (Papacharissi, 2004). This "anti-deliberative" trend found in the media, and particularly in the social networks, has very harmful consequences in terms of the quality of debate—which has been described as "unpleasant or toxic" (Anderson et al., 2018)—and, by extension, of democracy. One of the reasons for this is that it generates a loss of trust as regards exchange in public affairs, which can lead to cynicism (Mutz, 2015) and disaffection among citizens towards politics (Mutz & Reeves, 2005). From this perspective, conflict and the incivility among political and media elites is demotivating and reduces participation from people in debates of social and political interest (Gervais, 2017, 2015; Borah, 2013) instead of raising it, though it would be necessary to take into account the context and place in which such interactions occur, since the responses would not always be homogeneous (Otto, Lechler & Schuck, 2020).

But beyond this distancing from issues of a political nature, uncivil discourse produced by the different social classes can also lead to negative affective responses such as anger and polarisation (Suhay, Bello-Pardo & Mauser, 2018; Hwang, Kim, and Huh, 2014; Borah, 2014). According to Waisbord (2020: 250-251), polarisation is a one-dimensional political and communicative strategy that is put forward as an eternal conflict of "us against them" (McCoy et al., 2018). From this stance, polarisation is gene-

INVESTIGACIÓN

rally seen as a challenge to democracy since it encourages extremism in attitudes and politics. A high level of polarisation can give rise to irreconcilable positions, making it difficult for opponents to reach agreements and compromises.

In recent years, several authors have confirmed the rise in social polarisation, which has led to a highly polarised political and electoral system (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). In fact, the triumph of Brexit in the United Kingdom and Donald Trump in the United States, as well as the rise of the extreme right in many countries within and outside Europe (Mudde, 2019), have been interpreted as unmistakable signs of heightening polarisation (Frichlich et al., 2021). Although there are multiple causes that explain the rise of incivility and contemporary polarisation (Fletcher et al, 2020), it seems worthwhile to point out structural factors concerning communication that are related to economic, regulatory and technological matters (Berry & Sobieraj, 2013). The danger of habitual exposure to this uncivil discourse could possibly lead to it becoming normalised (Bilewick & Soral, 2020), which in turn could lead to acceptance and a naturalisation of increasingly polarised societies (Gervais, 2019: 638).

Even so, and as we mentioned at the beginning, incivility is not specifically new in politics, nor in media beyond the social networks. Television content has also been a space for unpleasant, uncivil personal exchanges to develop (Mutz, 2015; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011), though they have not received much attention from an academic point of view. Political talk shows on television, for example, are an ideal place for public debate. Such formats are relevant in articulating the political agenda at a given moment (Kessler & Lachenmaier, 2017), and they are followed the next day by the rest of the media, whether traditional or digital, improving the trust of viewers towards politicians and their parties (Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2016). Moreover, they have large audiences, much bigger than most posts uploaded to social media. Considering that visual incivility is recognised faster and is more provocative and emotional than the textual kind (Schmid, Kumpel & Rieger, 2022), in the following pages we intend to find out whether political talk shows comply with their duty of keeping the population more and better informed or if, on the contrary, they contribute decisively to the polarisation of society through toxic, aggressive exchanges.

To do so, we shall analyse *La Sexta Noche*, the current affairs magazine that includes the main Spanish political debate section in recent years in terms of viewing numbers, broadcast at prime time on Saturdays on La Sexta, a TV channel belonging to one of the two big commercial visual media multinationals in Spain, Atresmedia.

TELEVISION ENTERTAINMENT AND POLITICAL TALKS SHOWS.

Since it emerged in the early 1960s with a key role in contemporary political communication (Mazzoleni, 2010; Norris, 2000), television has strived to be the main mediator between politics and the audience. While organising and communicating electoral campaigns has become more professional with new characters such as political advisers and spin doctors, and as political and electoral marketing has developed and become more sophisticated until reaching maturity in the 1980s (Maarek, 2009), television has emerged as an instrument in a privileged position for transmitting and legitimising political messages, consistent with the importance that image has acquired for electoral success.

The demands and pace of the medium of television have contributed to the search for formulas that go

INVESTIGACIÓN

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas,Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

263

further in the commercialisation and growing "spectacle" of news spaces, especially on private North American television channels (Nichols, 2017). These were to become based on introducing practices and elements from entertainment into the narrative of current affairs, thereby increasing the dosage of show-business involved. In doing so, the "personalisation" (Bennet, 2012) and "dramatisation" of the narratives (Langer, 2000), the fragmentation of the topics and the simplicity and banality of the arguments, all gradually became part of political information on TV. It was a process that would worsen during the 70s in the thick of the economic crisis due to the oil shortage, which affected advertising revenues, and the deregulation of the telecommunications markets that was to become established in the 80s.

This alliance between information and entertainment, which had always been approached separately, was dubbed "infotainment" (Brants, 1998; Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001; Thussu, 2007), and it spread to all channels, whether public or private, first in the United States, then in the rest of the world. "Infotainment" was to be seen first of all by introducing minor news items, the so-called soft news, within traditional news; secondly, via the trend of addressing serious issues of public debate within programmes and formats primarily intended for entertainment, such as magazines and talk shows; and, finally, by appearing in programmes in which reality was de-sanctified and ridiculed through humour and satire (Peris-Blanes et al., 2017). When such spaces have focused primarily on political discourse, they have been categorised as "pop politics" (Mazzoleni & Sfardini, 2009) and even as "politainment" (Berrocal, 2017).

We cannot separate these communication processes from the so-called "emotional turn" (Baum, 2012) that has occurred in the social sciences in general and in political discourse in particular for some time now. One of the most visible consequences of this "emotional" public sphere (Richards, 2010) is the habitual presence of politicians on television entertainment programmes (Peris-Blanes & López-Rico, 2017). But this is not strictly a new phenomenon. Political talk shows have been one of the most relevant tools in political communication since they burst onto American television in the 1980s and 1990s. It was on Oprah Winfrey's talk show where President Bill Clinton played the saxophone live for the first time (Baum & Jamison, 2006). Since then, American politicians, including sitting presidents, have regularly resorted to formats such as the talk show, magazine or late night show. The need for parties and leaders to bring their message to broad sectors of the population, and the channels' willingness to look for cheap formats that give good audience results with which to occupy wide swathes of scheduling at a time of great competition, made it easier for this type of practice to spread to all television channels in a short time.

The political talk show in particular has been a very prolific television sub-genre when it comes to digging deeper into the relationship between politics and entertainment television. It is a flexible, hybrid genre in which information and interpretation become blurred, and in which there is no need for a strict structure or elaborate plot lines. The politicians who appear in these spaces are aware that, as well as transmitting their message, they have to make an effort to show empathy with the audience and to be perceived as an ordinary citizen. It has also been verified that it gives them media attention and above all a digital payback much higher than what can be obtained through traditional rallies, and much more cheaply. Hence, encouraged by their advisers, politicians agree to take part in these "infotainment" programmes because

INVESTIGACIÓN

they provide them with much more relaxed and less combative conversations than interviews with journalists conducted on strictly news programmes (Peris-Blanes & López-Rico, 2017).

In return, they must show a more personal side and talk about aspects of their private life that they would not have previously revealed (Holtz-Bacha, 2003), and that relates them to the celebrities (Wheeler, 2013). Another price that politicians have to pay is the presence of uncivil discourse in many television spaces in which they participate, which makes it difficult to convey ideas in a respectful or serious way (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011). The desire to make programmes that are increasingly attractive to the audience has led most "infotainment" programmes, and especially talk shows (including ones with political content), to tolerate and even encourage uncivil behaviour and attitudes from the participants and presenters, affecting the programme's ultimate tone (Berry & Sobieraj, 2013). The channels understand that polarisation as a political and media strategy gives results. Mostly this is a tense negotiation between the "media rationale" and "political rationale" that can be explained in terms of "mediatisation" (Hepp, Hjarvard & Lundby, 2015; Strömback, 2008; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999), the winner of which is often uncertain.

Also in Spain, a notable increase has been seen in political talk shows on both public and private channels for some time now (Montagut & Carrillo, 2017; Francés & Peris-Blanes, 2017). So much is this the case that they are reproduced on practically all channels, in almost all time slots (morning, afternoon, evening and night) and every day of the week, following very similar guidelines in keeping with the homogenisation of the Spanish television system, marked by a notable business focus and an atavistic fear of innovation and risk (Bustamante, 2014). The "re-politicisation" of Span-

ish society as a consequence of the economic crisis and cases of corruption that have plagued the main political parties (Sánchez-Duarte, 2016), as well as the need to cover many more broadcasting hours at an affordable price with the arrival of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) and its multiple channels since 2010, have all fuelled interest in this type of genre. It is true that talk show formats have ceased to be an essentially low-cost product, especially the ones broadcast at prime time and in the mornings, but without a doubt they continue to be less expensive than fiction and the big entertainment formats such as reality and talent shows (Oliva, 2013).

In recent times, several authors have attempted to establish the genre's characteristic elements (Peris-Blanes & Pérez-Sánchez, 2020; Montagut & Carrillo, 2017), most notably the "personalisation" and "dramatisation" of the political issues addressed. Taking these approaches into account, for years there has been an intense yet contradictory debate among researchers, academics and experts about the value and effects of "infotainment" in general and of political talk shows in particular. There is agreement in pointing out that political and plural debate in the public space is an indisputable exercise in democratic maturity and a central element in consolidating full-fledged citizenry. In this sense, it seems worthwhile to ask whether political talk shows, as they are carried out today, meet that purpose and play an active role in creating an informed citizenry.

For some authors, "infotainment"—and by extension also political talk shows—represent a degradation and trivialisation of information and a strategy for passivity and resignation among citizens (Langer, 2000). They argue that some of the consequences of this are: an increasingly impoverished public agenda that is committed to the anecdotal and the super-

INVESTIGACIÓN

ficial (Blumler, 1999; Abril, 1997), a lowering of journalistic principles and a loss of prestige for current affairs programmes (Redondo and Campos, 2015). For others, introducing political content into entertainment can be "empowering" (Hartley, 2000; Brants, 1998) because it makes it easier for many people not initially interested in such issues to become more informed, share arguments and opinions, and gain awareness of things happening that affect them directly. From such standpoints, political talk shows may serve a democratising purpose and have a liberating, inclusive potential (Harrington, 2008), since they open up public debate to new participants and topics, mitigating the deep disaffection that has been detected towards politics in some sectors, especially among the youngest and least-educated. In order to participate in this debate, we would like to delve deeper into the main political talk show on recent Spanish television in detail.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS.

In order to learn the levels of incivility present in political talk shows, we have made an analysis of *La Sexta Noche* (La Sexta, 2013-2022), a current affairs magazine whose most notable section is the main political talk show run on Spanish television for many years. Broadcast at prime time in Spain on Saturdays from 10:00 p.m. to 02:00 a.m. approximately, the programme has almost always achieved audience numbers above the channel's average, which has made it a very powerful asset for the network from the commercial point of view. As an indication, some of the most relevant examples of data obtained over these years have been the average audiences achieved in the 2014–2015 season, with a 11.5% share of the total TV audience; 8.3% in the 2014–2015 season, and 7.8% in the 2019–2020 season, while the average audience share for the channel in those same

years was 7.4%, 6 .9% and 7.0% respectively. It should be noted, however, that in recent times the audience following fell lower and lower until the format was replaced in September 2022 by similar content.

Moreover, *La Sexta Noche* has unarguably been a benchmark in shaping Spanish public opinion since it was launched, with the country's main political and economic leaders appearing on the show, as well as representatives of social movements and the main civic associations, in addition to countless experts and personalities from the spheres of culture and science. Furthermore, the programme has become a platform for the transformation of recent politics, since it has given a voice from the very beginning to emerging political forces such as Podemos (left-wing) and Ciudadanos (liberals), who have been able to defend their arguments and articulate an alternative stance as opposed to the traditional political parties in Spain such as the PSOE (social democracy) and the PP (conservatives). The visibility that these parties' leaders have attained at prime time has allowed citizens to better understand their stances and ideas, which they have often put forward using emotional and affective strategies shaping their political discourse, beyond matters related to ideology or their manifestos (Casero-Ripollés, Feenstra & Tormey, 2016).

To achieve this aim, this study is set out using a two-fold approach: a quantitative one and a more qualitative one. In the former, several attempts have been made to measure the level of incivility, as mentioned above, especially in the social networks. Taking into account previous studies that have painstakingly addressed this matter (Mutz, 2015; Gervais, 2015; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011; Brooks & Geer, 2007; Mutz & Reeves, 2005), as the point of reference for our own analysis we shall take the categories proposed by Coe, Kenski & Rains

INVESTIGACIÓN

(2014: 661), which have been widely accepted and have even been adapted in other studies (Rossini, 2022), where the tone in which a debate is carried out is a key element in determining the level of incivility (Shea & Sproveni, 2012). These authors propose classifying uncivil messages using five indicators: personal attacks ("name-calling"), which include insults and mockery; attacks on an idea, a plan or an argument; accusing the opponent of lying or distorting reality; profane and vulgar language; and derogatory interactions about how other persons express themselves. This focus of interest is encompassed in the following research hypothesis:

H1: The levels of incivility quantified in the political talk show *La Sexta Noche* are very high, to the point where they influence the debate on public affairs.

In order to respond to this hypothesis, we have prepared a sample that includes all of the programmes of *La Sexta Noche* broadcast during March 2021. This includes four programmes (06/03/21, 13/03/21, 20/03/21, 27/03/21), from which strictly the political talk show sections have been studied, amounting to a total of 413 minutes of the 1,079 minutes counted in total. We believe that we are thus dealing with a sufficiently large sample to quantify the quality of the debate in terms of incivility. The decision was taken to choose the month of March 2021 for the analysis' sample because it was a period with no upcoming elections in Spain and also a period with no major political scandals that might affect public debate, so that it may be considered a "calm" stage from the point of view of ideological or partisan agitation.

According to Mutz (2015), we understand that incivility within audiovisual content should include verbal and linguistic messages as well as non-verbal communication (Gallardo-Pauls, 2018), that is, laughter and other facial or body gestures. In any case, and to help analyse the content, in this study we have restricted ourselves to the verbal or linguistic interactions by the participants in the political talk show. The profile of such regular collaborators is that of journalists specialising in current political affairs, experts and former politicians, with the ability to have discussions with no holds barred, and who do not allow themselves to be intimidated by the "adversary", expressing themselves from a very clear ideological standpoint. The commentators are essential personalities in the success of these programmes, particularly in *La Sexta Noche*. In the case we are dealing with, there are eight commentators on the set: four representing "progressive" stances and four representing "conservative" stances. In the programmes analysed, it is common to see the same people, with small rotations from one week to the next, which indicates that they are acting as permanent collaborators. In this vein, over the 413 minutes analysed, we counted a total of 582 interventions or units of analysis made by these commentators.

To achieve a proper analysis with such a large amount of data, the descriptive statistical method was chosen (Daymon & Holloway, 2011), which enables a global, summarised view of all the sample's data, attaining sufficiently organised and structured information so as to determine the patterns appearing in the different talk show sections broadcast. In order to establish whether there were significant differences found as regards the quantitative results of the uncivil content in the programmes analysed, we deemed it appropriate to carry out an analysis of association among the variables using the Chi-square test. This verification allows us to check not only if there is a statistical association among the variables under study, but also to analyse in which specific categories there is a greater dependent association. The results obtained in the 582 resulting units of

INVESTIGACIÓN

analysis, whether by categories of incivility or in general, have given a relative value extremely close to 0, so we can verify that there is no associated variable in most cases.

On the other hand, and assuming that the results are positive and that uncivil behaviour does indeed occur during the time dedicated to the political talk show within the programme, we asked ourselves whether there are contextual elements that influence such practices and drive the participants to express their interventions in disrespectful or conflictive ways. There is a great deal of literature related to the social networks confirming how the context—such as anonymity, for example—can encourage people to express their opinions in uncivil ways (Otto, Lecheler & Schuck, 2020).

They are structural factors that are doubtless related to the design of the format and which are not exclusive to *La Sexta Noche*, but which are shared by most programmes of these characteristics, not only in Spain but in other Western countries. In order to attempt to respond to this concern, we propose the following research question:

R1: If the political talk show analysed includes a high percentage of uncivil interventions by the participants in the debate, are there contextual elements in the programme, which have to do with its production and staging, that may foster such behaviour and attitudes?

In order to answer this research question, a qualitative analysis has been carried out of the formal elements and audiovisual language of *La Sexta Noche*. This is based on a three-way division found between the physical staging, the framing in the shot, and the multiple shot (Carmona, 1993), with other framings put forward in the stylistic system's synoptic layout in the film form proposed by Bordwell (1995) in a now classic study. This approach makes it pos-

sible to identify the elements that characterise the format and to assess whether they contribute to the development of a complex, respectful debate on the issues dealt with between the different parties or, on the contrary, they encourage the protagonists to simplify and trivialise their interventions, agitating the debate with disrespectful, uncivil behaviour such as insults and personal attacks or a disregard for their opponents' arguments, which, ultimately, could aggravate social and political polarisation.

RESULTS FROM THE STUDY.

As regards presenting the results obtained, the first thing we should point out is the difficulty in determining the number of interventions or units for analysis, since at times the interruptions in speaking time occurred constantly. Furthermore, they are not evenly spread. In fact, out of the 582 interventions accounted for in the four programmes analysed (see Table 1), a little more than 60% of them (350 in total) correspond to commentators from the "conservative" sector, while the other 40% (232) were made by those invited to comment on current affairs from the "progressive" side. This imbalance may be attributable to the programme's presenter, whose performance may be influencing the pluralism of the programmes (Ceron & Splendore, 2018), instead of exercising proper moderation and distributing the intervention time more evenly, as his mission should be.

The other most striking piece of information is without a doubt the extremely high percentage of interventions with elements classified as uncivil compared to the total. According to our calculations, 89% of the 582 interventions carried out contained some type of insult, vulgarity, belittling or something similar (see Table 2). This total percentage is influenced by the percentage obtained by the commentators from the "conservati-

INVESTIGACIÓN

ve" sector, since some uncivil element could be traced in 109% of their interventions. This percentage means that in each and every intervention carried out by this group there was more than one category of incivility. These figures clearly demonstrate the tone with which these people take on this type of exchange, in which belittling prevail

much more than an attempt to maintain a discussion respectful towards those who think differently. Nor is the percentage obtained from the "progressive" side, 60% of the interventions, very positive, since it indicates that emotional and colloquial factors are very much present in both sides.

TABLE 1.

Levels of incivility in the talk show on *La Sexta Noche* (March 2021).

	Number of interventions	"Progressive" sector	"Conservative" sector	Totals
Uncivil elements	Personal attacks (insults and mockery)	45	119	164
	Attacks on an idea, plan, policy or conduct (arguments or perspectives)	16	50	66
	Accusations of the opponent of lying or faking reality	28	55	83
	Profane and vulgar language	27	89	116
	Contempt for how people express themselves or communicate	21	68	89
Total interventions		232	350	582

Source: the authors.

Of all the categories, the category of "Personal attacks (insults and mockery)" stands out with 164 interventions, meaning 28% of the total (see Tables 1 and 2). The number of interventions with these characteristics made by the "conservative" sector is especially striking, with 119, which is 34% of the total interventions made by this group throughout all of the programmes. From the "progressive" side, the interventions found within this category are also the most numerous, with 45, but they account for less than half of those carried out by the "conservative" group, and on many occasions they were a reactive action to the attacks received beforehand. In any case, it is on the whole a very noteworthy amount and one that indicates the level of aggressiveness and virulence experienced during these political discussions. In fact,

insults are considered to be the most uncivil and harmful form of communication (Kenski, Coe & Rains, 2020; Stryker et al., 2016).

The category of "Profane and vulgar language" also stands out, with a total of 116 interventions, meaning 20% of the total (see Tables 1 and 2). On this occasion, we are looking at a habitual practice within the analyses of uncivil discourse, since almost all of the studies confirm that vulgarity and obscenity in tone are an inseparable element of incivility in exchange in public affairs (Kenski, Coe & Rains, 2020; Gervais, 2015; Berry & Sobieraj, 2013). In order to present themselves as more familiar to the audience, many of the participants choose to use colloquial expressions of poorly interpreted familiarity, which are inappropriate in professional language.

INVESTIGACIÓN

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas,Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

269

At the same time, it is necessary to review what is known as "indirect hate speech" (Paasch-Colberg et al., 2021), which can be equally virulent or more so than direct attacks. In this vein, the condescension or contempt with which they address each other (89 interventions in total) does not exactly help maintain a respectful attitude among the participants.

TABLE 2.

Levels of incivility in the talk show section of *La Sexta Noche* (March 2021) in percentages compared to the total number of interventions.

	Number of interventions	"Progressive" sector	"Conservative" sector	Totals
Uncivil elements	Personal attacks (insults and mockery)	19%	34%	28%
	Attacks on an idea, plan, policy or conduct (arguments or perspectives)	7%	14%	11%
	Accusations of the opponent of lying or faking reality	12%	16%	14%
	Profane and vulgar language	12%	25%	20%
	Contempt for how people express themselves or communicate	9%	19%	15%
Total interventions		59%	109%	89%

Source: the authors.

Turning to the formal analysis of the talk show, the first aspect to consider, as has been said, is the *mise-en-scène*. In this sense, what stands out above all is the "personalisation" that public discourse acquires within the programme and which is fundamentally perceived on two levels. On the one hand, there is the category of the presenter, as the "master of ceremonies", who no longer acts solely as moderator of the debate, but actively takes part in it, providing comments and making points, often with humour to reduce the tension. In their role as moderators and hosts of the show, they are often willing to let participants reply with no interruptions and without constantly disputing details. In general, they are familiar and cordial, even joking, trying to create a good atmosphere, though they hardly succeed and occasionally they have to admonish one of the participants in the talk show.

On a secondary level, there are the commentators, who have become almost a new television star system in their own right. In fact, it is common for each commentator to participate in the formats of one single media group, though it is also possible for them to be called upon in rival media networks programmes. Everything boils down to a "market logic" (Landerer, 2013): whoever pays the most is the one who gets the most "combative" commentators who manage to convey their message most effectively, even if it is full of categorical judgments to which the audience adheres as part of the show. There is such great competition for audience

INVESTIGACIÓN

numbers among the political debate programmes, especially on weekday mornings and prime time on Saturdays, that collaborators are hired for their ability to raise the audience curve, forcing them to redouble their aggressiveness, forcefulness or demagogy.

Another of the genre's fundamental characteristics is the "dramatisation" of the discourse, which is achieved by using various strategies. To begin with, current affairs are constructed as a narrative, a compendium of anecdotes and topics associated with "metapolitics", which overshadows the proposals, policies and the complex analysis of reality (Ortells-Badenes, 2012). Montagut and Carrillo (2017) maintain that those who play a role in the news in debates are described as "heroes and anti-heroes" in discourses that resemble the methods of fiction while leaving behind journalistic formulas. This is perceived thanks to the screen that presides over the set, often starring the politicians themselves that the topics discussed are about. Political evaluation surveys and electoral polls contribute to this image created of politicians as "winners and losers", who are given a big presence since they enable politics to be turned into a competition or "horse race" (Maarek, 2009), especially during electoral campaigns and pre-campaign periods, as is the case with the programmes analysed as regards the elections for the Madrid regional government, which very much influences the debate.

As for the design of the studio sets, the programme is carried out on three different sets. The main set is for the political debate and is separated by two rows of armchairs or individual armchairs facing each other arranged in a horseshoe shape, with the presenter standing at the head. The four "progressive" commentators are on the left of the screen and the four representing "conservative" stances are on the right. These ar-

mchairs are placed on platforms illuminated with green and white LEDs underneath, with a metallic appearance, and the armchairs themselves are red, all surrounded by rectangular LED panels one metre high that usually project different shades of green. The colour combination of green and red is very particular: green symbolises the main colour of the programme and the channel; red, on the other hand, is a more aggressive colour, representing the emotional side of the debate. The armchairs are the same as those on the set for interviews and debates, with a red colour that, in addition to evoking the psychological sensations mentioned, is a striking colour that makes the commentators and interviewees stand out in general shots (Castillo, 2013).

As for the framing "in the shot", *La Sexta Noche* has a classic and well-established framing design and array of shots, ranging from the use of medium and short-medium shots for debates and interviews, interspersed with general shots to pause and position the elements and commentators on the screen, generally with descriptive camera movements. Likewise, the use of an American shot for explanations in front of the video wall or screens is also very common. For all of these reasons, from the point of view of framing it is not new, but rather uses the most classic, established bases of audiovisual language. It habitually follows the basic rules of debates and interviews of not jumping to close-ups of persons not clearly placed in immediately previous shots, for which reason the production of the programme articulates and intersperses wide-angle shots from time to time.

What most identifies such use, in any case, is the decision to divide the screen into several windows, related to the multiple framing of this format. During the talk show, the screen is generally split into two (picture in picture), serving to confront posi-

INVESTIGACIÓN

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas, Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

271

tions between two speakers at the same time, and even changing shots from one commentator to another while keeping the screen divided. The opponents' reactions can thus be better perceived, especially the non-verbal ones, often full of gestures and agitation. There is no doubt that this usage is intended to foster tension in the discussion and visualise the opposing stances more clearly. Furthermore, on exceptional occasions a three-way split is often used, mainly to introduce images so as to illustrate the topic being addressed. Thanks to technological innovation, this multi-camera or multi-window montage has contributed to sophisticated productions full of expressive media that have discarded certain functional production practices such as covering up the interviewee while they are talking.

At other times, a split screen is also used outside of the interview and the talk show, such as when there is a live connection with the newsroom, which in this case is very similar to the classic cinematographic sense of splitting the shot, usually used for phone conversations in film narratives (Bordwell, 1995). This likeness is very similar to the meaning behind the direct connection with the newsroom, used to add data, update it or give way to breaking news. It symbolises immediacy and makes a reference to the information services. The layout of combining windows or splitting the multi-camera image in *La Sexta Noche* becomes an expressive, narrative and aesthetic medium that identifies the talk show itself, in turn generating tension and dynamism, and lending pace to the programme's visual language, which falls within the so-called "technological style" (Barroso, 1996). Lastly, the expressive use of music should be mentioned, providing a serious tonality at all times during the talk show which attempts to instil drama and emotion into the discussion.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.

It is possible that *La Sexta Noche*'s political talk show has given a voice to the emerging Spanish parties, which have been able to become more widely known among the general public. Also, thanks to its way of approaching political issues with a very colloquial and even profane style, there may be more people that have become interested in political and social issues, and it could even happen that, thanks to viewing these debates, sections of the population with less education or distanced from current affairs becoming more concerned about what affects them in their day-to-day lives. But what price must be paid for this? Which is the cost to make the general public more familiar with political discussion by means of this type of television programme?

Based on the analysis carried out in this study, we can only confirm the first hypothesis (H1), since very high levels of incivility are indeed observed in the interventions made by the participants in the talk shows—and in all categories, especially from the "conservative" side. In general terms, we have been able to verify that the commentators' discourse and oratory is intended to ridicule the rivals by using insults and verbal harshness, always with extremely vulgar language for the occasion that lowers the intellectual level of the debate a great deal, while a certain emotional atmosphere is prioritised in order to enhance the televised spectacle. So much is this the case that the continuous belittling and interruptions mostly leads the conversation towards conflict and confrontation, triggering a degradation in the discourse and the way they opponent is treated. It is particularly aggressive and challenging verbal language, very much affected and occasionally overacted and "dramatised", which in our opinion no way fosters calm reflection or empathic stances.

INVESTIGACIÓN

Considering that the levels of incivility are indeed high, we then asked ourselves (R1) if this format might have narrative characteristics and elements of staging and production, which we have called "contextual" in keeping with previous works, boosting such a disrespectful and conflictive tone. The practical analysis indicates that, at least as regards the format in question, we can confirm that it is designed to provoke a discussion in a spectacular tone. In terms of "mediatisation" (Strömback, 2008), we could argue that it is the "media logic" that sets the tone and which "submits" the launched message to its conditions. Observing the conception and creation of the set and the location of the protagonists, as well as splitting the screen in two and the presence of music accompanying the seriousness and emotionality of the debate, everything points towards a quest for content in which clashes, rows and contempt for opponents and their reasoning all prevail.

It so happens that these same elements, whether discursive or "contextual", are found in almost identical form in classic talk shows intended for the sensationalist press, social chronicles and "metatelevision" discourse (Imbert, 2008). Such is the case of the format for *Sálvame Deluxe*, which is broadcast since 2009 on the same day at the same time (prime time on Saturdays) on the rival network Telecinco, belonging to the Mediaset group, the other large commercial communication group operating in Spain. What we observe is that the tone of the interventions, the role and attitude of the commentators and collaborators, the role of the presenter-moderator, as well as the staging of the format with two rows of chairs facing each other, bright lighting and emphatic music, are all very similar to the political talk show analysed.

The main difference naturally lies in the subject matter, since the sensationalist social talk show is dedicated to discussing fundamentally sentimental confrontations and celebrities' personal and affective relationships, as well as increasingly the private lives of the collaborators themselves, who for some time now have themselves become protagonists of the news commented. The understanding of politicians as "celebrities", at the same level as other characters in the social chronicle, is an aspect that we should take into account. In some way, political talk shows have been "contaminated" by this way of doing television, which "infotainment" has been exploring for decades (Ferré-Pavia, 2013). However, approaching politics from the perspective of conflict, aggressiveness and spectacle does not seem to be the most appropriate way to establish a context for discussion through which to rationally contrast different views of reality, even if a larger audience is achieved. In this sense, and as happens with the sentimental talk shows, what usually happens is that when the information becomes trivialised, what is left is noise.

There are some researchers, such as Rossini (2022), who do not see incivility in an inherently negative way, as we have mentioned before, since they consider that disagreement and conflict do not undermine the values upon which the democratic system is founded, as intolerant speech does. Although we understand the difference that the author specifies, we do not share that more complacent vision. We are aware that in this study we have not been able to verify how the audience of the programme perceives the interventions by the commentators and collaborators. Undoubtedly, that is a line of work that opens up many possibilities for the future. In any case, from what we know from other studies, the perception of the personal exchanges as uncivil depends largely on the context and the persons, and therefore it is not uniform. Depending on where people come from, it seems that the messag-

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas,Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

273

es may be perceived as more or less uncivil (Kenski, Coe & Rains, 2020: 800). Nevertheless, there are also studies that indicate that the perception of incivility is similar in culturally different European countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Spain (Otto, Lecheler & Schuck, 2020: 101), and that exposure to uncivil media can lead to an increase in uncivil comments by citizens (Gervais, 2014).

From this perspective, although it is not conclusive, we should not ignore the pernicious effects that uncivil discourse may have on coexistence and democracy. Without going any further, the insults and personal attacks so rife in the interventions in the talk show analysed are not innocuous in our point of view. Rather, the toxicity and contempt on which these relationships are built, whether personal or towards the ideas of others, go beyond disrespect and often border on hate speech. In fact, many of the insults proffered on the show could easily be categorised as intolerant or hate speech, in the sense that Rossini gives it (2022). We could even argue that the irreconcilable stances that are continuously shown between the two groups of collaborators, the "progressive" and the "conservative" ones, are driving towards a rising polarisation of the audience, which in Spain is already very high according to some recent studies, both at the media level and at the social and political level, and would have doubled in the last decade (Boese et al., 2022; Capdevila, Moragas-Fernández & Grau-Masot, 2022; Masip, Suau & Ruiz-Caballero, 2020; Gidron, Adams & Horne, 2020).

According to Waisbord (2020: 255), polarisation responds to political phenomena, but also to communication-related ones. Consequently, it is not inevitable, but is the result of decisions by the political and media elites, in keeping with specific ideological and commercial interests. That is why the market strategy of polarising content generates economic payback for the media in the form of a greater following and audiences, and also electoral payback. It has been verified that several ultra-conservative media are directly responsible for the polarisation of the right in the United States, especially in recent years (Garret et al., 2019), in which disinformation has played a decisive role (Bennett & Livingston, 2018). In fact, it is impossible to understand contemporary polarisation without analysing populism, another ideological and essentially communicative phenomenon (Ernst et al., 2019; Sorensen, 2017).

The fact is that there are strong similarities between the stylistic elements of populism (emotional tone, colloquial style, etc.) and those of the political talk show analysed. It even seems that the truth matters little in this type of spaces, according to the results of our analysis, where the interventions of the commentators accusing the opponent of lying have been numerous (see Table 1). Yet this is not an isolated case. It is no coincidence that several studies (Bos & Brants, 2014; Crammer, 2011) have concluded that political talk shows provide structurally great opportunities for populist communication. Polarization would not cease to be a reflection of this trend.

At this point, we should ask ourselves if there is the possibility of reducing antisocial messages in political television communication, especially in political talk shows, or if this is the new way of expressing oneself politically, typical of our time. We share the reflection that disagreement is a necessary part of developing healthy deliberation (Otto, Lecheler & Schuck, 2020). It is not obligatory in all circumstances to always reach a consensus, as Habermas suggests. Political negotiation, the management of diversity, in the words of Arendt, is a value to be preserved and demanded

INVESTIGACIÓN

in our societies. Even polarisation can be healthy at a given moment, in the sense of contrasting ideas and points of view, and putting particular interests that remained hidden onto the table (Laclau, 2005). But appealing to the need for disagreement does not mean falling into incivility, and that is where the responsibility of political and media elites becomes vital (Mutz, 2015). Some authors distinguish for this purpose between "ideological" polarization, which would fall within the acceptable parameters of ideological confrontation, and "affective" polarization, which would be moved by extreme emotional discourses without any possibility of meeting (Torcal & Comellas, 2022).

For the time being, what we have been able to verify with our analysis of the political talk show in *La Sexta Noche*, with its high levels of incivility, says a lot about the path that political debate formats are taking, at least in Spain. Its similarities with sentimental talk shows do not precisely help. One of the dangers in continuing such practices, of which there has already been warning (Schmid, Kümpel & Riegel, 2022), is that we may end up normalising them and that, ultimately, they may come to seem like acceptable formulas for public debate with which we will have to live. It would be the undesired consequence of turning communication into a commodity that must be made profitable. The other danger is that, as occurs with personalities in other talk shows and reality shows (Hill, 2005), the commentators, eager to continually and artificially seek confrontation, may end up becoming a substitute for themselves, a «simulacrum», in the terms of Baudrillard (1987), and become no longer credible to the audience, allowing debate programs to be perceived as just another show. Thus, with the political talk show turned into "reality fodder", television may burn up matters of undoubted public interest at a dizzying pace. In this sense, politics would become more and more like fast food, a product that is consumed hastily and is digested very fast.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Abril, G. (1997). *Teoría general de la información*. Madrid: Cátedra.

Allcott, H. & Gentzkow, M. (2017). "Social media and fake news in the 2016 election", *Journal of economic perspective*, 31(2), 221-236. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211

Anderson, A. A.; Yeo, S. K.; Brossard, D.; Scheufele, D. A.; & Xenos, M. A. (2018). "Toxic talk: How online incivility can undermine perceptions of media", *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 30(1), 156–168. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edw022

Barroso, J. (1996). *Realización de los géneros televisivos*. Madrid: Síntesis.

Baudrillard, J. (1987). *Cultura y simulacro*. Barcelona: Kairós.

Baum, E. (2012). "El rol de las emociones en la esfera pública", *Revista latinoamericana de derechos humanos*, 23(1), 47-58. https://www.revistas.una.ac.cr/index.php/derechoshumanos/article/view/5288

Bennett, L. W. (2012). "The personalization of politics: Political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 644(1), 20-39.

Bennett, W. L. & Livingston, S. (2018). "The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions", *European Journal of Communication*, 33(2), pp. 122-139.

Benson, T. W. (2011). "The rhetoric of civility: Power, authenticity, and democracy", *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, 1(1), 22–30.

Berrocal-Gonzalo, S. (coord.) (2017). *Politainment: la política como espectáculo en los medios de comunicación*. Valencia: Tirant Humanidades.

INVESTIGACIÓN

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas, Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

275

Bilewicz, M. & Soral, W. (2020). "Hate speech epidemic. The dynamic effects of derogatory language on intergroup relations and political radicalization", *Political Psychology*, 41(1), 3–33.

Bjarnoe, C.; de Vreese, C. H.; & Albaek, E. (2019). "The effect of being conflict non-avoidant: Linking conflict framing and political participation", *West European Politics*, 1–27. doi:10.1080/01402382.2019.1572334

Blumler, J. (1999). "Political Communication Systems all Changes", *European Journal of Communication*, 14(2), 241-249.

Boese V. A.; Alizada, N.; Lundstedt, M.; Morrison, K.; Natsika, N.; Sato, Y.; Tai, H. & Lindberg, S. I. (2022). *Autocratization Changing Nature? Democracy Report 2022. Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem)*. https://v-dem.net/media/publications/dr_2022.pdf

Borah, P. (2012). "Does it matter where you read the news story? Interaction of incivility and news frames in the political blogosphere", Communication Research, 41(6), 809–827, doi:10.1177/0093650212449353

Borah, P. (2013). "Interactions of news frames and incivility in the political blogosphere: Examining perceptual outcomes", *Political Communication*, 30(3), 456–473. doi:10.1080/10584609.2012.737426

Bordwell, D. (1995). *El arte cinematográfico: una introducción*. Barcelona: Paidós Ibérica.

Bos, L. & Brants, K. (2014). "Populist rhetoric in politics and media: A longitudinal study of the Netherlands", *European Journal of Communication*, 29, 703–719.

Boukes, M. & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2016). "Politician seeking voter: How interviews on entertainment talk shows affect trust in politicians", *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 1145–1166.

Brants, K. (1998). "Who's afraid of infotainment?", *European journal of communication*, 13(3), 315-336.

Brooks, D. J.; & Geer, J. G. (2007). "Beyond negativity: The effects of incivility on the electorate", *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 1–16.

Bustamante, E. (2014). "El caso español: mutación ideológica de modelos". In: M. Francés; J. Gavaldà; G. Llorca; À. Peris (coords.). *La televisión de la crisis ante el abismo digital*. Barcelona: Gedisa, pp. 15-28.

Capdevila, A.; Moragas-Fernández, C. M. & Grau-Masot, J. M. (2022). "Emergencia del populismo en España: marcos metafóricos de Vox y de su comunidad online durante las elecciones generals de 2019", *El profesional de la información*, 31(3).

https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2022.may.17

Carmona, R. (1993). *Cómo se comenta un texto fílmico*. Madrid: Cátedra.

Casero-Ripollés, A.; Feenstra, R.; & Tormey, Simon (2016). "Old and new media logics in an electoral campaign: The case of Podemos and the two-way street mediatization of politics", *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 21(3), 378-397.

Casero-Ripollés, A.; Feenstra, R.; Tormey, Simon (2016). "Old and new media logics in an electoral campaign: The case of Podemos and the two-way street mediatization of politics", *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 21(3), 378-397.

Castillo, J. M. (2013). *Televisión, realización y lenguaje audiovisual*. Madrid: Instituto de RTVE.

Ceron, A. & Splendore, S. (2018). "From contents to comments: Social TV and perceived pluralism in political talk shows", *New Media & Society*, 20(2), 659-675.

Coe, K., Kenski, K., & Rains, S. A. (2014). "Online and uncivil? Patterns

and determinants of incivility in newspaper website comments", *Journal of Communication*, 64(4), 658–679. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12104

Cranmer, M. (2011). "Populist communication and publicity: An empirical study of contextual differences in Switzerland", *Swiss Political Science Review*, 17, 286–307.

Dahlgren, P. (2005). "The Internet, public spheres, and political communication: Dispersion and deliberation", *Political Communication*, 22(2), 147–162.

Daymon, C. & Holloway, I. (2011). *Qualitative research methods in public relations and marketing communications*. London: Routledge.

Delli Carpini, M. & Williams, B. A. (2001). "Let us infotain you: Politics in the new media". In: Bennet, L. W. & Entman, R. M. (eds.). *Mediated politics: Communication in the future of democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 160-181.

Ernst, N.; Blassnig, S.; Engesser, S.; Büchel, F.; & Esser, F. (2019). "Politists Prefer Social Media Over Talk Shows: An Analysis of Populist Messages and Stylistic Elements Across Six Countries", *Social Media + Society*, 1-14. DOI: 10.1177/2056305118823358

Ferré-Pavia, C. (ed.) (2013). *Infoentretenimiento. El formato imparable de la era del espectáculo.* Barcelona: UOC.

Fletcher, R.; Cornia, A.; & Kleis Nielsen, R. (2020). "How Polarized Are Online and Offline News Audiences? A Comparative Analysis of Twelve Countries Research Article", *The International Journal of Press/Politics* , 25(2), 169-195.

Francés, M. & Peris, À. (2017). "Producción, oferta y consumo televisivo español en tiempos de crisis". In: G. Orozco Gómez (coord.). *TVMorfosis 6. Gestión y consumo de contenidos digitales. Nuevos modelos*. México: Sahagón Repoll, pp. 83-129.

Frischlich, L.; Schatto-Eckrodt, T.; Boberg, S.; & Winterlin, F. (2021). "Roots of Incivility: How Personality, Media Use, And Online Experiences Shape Uncivil Participation", *Media and Communication*, 9(1), 195-208. DOI: 10.17645/mac.v9i1.3360

Gallardo-Paúls, B. (2018). *Tiempos de hipérbole. Inestabilidad e interferencias en el discurso político*. Valencia: Tirant Lo Blanch.

Garrett, R. K.; Long, J. A.; & Jeong, M. S. (2019). "New Evidence on Group Polarization from Partisan Media to Misperception: Affective Polarization as Mediator", *Journal of Communication*, 69(5), 490-517.

Gervais, B. T. (2015). "Incivility online: Affective and behavioral reactions to uncivil political posts in a web-based experiment", *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 12, 167–185. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.997416

Gervais, B. T. (2017). "More than mimicry? The role of anger in uncivil reactions to elite politica incivility", *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 29(3), 384–405, doi:10.1093/ijpor/edw010

Gervais, B. T. (2019). "Rousing the Partisan Combatant: Elite Incivility, Anger, and Antideliberative Attituds", Political Psychology, 40(3), doi: 10.1111/pops.12532

Gibson, J. L. (2007). "Political intolerance in the context of democratic theory". En: R. Dalton & H. D. Klingermann (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of political behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 323–341.

Habermas, J. (1996). Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy. MIT Press.

Harrington, S. (2008). "Popular news in the 21st century. Time for a new critical approach?", *Journalism*, 9(3), 266-284.

INVESTIGACIÓN

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas, Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

277

Hartley, J. (2000). *Los usos de la televisión*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Hepp, A.; Hjarvard, S.; & Lundby, K. (2015). "Mediatization: Theorizing the Interplay Between Media, Culture and Society", *Media, Culture & Society*, 37(2), 314-324.

Herbst, S. (2010). *Rude democracy: Civility and incivility in American politics*. Temple University Press.

Hill, A. (2005). *Reality TV. Audiences and popular factual television*. Abington/New York: Routledge.

Holtz-Bacha, C. (2003). "Comunicación política: entre la privatización y la espectacularización", *Diálogo Político*, 1, 137-154.

Hwang, H.; Kim, Y.; & Huh, C. U. (2014). "Seeing is believing: Effects of uncivil online debate on political polarization and expectations of deliberation", *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 58, 621-633, doi:10.1080/08838151.2014.966365

Imbert, G. (2008). *El transformismo televisivo. Postelevisión e imaginarios sociales*. Madrid: Cátedra.

Iyengar, S. & Westwood, S. J. (2015). "Fear and loathing across party lines: New evidence on group polarization", *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(3), 690–707.

Kenski, K.; Coe, K.; & Rains, S. A. (2020). "Perceptions of Uncivil Discourse Online: An Examination of Types and Predictors", *Communication Research*, 47(6), 795-814, doi/10.1177/0093650217699933

Kessler, S. H. & Lachenmaier, C. (2017). "Without evidence in the talk show Olympus: References and actors in political talk shows on the Greek crisis", *M&K Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft*, 65, 64–82.

Laclau, E. (2005). *La razón populista*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Landerer, N. (2013). "Rethinking the Logics: A Conceptual Framework for the Mediatization of Politics", *Communication Theory*, 23, 239-258. Doi:10.1111/comt.12013

Langer, J. (2000). *La televisión sensacionalista. El periodisme popular y las "otras noticias"*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Maarek, Ph. (2009). *Marketing político y comunicación. Claves para una buena información política*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Masip, P.; Suau, J.; & Ruiz-Caballero, Carlos (2020). "Percepciones sobre medios de comunicación y desinformación: ideología y polarización en el sistema mediático español", *El Profesional de la Información*, 29(5), e290527. https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2020.sep.27

Matamoros-Fernández, A. & Farkas, J. (2021). "Racism, hate speech, and social media: a systematic review and critique", *Television & New Media*, 22(2), 205–224.

Mazzoleni, G. (2010). *La comunicación política*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

Mazzoleni, G. & Schulz, W. (1999). "Mediatization of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?", Political Communication, 16(3), 247-261.

Mazzoleni, G. & Sfardini, A. (2009). *Politica Pop: Da «Porta a Porta» a «L'isola dei famosi»*. Bolonia: Il Mulino.

McCoy, J.; Rahman, T.; & Somer, M. (2018). "Polarization and the global crisis of democracy: Common patterns, dynamics, and pernicious consequences for democratic politics", *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(1), 16-42.

Montagut, M. & Carrillo, N. (2017). "Estrategias de espectacularización en las tertulias políticas televisives. Caso de la cobertura de las Elecciones municipales de Barcelona de 2015", *El Profesional de la Información*, 26(4), 621-629.

INVESTIGACIÓN

Mudde, C. (2019). *The Far Right Today*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Muddiman, A. (2017). "Personal and public levels of political incivility. International Journal of Communication", 11, 3182–3202.

Mutz, D. C. (2015). *In-your-face politics: The consequences of uncivil media*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mutz, D. C. & Reeves, B. (2005). "The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust", *The American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051452

Nichols, T. (2017). *The death of expertise: the campaign against established knowledge and why it matters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norris, P. (2000). *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communication in Postindustrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oliva, M. (2013). Telerrealidad, disciplina e identidad. Los makeover shows en España. Barcelona: UOC.

Ortells Badenes, Sara (2012). "Infoentretenimiento y periodismo político en televisión". En: A. Casero-Ripollés (ed.). *Periodismo político en España: concepciones, tensiones y elecciones.* Tenerife: Cuadernos Artesanos Latina, pp. 99-118.

Otto, L. P.; Lecheler, S.; & Schuck, Andreas R. T. (2020). "Is Context the Key? The (Non-)Differential Effects of Mediated Incivility in three European Countries", *Political Communication*, 37, 88-107. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1663324

Paasch-Colberg, S. & Strippel, C. (2021). "The boundaries are blurry…": how comment moderators in Germany see and respond to hate comments", *Journalism Studies,* 23(2), 224–244.

Papacharissi, Z. (2004). "Democracy online: Civility, politeness, and the democratic potential of online political discussion groups", *New Media & Society*, 6(2), 259–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444804041444

Peris-Blanes, À. & López Rico, C. M. (2017). "Los programas de entretenimiento: espectáculo y emoción en la comunicación política española". En: G. López García; L. Valera Ordaz (eds.). Pantallas electorales. El discurso de partidos, medios y ciudadanos en la campaña de 2015. Barcelona: UOC, pp. 129-151.

Peris-Blanes, À. & Pérez-Sánchez, J. (2020). "Polarization and Spectacle in the Spanish Political Talk Show 'La Sexta Noche' During the 2019 European Elections", Tripodos, 49, pp. 71-87. doi.org/10.51698/tripodos.2020.49

Redondo, M. & Campos Domínguez, E. (2015). "Implicaciones éticas del infoentretenimiento televisivo", Comunicació. Revista de Recerca i d'Anàlisi, 32 (1), 73-89.

Richards, B. (2010). "News and the emotional public sphere". In: S. Allan (ed.). *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 301-311

Rossini, P. (2022). "Beyond Incivility: Understanding Patterns of Uncivil and Intolerant Discourse in Online Political Talk Show", *Communication Research*, 49(3), 399-425, doi.org/10.1177/0093650220921314

Sánchez-Duarte, J. M. (2016). "La red como espacio para la militancia política: tecnología y participación en campaña electoral", Communication & Society, 29(3), 33-47, doi: 10.15581/003.29.3.sp.33-47

Schmid, U. K.; Kümpel, A. S.; & Rieger, D. (2022). "How Social Media Users Perceive Different Forms of Online Hate Speech: A qualitative multi-method study", *New Media & Society*, 1-19, DOI: 10.1177/14614448221091185

ENCUENTROS | Revista de Ciencias Humanas,Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico
N° 20 Enero – Abril (2024). **PP:** 259-279

279

Schuck, A. R. T.; Vliegenthart, R.; & De Vreese, C. H. (2016). "Who's afraid of conflict? The mobilizing effect of conflict framing in campaign news", *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(1), 177–194. doi:10.1017/S0007123413000525

Shea, D. M., & Sproveri, A. (2012). "The rise and fall of nasty politics in America", *Political Science & Politics*, 45(3), 416–421. doi:10.1017/S1049096512000480

Sobieraj, S., & Berry, J. M. (2011). "From incivility to outrage: Political discourse in blogs, talk radio, and cable news", *Political Communication*, 28(1), 19–41. doi:10.1080/10584609.2010.542360

Sorensen, L. N. (2017). "Populism in communications perspective: Concepts, issues, evidence". In: R. Heinisch, C. Holtz-Bacha, & O. Mazzoleni (eds.), *Handbook on political populism*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 137–151.

Strömback, J. (2008). "Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of Mediatization of Politics", *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *13*(3), 228-246.

Stryker, R.; Conway, B. A.; & Danielson, J. T. (2016). "What is political incivility?", *Communication Monographs*, 83(4), 535–556.

Suhay, E.; Bello-Pardo, E.; & Maurer, B. (2018). "The polarizing effects of online partisan criticism: Evidence from two experiments", *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(1), 95–115.

Sydnor, E. (2018). "Platforms for incivility: Examining perceptions across different media formats", Political Communication, 35(1), 97–116. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1355857

Sydnor, E. (2018). "Platforms for incivility: Examining perceptions across different media formats", *Po-litical Communication*, 35(1), 97–116. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1355857

Thussu, D. K. (2007). *News as Entertainment*. London: Sage.

Torcal, M. & Comellas, J. M. (2022). "Affective Polarisation in Times of Political Instability and Conflict. Spain from a Comparative Perspective", *South European Society and Politics*, 27(1), 1-26.

DOI: 10.1080/13608746.2022.2044236

Waisbord, S. (2020). "¿Es válido atribuir la polarización política a la comunicación digital? Sobre burbujas, plataformas y polarización afectiva", Revista SAAP, 14(2), 249-279. https://doi.org/10.46468/rsaap.14.2.A1

Wheeler, M. (2013). Celebrity politics: Image and identity in contemporary political communication. Cambridge: Polity Press.

INVESTIGACIÓN