

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPANISH MEDIA ON PUBLIC OPINION  
TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Leah McWilliams

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the department of Political Science.

Chapel Hill  
2007

Approved By:

Professor Liesbet Hooghe

Professor John Stephens

Professor Mulada Vachudova

## ABSTRACT

Leah McWilliams: The Influence of the Spanish media on Public Opinion towards European Integration  
(Under the direction of Liesbet Hooghe)

National media systems have the ability to strongly influence public opinion on issues that are “unobtrusive” or outside the audience’s realm of direct experience. Coverage of supranational entities like European Union (EU) is imparted through the lens of individual member states which makes it a widely unobtrusive matter. Spain is an EU member state where the national media maintain a pro-European stance throughout its history with the European Community. This realization goes hand in hand with a public that has repeatedly indicated high levels of support and satisfaction for European integration. Although the variety reasons for supporting European integration do not originate from one explanatory factor, national media coverage offers one reason with which public opinion can be analyzed and assessed. Analyzing the details of Spain’s particular national media coverage of European affairs provides insightful information about the character of the Spanish public’s Pro-european attitudes.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE 1 .....	17
FIGURE 1 .....	16
Chapter	
I.    Introduction.....	1
II.   Theoretical Approaches to the medias influence on public opinion.....	3
III.  Public opinion in Spain towards EU integration.....	10
IV.  Chosen materials for investigation and the status of Spanish media .....	15
V.   European Integration coverage from Franco to EEC Accession.....	20
VI.  European Integration coverage post accession .....	28
VII. Discussion and Conclusion.....	37
Works Cited.....	42

## **INTRODUCTION**

Exploring the variety of reasons for which countries and people support the idea of European integration is a difficult process, and involves several different factors. Some of these factors and explanatory variables stem from each country's perceptions of economic status, identity and the question of what impact European integration has on individual cultures. Nation states remain as key socialization agents and provide the bounded spaces in which individuals spend most of their lives. These nation states, then, help to shape the world views of these individuals. Their national media systems are one major way in which informational processes differ across member states, as ideas about Europe are discussed, shaped and reinforced through specific presentational choices. Examining the coverage of a particular national media system can provide much insight into the formation of the public's opinion towards Europe and European integration.

Spain provides an interesting case study, as it has maintained a fairly stable amount of public support for European integration since its entrance into the European Community. Spain consistently reports attitudes in public opinion polls that are pro-European, which show that Spain is more in favor of European institutions than the majority of the European member states. Alongside this public support is a national media system that provides almost unanimously

positive coverage with respect to European integration. The goal of this paper therefore, is to examine the Spanish public's opinion towards the EU and to determine if the country's media coverage of Europe and the European Union Europe has had an influence on its pro European stance as well as what that influence has been.

The analysis will begin with an overview of the theoretical viewpoints found in Communications literature which have to do with the power of the media to influence public opinion. With these theories in mind, Spanish public opinion will be examined through various studies which have been conducted periodically since Spain's membership in the European Community was made official in 1986. The paper will then analyze what has influenced the extremely pro-European attitude found in the Spanish population by looking historically at the country's quality press coverage of European affairs and, in particular, at op-ed articles and editorials dating from pre-EU membership to membership. Next, the article will focus on post-accession press coverage analysis, especially on the changes in Spain's perceived international status which have occurred since its accession to the EU, and how this status corresponds with its consistently positive stance towards being a member of the European Union. Finally, the article will discuss the influence of the press's coverage of European affairs with regards to public opinion, chiefly noting the unique position of the media and its ability to inform the public about Europe.

## **THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC OPINION**

The breakdown of conceptions of the European Union and European integration is rooted in a sociological principle that underlines the notion that people's thoughts and conduct concerning objects or problems rely on how they envision, frame, or embody them. Studies indicate that most people derive their information about the European Union from the media which makes media analysis important when examining public opinion about European integration (Inthorn 2006). Most of what Europeans know about European issues comes from their own national news media. Although the extent of the effect of the media on public perception is not completely understood, it is not out of the question to acknowledge that the media serves, in part, as an agent that aids in the distribution of imagined collective identities (Inthorn 2006). In the following section, the most popular and consulted media theories are highlighted in order to illuminate the power of the media and its ability to determine public opinion, especially with respect to issues such as European integration.

Leen d'Haenens says that "According to the cultural studies school of thought, the media are not merely representing reality, but are rather, defining, creating and shaping it" (2005, 424). This concept is especially true when referring to a person's personal experience, such as domestic politics and even more so with European politics. European news is unique in nature as it does not

have its own major distribution hub. Citizens receive information about the EU through their own particular national media system. European news as it stands is considered a second order issue, normally being mentioned only when it is related to a domestic matter. Indeed, in every nation of the EU, the information received on EU matters is reported from a distinctly domestic angle. The construction of Europe in the minds of its citizens, as a result, is in many ways influenced by the media, as the information it provides is seen as a true representation of reality.

One of the central theories relating to the media's ability to set the public agenda was studied extensively in the 1960s. The concept of agenda setting was launched in 1963 with an investigation that examined the ability of the press to influence public opinion about foreign affairs. In his study, Bernard Cohen discovered that "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Semetko 2000). This led to other inquiries over the power of the press and developed into the agenda setting theory that exists today. Agenda setting in essence, refers to the notion that the amount of visibility an issue receives in the news is related to its perceived importance. The agenda setting theory however does not delve into the realm of topic evaluation, but merely suggests the power the information provider has when deciding what the public will determine to be worth evaluating (Semetko 2000).

Frame analysis goes even deeper than agenda setting. Both agenda setting and framing are related to the relationship between public policy issues in

the news and the public's perception of these issues. However as opposed to agenda setting, framing goes beyond examining only what people think about and poses questions as to why and how people think about particular issues. Certainly, the two concepts both deal in the realm of media agenda and how it is able to influence the public agenda and they are often used hand in hand for the purposes of media analysis.

The exact definition of framing is subjective, although most research has broken it down into three relatively manageable aspects: selection, organization, and emphasis (Semetko 2000). "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular definition of a problem, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described"(d'Haenens 2005: 422). Framing an issue in a certain way, therefore, has the ability to enhance agenda setting effects since it actually penetrates the agenda itself and suggests how it should be conceptualized. Framing effects, thus, refer to the ability of a particular frame to change the evaluations, conclusions and analyses resulting from the way the frame was presented through its selection, organization and emphasis. Essentially, a frame is used to string together a series of concepts in a more or less coherent manner that can then be used to persuade an audience. The media have the power to portray a specific topic in a number of ways, stressing certain elements or portions of an issue at the expenditure of another. Framing, in dealing with its effect on public

opinion, can be viewed as a potent tool for the construction of public debate and in the formation of the conception of public matters (Schuck 2006).

While examining the coverage of European integration in the media, there is yet another facet to consider. There is a strand within these theories that dives slightly deeper, and scrutinizes the “character” of the issues on the particular agenda, introducing another aspect to the assessment of agenda setting effects with regards to European integration. There are several agenda setting studies that have noted that “unobtrusive” issues, or issues that the average person is not able to come into contact with directly, lead to stronger agenda setting effects than do “obtrusive” issues, or those issues that the average person can live through in a directly (Peter 2003). Since unobtrusive matters are only able to be understood through the media, their coverage has an increased likelihood of shaping the public’s perception about those particular issues. European integration is an issue that is widely unobtrusive, which goes to speculate that when covering EU matters, the effects of the media’s presentation are enhanced (Peter 2003).

Average citizens receive the bulk of their information about politics through the news media, allowing these media sources the power to shape their view of the world as well as their place within it. The media has the ability to contribute to the public’s understanding of the significance of belonging to a cultural and political collectivity, such as Europe (Inthorn 2006). Hence, news frames have the ability with their selection of specified tones and emphases on the on going concern for accurate facts and figures, to be situated as a catalyst for the

continuing process of integration and serve to help the citizens of Europe perceive themselves as European (d'Haenens 2005). The dominant ideology of a community is embedded within the language or discourse utilized by the media. The discourse provides the collection of potential declarations about a given topic, while ordering and shaping the way in which a particular idea, entity or procedure is to be discussed. Discourse, in other words, offers the array of characterization of meaning that sustains the ideology of the community, and language is its predominant outlet (d'Haenens 2005). When using the concepts of framing and discourse for understanding public opinion about European integration, it is necessary to identify what sorts of frames and discourse are used by the media during their coverage of European issues.

With regards specifically to European integration, the media has several framing possibilities. The discourse can be inclusive or exclusive. An exclusive position would set political, geographical, economic or cultural limitations on European integration. An inclusive position in contrast would be more apt to eliminate boundaries. To make coverage more interesting, combative frames are sought after whereby issues develop in an "us" versus "them," "winning" versus "losing" or in sum "loss" versus "gain" format (D'Haenens). The way in which the media chooses to make out the nation's stance with regards to its participation in Europe can effectively set the tone with which the idea of Europe is regarded.

Coverage can be designed to depict integration as politically, economically or culturally positive or negative. Simple choices in discourse such as describing relations in a cooperative manner with pronouns such as "we" or "us" that

encompass citizens or politicians of multiple nation states can greatly affect the character of the information in which the public receives. The direct opposite alternative in which portrayals place other member states in a “them” or “outsider” context highlights a sense of disunity by calling attention to the differences between the entities. These subtle tactics take a toll in the formation of the way the public considers European integration. In addition, accentuating the bottom line of EU policies whereby only the economic consequences from a national perspective are conveyed can serve to shape the mindset in which the audience views Europe. The ramification of such coverage can cause the audience to think about European affairs in purely economic terms to the exclusion of cultural or social ones. All of these tonal subtleties as a result contribute to how the image of Europe is construed in the minds of the public and necessarily are important factors when examining national media coverage on European integration.

It is the goal of this paper to examine how the Spanish media has used and continues to use its ability to set agendas and frame the public’s perception about Europe. Examining the discourse Spain’s media employs to present issues on European integration can highlight how Europe has been presented to the public over the years and how the discourse has influenced public opinion towards European integration. The media in any context are not completely unbiased in their representation, but predominantly impart the overriding illusion of reality. For the most part are they are transporters of the prevailing sets of tenets, ideals, norms and outlooks within a specific community. Looking at the

Spanish press's coverage of European issues demonstrates the sort of information the people within the community have come across over time. The media is a carrier of the dominant ideology as understood by the community to the dominant group within the community. Therefore, when it presents an issue such as Europe in a certain light, it can influence how the public perceives its relative importance and shapes its understanding of it. In the case of Spain, coverage of European integration will be compared to public opinion in order to determine if the media plays a role in its formation.

## **PUBLIC OPINION IN SPAIN TOWARDS EU INTEGRATION**

Before taking a look at the coverage of Spain's media on European integration, it is first necessary to examine the depth and character of the public's attitude towards Europe. Public opinion analysis regarding the European Union actually has a longer tradition than the official declaration of the Union itself, and began with the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht in February of 1992. The Euro barometer is the public opinion analysis sector of the European Commission and has monitored the evolution of public opinion in the European community as well as in some of the contending member states since 1973. Public opinion, it seems, was and still is an important component for measuring the success of the goals of the European project and for determining reactionary differences among the diverse group of people that live within its boundaries. When examining the public opinion of Spain specifically, information can also be gathered from El Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), which is sponsored by the Spanish government.

The distinctly pro-European public opinion found in Spain has been consistent throughout the history of the European Economic Community (EEC). Spanish public opinion has remained more or less pro-European since the time of its accession to the European community in 1986. In 1989, a study conducted by the CIS confirmed that 71% of Spanish citizens surveyed were in agreement

with the process of the uniting with the rest of Western Europe (Senante-Berendes 1999). This high level of support has actually been confirmed as far back as 1981 when talks of entry into the EEC were still being negotiated. This stance, in fact, was overwhelmingly unanimous, with opposition to integration forces only existing between 5 and 9 per cent (Senante-Berendes 1999).

These surveys have continued throughout the 1990s as well as into the new millennium and are used to reflect and measure the wide range of the various types of support that can exist for a supranational entity like the EU. According to a 1996 CIS study about the way democracy works in the EU, Spain had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest level of satisfaction behind Ireland and Luxemburg with 46%, which contrasts with the reported community average of 35%. A similar assessment performed by the Euro barometer in 2000 placed Spain as the most content with nearly 60% reporting approval for the way democracy works in the EU, a full 20% higher than the EU 15 average (How Europeans see themselves, 2000). With respect to trust in European institutions, Spain came in as the second most trusting country with 55% of the population trusting in them. Only Portugal had a higher amount of trust at 57%. This was in stark contrast to other member states such as the UK or Sweden, where only 20 and 21 per cent of those surveyed were indicated as having trust in the EU. The EU community average was 40%.

The same Euro barometer study from 2000 asked respondents how they saw themselves in relation to their national and European identities. 68 per cent of the Spaniards inquired reported that they felt a relatively high level of

attachment to Europe. These results were the fourth highest percentage of the EU 15, surpassing the community average by 11 percentile points. Another question in the survey measured the respondent's level of identification towards feeling European versus their respective national identity. In the case of Spain, 4% claimed to feel only European, 6 % said they felt European and then Spanish, 53% informed of feeling Spanish and then European, and 31% affirmed that they only feel Spanish. The overall European average for this same question were 4%, 5%, 42% and 45%, respectively, substituting the country of origin in each case for the respondents that were not Spanish. These statistics reveal that in contrast with many other member states of the European Union, Spaniards have a higher propensity to identify with both their nation and Europe. Although it is clear that only a relatively small portion of Spanish citizens feel only European or European before Spanish, the fact that Spain had the third highest per cent of citizens reporting that they identify with their nation first and then Europe is not insignificant.

More recent surveys from the Euro barometer echo these earlier findings. The affinity for Europe among Spaniards is relatively high when compared to other EU member states. A Euro barometer survey from February-March 2004 indicated that 57.5 percent of Spaniards trust the EU. This number is fairly significant when taking into account the fact that only 5 other member states had more than 50 percent of respondents with trust in the EU [Portugal 60.6%, Greece 68.5, Ireland 55.6%, Italy 54.2% and Luxemburg 52.7%] (Llamazares and Gramacho 2007). A survey from 2006, entitled *The Future of Europe* asked

citizens of each of the member states about their thoughts and concerns for the future of the European Union as well as its current condition. Its goal, was essentially to assess, after the rejection of the constitutional treaty by France and The Netherlands, the communication gap between the citizens and the European Union. The questions were designed to illuminate the failures and successes of the European Union according to the judgments of the average citizen. According to this survey, 62% of Spaniards indicated that their membership to the EU is a positive thing, putting them in the fourth highest position, following Luxemburg, The Netherlands and Ireland, and 13 percentage points above the EU 25 community average. The findings reveal that not only are Spanish citizens above average with regards to being able to identify with Europe but in addition, they have a higher level of trust and confidence in the democracy and institutions that comprise the EU. These sentiments have been maintained over time as the surveys referenced cover attitudes from the pre-accession through the rejection of the constitutional treaty in 2006.

The grounds for positive or negative attitudes towards European integration stem from a range of issues which can be traced back to far-removed social, economic and ideological factors. These factors all contribute to how individuals perceive national benefits derived from EU membership (Llamazares and Gramacho 2007). The most common approach for explaining the formation of attitudes towards European integration is usually broken down into two categories, political-economic and cultural-cognitive. With respect to the political-economic causal interpretation in the context of Spain, its economy is situated in

a welfare regime that has Christian-Democratic tendencies and a less affluent history than many other Western European nations. As a result, studies assert that in Spain, European integration is more easily viewed as less threatening, since the integration model is more likely to embrace many of the features of a Christian Democratic welfare state, making the process less drastic. In addition, for traditionally less affluent nations such as Spain, forming a political and economic union with more prosperous economies provides access to particular advantages such as the structural and cohesion funds allocated by the EU (Llamazares and Gramacho 2007).

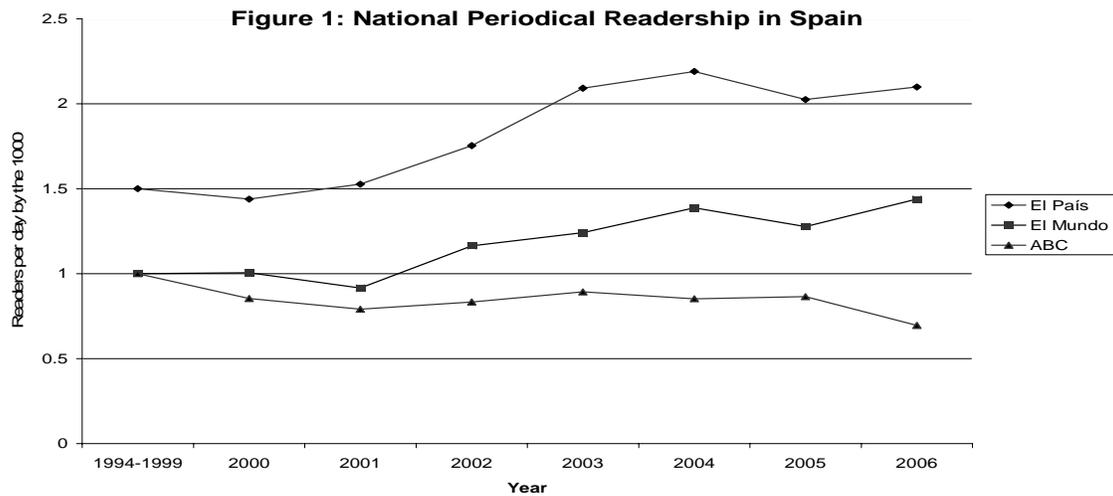
Referring to the cultural cognitive category, it can be claimed that certain historical processes have shaped the Spanish public's view of European integration, namely citing Spain's authoritarian and economically backward past. Europe, as a result, has over time, been cognitively framed as a symbol of democratic stability and economic modernization (Medrano 2003). The goal in this analysis however is not to determine which explanatory factor weighs contributes more heavily to the pro-European public opinion of Spaniards, but instead to examine how the national media contributes to the overall process. In Spain, the pro-European public opinion goes alongside a national media system that is widely supportive of European integration and has been since the formation of the European community in the 1950s. In the analysis that follows it will be demonstrated that the national media have been a contributory factor to the pro-European attitudes, serving as a reinforcing factor that rarely if ever mentions the drawbacks of European integration.

## **CHOSEN MATERIALS FOR INVESTIGATION AND THE STATUS OF SPANISH MEDIA**

Until 1975 the Spanish media were chiefly dominated by the Franco regime; therefore the portion of the analysis that comes from this era is from the print media with the highest readership allowed during that time. Since the transition to democracy Spain has been a place for energetic and competitive media industry (Sanders 2004). With respect to information about European integration, a Euro barometer survey conducted in 2005 revealed that 66% of Spaniards receive their news about the EU from television, 35% from the daily press, 24% from the radio and 10% from the internet. When asked about whom they trust most for receiving information about the EU, journalists ranked as the most trustworthy for Spaniards. Respondents felt that the EU was discussed about the right amount in the media and that the information was presented in a mostly objective way (Euro barometer Spring 2005).

It is important to note however that although the newspaper market has grown steadily in Spain, the level of readership is among the lowest in the EU. In addition, for those Spaniards that do read newspapers, national polls indicate that as many as 3 out of 5 never read about politics (Sanders 2004). Indeed, Spain is characterized by having a low level of civic participation and overall interest in politics. Nevertheless it is still worthwhile examining the presentation of European integration in the media, since it is clear that although Spaniards may

not have a high level of interest in politics, the information that they do receive is almost exclusively from the media.



\*Data from Estudio General de Medios (EGM) and Gunther 1999. From 1994-1999, *El Mundo* and *Abc* had roughly equal readership levels, and along with *El País* those levels remained stable. *El País* for all of these years was in the number one position of national news periodicals, followed by *El Mundo* taking second place. *Abc* is in 3<sup>rd</sup> place from 2000 to 2002, but drops to 6<sup>th</sup> place by 2006. *Marca* is the most widely read periodical in Spain, but only covers sports news; as a result its data was not included.

**Table 1: Timeline of relevant dates in Spanish history**

<b>1898</b>	Spain loses the remainder of its overseas possessions after the Spanish-American War
<b>1931</b>	King Alfonso XIII flees the country and Spain becomes a republic
<b>1936-1939</b>	The Spanish Civil War: More than 350,000 deaths. Nationalist forces are led by General Francisco Franco.
<b>1939</b>	General Franco leads Nationalists to victory. Republicans are executed, jailed or exiled.
<b>1939-1959</b>	Spain is an autarky; its economy is closed to the outside world.
<b>1946-1950</b>	Franco regime is ostracized by the UN; many countries cut off diplomatic relations
<b>1955</b>	Spain admitted to the UN.
<b>1959</b>	Alberto Ullastres, Minister of Commerce and Mariano Navarro Rubio, Minister of Finance, succeed in convincing General Franco to seek out side council and credits. Resultantly, in July the Spanish government drew up, in cooperation with the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a stabilization program designed to equilibrate the nation's domestic and international transactions.
<b>1959-1973</b>	Period often referred to as "The Spanish Miracle"-a time of economic boom due to reforms accepted by Franco.
<b>1962</b>	Spain applies for associate membership to EEC, never obtaining a response
<b>1970</b>	EEC signs a Preferential Trade Agreement with Spain, a disappointing alternative to membership
<b>1975</b>	-Franco dies and is succeeded by King Juan Carlos. -Although there were still strict controls over TV news broadcasts and the radio, the print media benefited from considerable freedom in news coverage and the expression of op-ed and opinion articles. -The press of the Movimiento, the extreme right press, and the ultraconservative monarchist daily <i>Abc</i> remained hostile to political change.
<b>1976</b>	- <i>El País</i> begins publication and serves as a vehicle for disseminating the opinions of progressive reformers within the regime, as well as those of representatives of the moderate opposition groups (liberals, social democrats and Christian Democrats). -Readers begin to shift to the emerging democratic press, and the newspapers that supported the franquist regime virtually disappear.
<b>1977</b>	-First democratic elections in four decades -Spain requests membership of the EEC
<b>1978</b>	-Negotiations begin for Spain's entry to the EEC. -new constitution confirms Spain as a parliamentary monarchy.
<b>1979</b>	<i>El País</i> , created only 4 years earlier, is the highest circulating newspaper.
<b>1985</b>	June 12 <sup>th</sup> Spain signs its treaty of accession to the EEC.
<b>1986</b>	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> Spain becomes a member of the EEC.
<b>1989</b>	<i>El Mundo</i> begins publication, an event described as the most significant press development since the end of the transition period. The paper quickly attracted a following and assumed a prominent position in the newspaper market, which was previously dominated by <i>El País</i> and the rightwing <i>Abc</i> .
<b>1994</b>	Readership of <i>El Mundo</i> roughly equals that of <i>Abc</i> .
<b>1999</b>	Spain becomes a founding member of the European currency, the euro.
<b>2002</b>	Introduction of euro notes and coins, replacing the peseta.
<b>2005</b>	Feb 20 <sup>th</sup> , Spain becomes the first European country to ratify the new EU constitution, voting in favor in a referendum by 76.73% to 17.24%.

\*(Gunther 1999).

The quality press used in this analysis mainly comes from three major national periodicals *Abc*, *El País* and *El Mundo*. *Abc* has been in circulation since 1905, and is one of the oldest newspapers in Spain. It is known for its nationalistic views which are supportive of the traditions of Catholicism and the monarchy. Coverage from this newspaper is analyzed mainly during the Franco period, as it was the most prominent newspaper present during the dictatorship of Franco (Medrano 2003). After the death of Franco and the end of his authoritarian regime, other periodicals entered the market and readers began to shift to the more democratic press, thus causing *Abc*'s readership level to decrease. As a result, the latter two periodicals, *El País* and *El Mundo*, are chosen for the post-accession examination (Gunther 1999, Figure 1).

*El País*, founded in 1976, defines itself as independent and the defender of democratic values (Table 1, Figure 1). This paper revolutionized Spanish journalism in the post-Franco period and is the most widely read newspaper in the country (Medrano 2003). It is ideologically aligned with the left wing national party, El Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE). *El Mundo*, founded in 1989, is the second most widely read daily in Spain and has been a significant contribution to the press development in Spain (Gunther 1999). It is characterized as the critical voice of the socialist party and it serves as the mainstream conservative voice (Jiménez and Sampedro 2005). Citing editorials and op-ed articles from these three media sources that directly address European integration provides a well rounded display of how the Spanish media presents its information about Europe and possibly shapes public opinion.

The sources for this article are primarily derived from four comprehensive studies conducted by Juan Diez-Medrano, Paula Gutiérrez, Terry Cooper and Dale Fuchs. In his book, *Framing Europe*, along with his study conducted with Gutiérrez, Medrano twice codes op-ed articles and editorials from 1939-1997 that mention European integration, European institutions and Spain's relations with the European institutions from the leading Spanish newspapers of the time period being examined. They were coded once by research assistants, and then again by one of the publishing authors. The articles were evaluated as being either positive or negative towards European institutions, transfers of sovereignty, the monetary union, the Maastricht treaty, and the EEC. General statements of support for membership to the European Coal and Steel community (ECSC), the European Defense Community (EDC) and the European Economic Community were also included. In the study conducted by Cooper, he compares coverage of the British press with that of Spain. He coded *El País* and *El Mundo* during moments of increased press interest, mainly the Summits of the European Heads of Government, focusing on articles that mention the euro, monetary union, and Structural and Cohesion funds. Fuchs was a Fulbright Fellow that researched how Spanish journalists covered the adoption of the Euro and the Monetary Union. These studies encompass over 200 lead newspaper articles in three of the largest Spanish newspapers. The scope and the depth of the research tactics used in these investigations was convincing and thorough, making me conclude that they were more than fit to use as a representative sources for news coverage on European integration in Spain.

## **EUROPEAN INTEGRATION COVERAGE FROM FRANCO TO EEC ACCESSION**

Anti-Europeanism emerged only for a stint of time during the Franco regime following the end of World War II. In contrast to the secular, leftist, decentralized and legitimate republican regime that he declared war on, Franco stood on a platform of nationalist, anti-communist and catholic rhetoric. In an attempt to legitimize the regime, Franco's nationalist rhetoric began to pick up tones of anti-Europeanism to promote its international isolation and autarkic nature as well as to thwart the rise of communism in several European nations (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001). The logic behind the anti-European discourse faded quickly in the 1950s however, as the communist parties in Western Europe were defeated and the stance towards the Franco regime by Western powers was softened. The rhetoric became increasingly de-legitimized with the failure of the autarkic economic policy in 1957, when Franco was forced to adopt liberalization reforms which opened Spain to international markets, primarily those of Europe (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001).

Lead articles drawn from *Abc* archives from the years 1946 to 1962, according to the study published by Gutiérrez and Medrano, never once mentioned any sort of opposition to European integration or Spain's cooperation in it (2001). This trend continued all the way through to death of Franco and until the period of accession. In the same study, articles from *Abc* and *El País* were

taken when topics of European integration, European institutions and Spain's relations with the European institutions appeared. It was revealed that between 1959 and 1985, 65% of the articles sampled dealt with the relationship between Spain and the EC, while 48% spoke more specifically about negotiation terms. The tone expressed in all of the articles was overwhelmingly positive towards Spain's membership to the European Economic Community (EEC). Emphasis was placed 20% of the time on the economic benefits derived from the expansion of the common market and 23 % of the time positive aspects for Europe and Spain in creating a cohesive political and economic alliance were highlighted (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001). In addition, 11 % of the articles asserted that membership to the EEC would allow for the abandonment of Spain's traditional isolation and 8 per cent remarked that membership would help to jump start the process of modernization of the country (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001).

Furthermore, in his book *Framing Europe*, Juan Diez Medrano examines editorial and opinion articles from *Abc* (1946-1997) and *El País* (1976-97) and notes that the coverage of the Spanish press is almost unanimously preoccupied with Spain's membership to the European Community, as well as the overt necessity to be at the forefront of the progression of the European project. As opposed to the other countries examined such as Germany or the United Kingdom, there is hardly ever an attempt by any of these media sources to debate the alternative options or drawbacks to participation in European integration (Medrano 2003). Hence, with regards to the Spanish public sphere,

European integration had been discussed primarily in the context of Spain's membership to the EEC and the merits that consequentially ensued.

Instead of practical concerns being the main logic behind the press's reasoning for European unification, most of the op-ed articles at the onset of the debate after World War II used a more philosophical and ideological approach for the justification of European integration. Going along with Franco's ideology, articles from *Abc* used the "moral crusade" against communism and capitalist materialism (as embodied by the United States), and the defense of Christian values as the main sources of rationalization for building a stronger Europe:

"Europe's mission consists of two successive tasks, although not necessarily immediate. The first is the creation of universally valuable works and the discovery of all the valuable aspects of human creation, including those from outside Europe...The second and final task of Europe's mission is that of offering to God, lucidly and intentionally, the truth and value of all human creations." (Pedro Laín Entralgo, "Misión de Europa," *Abc*, June 12, 1947)

There were also articles that drew on Spain's former role in the enrichment of European society and assert its ability to continue its legacy of contribution in the future and even hinted at the wounded pride felt due to the difficulties of the negotiation process:

"We, as Spaniards, are unpleasantly surprised and annoyed upon noticing that our collaboration in this task [European Unification] is not invited; they do not even ask us to express our opinion. There is passion there, but also blindness. Spain, western nation, the fourth in Europe from a demographic viewpoint and in terms of its potential, and the oldest constituted nation within western civilization, to which it adhered twenty centuries ago, is fully entitled to be taken into account...Any attempt to unify Europe in which Spain is not present will lack viability: it will be condemned to failure" (Alfredo Kindelán, "Sin España no habrá una Europa eficaz," *Abc*, October 19, 1956).

The initial focus of the press at the time was not one that necessarily highlighted the cultural similarities of Spain to the rest of Europe, but rather focused on a shared sense of purpose that was designed to end the isolation created by the Franco regime in the immediate post WWII period. However, the fact remains that the public, even at the initial stages of the Franco period, received information that Spain is European and that the government fully intended upon making efforts to unify itself for the betterment of the country.

In 1962 the Spanish government sent a letter to the European Community expressing interest in beginning negotiations for entrance into the organization. The letter was never answered as Spain would never be allowed admission so long as it was non-democratic. This rejection left the political elites and the press with the bitter reality that Spain was not a democracy. This setback launched a movement within the political elite to support the ending of Spain's isolation and to strengthen economic cooperation with the EEC in an attempt to lessen the discrepancy between the two. This obstacle in addition to the absence of viable alternatives to membership helped to spur public discourse about the costs of authoritarian rule (Medrano 2003). Some reports were so bold as to comment on the uniqueness of Spain's situation in comparison to other European states:

“In all the countries that belong to the Common Market or EFTA—with one single exception—there are political parties, open parliament, freedom of expression, a non-confessional state, and free trade unions. That is, a system that rests on an individualist—not means based, not family based—form of democracy...today's Europe rests on free newspapers, free weeklies, uncensored books, on a radio and a TV that—while state owned—maintain a balance between the different political tendencies...[F]rom the Pyrenees to Finland, fourteen countries live in and are governed by roughly comparable political regimes”(J.M. de Areiliza, “La primera década,” *Abc*, July 13, 1967).

For this reason Europe grew to become the primary representation of economic well-being after which Spain should model itself, and was presented as such by the political, economic and cultural elites of the time (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001). The strengthening of economic cooperation between the two entities led to tremendous economic growth in Spain during the 1960s, thereby serving as a legitimization tool for Franco's economic policy. This then deterred him from undermining the idealized image of Europe which was being portrayed by the elite and the media (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001).

Between 1967 and 1975, the year of Franco's death, Spain's relations with the EEC was the foremost discussed topic in the *Abc* op-ed articles dedicated to European integration (Medrano 2003). The articles underscored that necessity of secure trade agreements between Spain and the EEC were crucial to the country's endurance. The conversion of the dialogue with the EEC into a deliberation about the virtues of democracy inadvertently increased the salience and significance of membership. For many membership to the EEC was thought to be imminent when democracy came in 1975. Although to their grave disappointment, the road to accession was still several years away. As a result, accession to the EEC switched from being a sense of entitlement to being litmus test for democratic legitimacy. *El País*, founded in 1976, added to the commentary of the duration of the negotiation process. Like *Abc* however, *El País* spent hardly any time on debating the trajectory of European integration and

instead focused primarily on arguments of modernization and democratic stability as reasons to be in support of accession:

“In Spain, Europeanist feeling has generally been part of an endless and continuous civil war, cold or hot, latent or overt. One part of the population has always understood that in Europe, taken as a whole, ideas had been developed and proposals for societal transformation had been made there were beneficial to the entire population, and that through these ideas—about culture, education, equality of rights—one entered a stage of wealth distribution, of accumulation of technical, scientific, and economic benefits, in which one needed to participate” (“Europa en Madrid,” *El País*, June 21, 1981).

Another lead article published by *El País* in 1983 discussed how entrance into the common market reflects on the democratic makeup of Spanish institutions:

“Spain’s application to become a member of the EEC has always been guided by a double goal, political and economic. The goal of having its institutions recognized by the European democracies went hand in hand with the goal of inserting our economy in a market formed by developed countries” (“Atenas y el ingreso de España en el Mercado común, April 12, 1983).

The coverage of European integration by the Spanish press during the 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s gradually demonstrates the amalgamation that occurred between the Spanish and European identities. The rejection of the Spain’s application in 1962 initiated a public debate over the country’s lack of democracy and in essence made the negotiations with the EEC a type of political tool that the opposition could use against Franco. Although the freedom of the press was constrained during those times, talking about European integration made it possible to have a relatively open discussion about the deficiency of democratic organizations within the Franco regime. As the excerpts demonstrate, the op-ed articles that began as an effort to defeat communism and highlight the common

purposes between Spain and Europe in the 1950s developed into commentaries about Spain's isolation and inability to join the EEC in the 1970s. In fact, 42% of the op-ed articles examined by the Gutiérrez and Medrano study that were published between 1959 and 1976 mentioned the connection between democracy and accession to the EEC. What is even more revealing is that from 1972 forward, every lead op-ed article on European integration in *Abc* and *El País* that brought up the association between democracy and membership to the European Community appealed for this exact transition (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001).

The public discourse that occurred during and soon after the Franco regime portrayed European integration and Spain's role in it as positive and not infringing on Spanish, or even regional, identities. Of the articles surveyed on European integration only 1.5% even alluded to a potential negative ramification of European integration on Spanish or regional identity. The absence of negative debate on European integration has permitted Spaniards to view their national, regional and European identities as compatible.

Hence, due to the ruling elites ensuing pursuance of admission into the EEC the first seedlings were planted for public debate on European integration and provided the foundation for which many of the ideas and myths about Europe were laid in the Spanish collective consciousness (Medrano 2003). The idea of European integration to the Spanish population is one that has been developed over time and aided by its coverage in the media. The positive image of Europe as depicted in a vast majority of the articles clearly demonstrates

agenda setting and framing tactics that orient the audience towards Europe in a pro-European manner. Europe was discussed with a very specific approach, where idealized discourse accompanied anti-isolationist and pro-democratic attitudes, which heightened its existence in the minds of the Spanish citizens. Joining the EC was on the elite's agenda, and with the help of the media, the conceptualization of what Europe represented aided in manipulating the public's view towards European integration.

## **EUROPEAN INTEGRATION COVERAGE POST ACCESSION**

Observing the press in more recent events reveals similar trends with respect to coverage on Europe and European integration. By beginning simply with headlines taken from *El País* during the time of Spain's accession on January 1, 1986 the enthusiasm with which the event was embraced was well announced, "¡Aleluya por Europa!" (Halleluiah for Europe!), 'El destino europeo de España' (Spain's European Destiny), and 'La reconversión europea de España' (Spain's European restructuring). Whether or not to enter into the EEC never entered into the realm of public debate as the public, the press and the political elites were all collectively aligned in agreement. National celebratory events took place in Madrid where political leaders and even the king made speeches that were broadcast nationwide and directly related the nation to the democratic principles that fortify the European project (Cooper 2001).

The examination of Spain's press coverage on European affairs in the post-accession period is most ample at times of perceived national importance. The bi-annual summits of the European Council head of government are times when the more significant political pronouncements are decided regarding matters that affect all member states. During these times press interest is higher and national attitudes more distinctly affect coverage, providing the most ideal of circumstances for analysis. The Luxemburg Summit held in December of 1997 is

one that is of particular interest as its main topics were the European Union's plan for central and eastern enlargement and the adoption of the euro in the coming year. These issues were of extreme importance to Spain, as it fully intended on participating in the adoption of the single currency and the further enlargement necessitated a renegotiation of the European Budget. These budget negotiations are related to adjustments in the Structural and Cohesion funds, of which Spain was a major recipient, and consequentially incur a potential threat for Spain to receive less money from the European Budget in the future. These therefore received a special amount of coverage.

Starting with an article from *El País* in December of 1997, France is described as "aislada" (isolated) during the budget negotiations due to a bloc produced by efforts from Spain and Germany. The reporter specifically chooses to describe the efforts as "encabezado" or led by Spain and Germany, deliberately placing them as important instruments in directing the negotiations. Later on in the same article, Gil-Robles, the Spanish national who at the time was the President of the European Parliament, is reported as successfully fulfilling his duty to maintain a neutral stance in expressing the views of the entire parliament throughout the budget negotiations (Folch, 'Francia aislada en el intento de mezclar la ampliación de la UE al Este con su factura,' *El País* December 13, 1997).

A report from *El Mundo* the next day alludes to a similar victorious and competent leadership by revealing how Spain was able to force an alteration to the schemes that would constrict the extent of the European budget in the future.

The “batalla financiera” or financial battle was put off until 1999 due to the influence of Spain. In addition, several quotes from the Spanish Prime Minister Aznar state “We have assured that no one will tarnish the steps towards the Eastern enlargement,” and with almost identical wording “We have assured that no one will tarnish this historical process with further questioning.” The reporters of the piece go on to write that “it is certain that yesterday Spain managed to turn this most controversial chapter to its end” and that Prime Ministers Aznar bravely “launched the battle, body to body” over lunch. They continue by saying that “practically all the countries found the Spanish arguments reasonable” and that, based on those reasons, “the EU fifteen decided to renew the entire chapter” and finally “in the end, the conclusions ended on Spain’s side” (Cruz and Segovia, ‘España gana el pulso a Francia y logra retrasar la batalla financiera hasta 1999,’ *El Mundo*, December 12, 1997).

Another article from *El País* quotes a list made by Aznar himself, noting the achievements accomplished during the summit and addresses the “modesty and satisfaction” he showed “for having covered the objectives set out by the government.” The reporter discusses Spain’s “triumfo completamente” or complete triumph and depicts Aznar as a leader that can be trusted to fulfill the country’s obligations (Larraya and Oppenheimer, ‘Aznar satisfecho porque la cumbre no fija un tope financiero,’ *El País*, December 14 1997).

The images used in these articles are not subtle. The reports are from a distinctly national perspective that places Spain at the forefront of the negotiations, and makes the nation an important contributor that is influential in

the decisions being made. It is important to note as well that the positive portrayal of Aznar is echoed in both *El Mundo* and in *El País*, the two most popular but ideologically contrasting printed national print news sources. The coverage in *El Mundo* is not surprising, given its habitual support of Aznar's party, Partido Popular (PP). *El País*, on the other hand, traditionally backs the left wing PSOE and yet during this period it represents the work of Aznar in the summit in almost equal terms. Both periodicals highlight the defense of Spain's national interests and focus on describing Spain's role in Europe as active, influential and on the inside of the negotiations. The "us" versus "them" framing technique is used, but not in the context of being excluded from the negotiations, but rather placing Spain as the enforcer of justice against those other nations that have managed to wonder off the more righteous path.

The financial battle that was put off in the Luxemburg Summit sprang up as a theme in some reports in *El Mundo* during the Vienna Summit in December of 1998. The language used to cover the event refers to metaphors of battle and links the European funding matters with enlargement as a question of the rich versus the poor. In one report, printed on December 11, 1998, states that Prime Minister Aznar is geared up "to blast the meeting in order to defend the assistance funds" (Marisa Cruz, 'Aznar se prepara para batallar por el Fondo de Cohesión en Viena,' *El Mundo*). Another report illustrates how France and Germany formed a coalition in an attempt to make Spain give way in the discussions about capping the future budget of the EU. The coalition will attempt to "defeat Spain in the financial battle" when the "millions of dollars from the

Structural and Cohesion Funds” will be in the “first line of fire.” The landscape was set for confrontation, but by the third report, Aznar is quoted as having been successful one more time at putting off the negotiations just as he did in Luxemburg by saying, “mission complete, objectives complete” (Marisa Cruz, ‘Aznar retrasa la batalla del dinero y proclama “misión cumplida,”’ *El Mundo*, December 13, 1998).

This coverage of the press uses language that identifies the Prime Minister as the defender of national interests while at the same time identifying him with the public. The negotiations in the upcoming year are interpreted as being long and difficult and indicate that those who are not in favor of the Cohesion Funds will attempt to deter the overall objective. In several reports, direct quotes are juxtaposed with metaphors of conflict and conquest, placing Spain along with its leader in a victorious outcome (Marisa Cruz, ‘Francia y Alemania se alían para batir a España en Viena,’ *El Mundo*, December 12, 1997). Spain’s national interest is tied to the belief of interregional camaraderie between regions and the enlargement. Prime Minister Aznar defends the “the unity that started with the Treaty of Rome,” and illustrates the idea that it is the rich countries that should be able to make some sacrifices. “Solidarity” he says, “should be maintained” and calls for modifications in the “research and development programs” and the “subsidization of agricultural exports” which benefit the “most prosperous countries” (Segovia and Cruz, ‘Aznar frena en Viena el plan franco-alemán de financiación de la Unión Europea,’ *El Mundo*, December 12, 1998). In other articles Aznar is reported as sympathizing with the

applicant countries and points out the injustice of not allowing the applicant countries to benefit from the cohesion funds since they have already adapted their economies to the euro. He even remarks that Spain at the time had still not achieved the European average in wealth per head in the EU 15 (Cooper 2001).

The Spanish press strongly attempts to render Spain as an active member in the European project. As opposed to portraying Spain as an outsider, ineffective or without purpose, the press clearly depicts a picture of effective leadership and significance. This positive pro-EU attitude spans the traditionally partisan press, forging a united image of Spain's role in the process of European integration. This image is due, in part, to the need for Spain to fully authenticate its departure from its past years of international isolation and economic backwardness. Integration with Europe, as presented by the press, uses descriptions of strength, leadership in order to reinforce its international participation and ability to be taken seriously by other nations. Participation in Europe authenticates Spain's international esteem and the national press presents these sentiments accordingly.

In May of 1998, Spain entered into the euro zone along with the rest of the participating member states. The adoption of the euro was not covered in the media as euphorically as Spain's accession to the EEC. Nevertheless, this was depicted as a momentous occasion that was symbolic of Spain's equality in a democratic project (Cooper 2001). In an article from *El País* titled "La larga marcha" or The Long March, Joaquín Estefanía paints a historical picture of Spain as having made a long march of almost 40 years that finally culminates

with his nation's inclusion in the euro zone. He makes a correlation between the philosopher Ortega y Gasset's work called *Spain is the problem: Europe is the Solution*, and the "technocrats" that gave an "amazing turn to an impoverished Spain, backwards and rural timidly looking from the outside." The 40 years were a journey "to the horizon called Europe." Europe has given Spain "democracy, a market economy, a rapprochement for social protection" and Spanish citizens "aspire to this corpus europeo." He points out the how the momentous passage imparts on many individuals and that "Europe has been a project that no one can claim as exclusive" (*El País*, May 3, 1998).

An earlier article from Estefanía underscores how significant it is for Spaniards to be considered a part of Europe and reiterates that adopting the euro does not make them European, since they already are, but instead will allow them like never before to be "Spanish citizens of Europe." Unlike in the past, "Spain arrives on time" ('Europeos también para lo bueno,' *El País*, April 26, 1998). Other references are made to arriving on time by other reports from *El País*. In an interview conducted with the Finance Minister Rodrigo Rato, the EU is depicted as "a project of the present and future." Spain "has made the final pass in integration with Europe" and now it is Spain's duty to "contribute to this project" and to meet "the conditions of advancement at the same pace as the rest of the member states" (Rodrigo Rato, 'España ha cogido al fin el paso de la integración europea,' *El País*, May 3, 1998). In another interview on the same day in *El Mundo*, Aznar is quoted as saying "for the first time in our history, we are not hung up; we are not still in route. We have arrived on time." A sense of

pride is indicated when he refers to the fact Spain, in its efforts to prepare for the euro, did not have to ask for “flexibility” in the economic requirements and that it can take full credit for this achievement. Spain has been brought to the “heart of Europe by its own merit” (Marisa Cruz, ‘Por una vez llegamos a tiempo y nadie nos ha reglado nada,’ *El Mundo*, May 3, 1998).

An end of year editorial published in December titled *1898-1998* draws on the past one hundred years of Spanish history. The editorial begins by looking back on the catastrophic events that took place in 1898, when Spain “was isolated, with no weight in the international realm” but now in 1998 it is a “nation in peace, respected and integrated in the European project.” Spain “has been provided with a constitution and political institutions that sustain a diverse and democratic life that is able to accommodate every citizen.” This is in stark distinction to the Franco years when “Spain lived in one of the longest and hardest periods of isolation” (Cooper 2001).

In fact, as in her report, *Spanish Journalists Adore the Euro*, Dale Fuchs interviews journalists from across the nation, all of whom echo a similar sort of enthusiasm in respect to what being in the euro zone means to their country. Business writers from *Colpisa*, Spain’s national news agency say, “It symbolizes democracy and modernity,” and “it anchors Spain to Europe.” Another editor and columnist from *La Vanguardia* comments, “it means we’ve caught the train of history,” and “we have the opportunity to end the century in the rich folks club, to belong to the group in charge.”

According to Fuchs, unlike other member states, Spain had little public debate over the prospect of a monetary union. Referendums were never considered, as there was undivided support from both the conservative and socialist parties. These factors, along with several others, “pushed the issue of monetary union far from the sphere of cost-benefit analysis and into the fuzzier realm of status symbol and national pride.” She describes how in contrast with other nations, such as Great Britain and Germany, issues like the loss of national sovereignty and separation anxiety from their former long time currency were never brought to the forefront in the public arena. The members of the Spanish press, “have breathlessly told a pretty tale,” but have neglected to discuss how individual nations will no longer be able to devalue their currencies or manipulate interest rates to quick fix their economies. In an interview with Ramón Munez, a business reporter from *El Mundo*, the sentiment of the press is summed up well when he comments, “Coming out with an argument highly critical of the euro is like, in the United States, coming out in favor of socialized health care and high taxes. If you say something, your colleagues dismiss you with a condescending smile, like you’re weird. No one wants to go against the current” (Fuchs 1999: 37).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The picture of Europe, as seen in the press, is clear. Prior to accession, Spain's elites believed that Europe was the model to which Spain needed to aspire. The elites, using the press as a vehicle, attempted to emphasize the economic benefits and common sense of purpose for internationalizing the economy. Nevertheless, the stark contrasts between Spain and the rest of Western Europe became increasingly apparent. As a consequence, Europe transitioned into being the symbolic answer to all of Spain's problems. The public debate that transpired due in part to the information provided by the press, resulted in the public viewing integration with Europe as being the most legitimate way to prove its democratic transition and complete exodus from its former self. Upon its entrance into the European Community, Spain's press continues to portray Europe in a positive light, reporting Spain's involvement and ability as needed to be taken seriously by the its fellow member states. This positive portrayal serves to legitimize the progress that Spain has made and emphasizes Spain's ability to participate in the international arena.

Spain's media coverage in European affairs is highly consonant, which heightens its ability to influence public opinion. Consonance is a term used to describe the amount of polarization within a particular media system. It is defined as "a large extent of similarity in the presentation of certain material in all the

media. The basic idea is that, if all media depict and evaluate an issue similarly, citizens hardly have a chance not to be exposed to that information. ... This presents an ideal situation for the media to external powerful effects.” (Peter 2004:144) In the case of Spain, with respect to European integration, the news media coverage is highly consonant.

When a citizen is inundated with media coverage that is consonant on a particular issue, their ability to selectively choose the sort of media message they are exposed to is diminished. People traditionally seek out news sources that are most similar to their own opinions. This phenomenon is precisely why consonant news coverage has the capability of producing powerful effects on public opinion. As opposed to dissonant coverage, whereby the media allocate contrasting views of a particular matter, consonant coverage disallows the public a choice of tone because its treatment is either blanketly positive or negative. As a result, with respect to the EU, pro integration advocates are constantly confronted with uniform messages that are always negative or positive and the same is true for anti integration advocates. This condition disallows the difference of reaction that would take place within a dissonantly covered media system, causing EU supporters and EU opponents alike to show increasing or decreasing support for EU integration, depending on the tone of the consonant media coverage (Peter 2004).

Research also indicates that when the elites within a political system are reported as opposing one another, the public tends to take more notice. The public is more likely to register a subject as being important if the elites are willing

to take opposite sides in regards to it (Peter 2003). Drawing on these ideas in regards to the case of European integration in the Spanish media, the consonance of the media and the lack of opposing elite interaction on the integration issue give the public less opportunity to regard European integration as anything but positive. If the media were more dissonant about European integration, the notoriously pro-European Spanish public opinion might not be quite so widespread. In fact as mentioned previously, the costs and benefits of integration are not as fully developed in the Spanish media as they perhaps are in other national media, which points to the idea that in the case of Spain, “public debate about foreign policy with respect to Europe has been driven more by the desire to ‘be there’ than by a systematic discussion of the merits and drawbacks of different integration projects” (Medrano, 2003).

The findings provide an interesting insight into the character of Spain’s pro-European outlook. These conclusions however, should be assessed while taking into account the inherent difficulties that materialize when making conclusions about how the portrayal of Europe in the Spanish media affects public opinion. It can be said that public opinion about the EU is the outcome of an endless combination of matters that stem from multiple variables including the nation’s historical relationship to the continent, its legacy of democracy and its economic state of affairs. All of these factors no doubt have shaped and contribute to how the Spanish public views European institutions.

In addition, the level of knowledge when it comes to the EU and its institutions is markedly low in Spain (Szmolka 1999). This fact, along with the

lack of public debate about the costs and benefits of participating in the EU, leads to the question of what exactly Spaniards are responding to in the opinion polls. This makes the assessment of what is at the root of public opinion all the more difficult. Spain also has noticeably low levels of civic participation and low levels of interest in politics (Sanders 2004). As a result, the pro-European stance could be the ramification of apathy rather than valid support. Taking these mitigating factors into account does not, however, wholeheartedly contradict the assertion that the coverage of the media has a role in Spain's pro-European approach. Spain's media is certainly not the sole determining factor that drives public opinion toward support of Europe, but the nature of its coverage does help to protect the image of Europe, and neglects to provide ammunition for anti-EU sentiments. The media is one of the many contributing factors for Spain's pro-European position.

Although the power of the media to coerce public opinion is not perfectly understood, it is an important factor when considering how the public views particular issues. The media in its reporting on unobtrusive topics such as European integration hold a special position in terms of its ability to distribute information to the public. Spain's pro-European outlook provides an interesting framework for investigative purposes, as its mainstream national media is non-polarized in its positive attitudes towards Europe. When examining the coverage of Europe in the Spanish press, Europe is not commonly framed in public discussions as being a threat to national or regional identities. On the contrary, Europe, and more specifically European integration, are depicted in terms that

are almost unanimously positive. The ramification of this positive representation affects the Spanish public's perception of being European, making them place their European-ness in a unique position within the framework of their overall identity (Gutiérrez and Medrano 2001). Spaniards have decided it seems, that democracy, modernization and international openness are better than authoritarian backwardness and isolation, and that integration with Europe is the way in which those goals are guaranteed. The press then reinforces this positive association with Europe through the use of specific pro-EU integration frames, all the while serving to help inform the public the pros of European integration.

## Works cited

Cooper, Terry. "Aleluya Por Europa!" Press treatment of European Union in Spain and the United Kingdom. *IJIS* 14 (2) 110-122. Intellect Ltd 2001.

Cruz, Marisa. 'Aznar se prepara para batalla por el Fondo de Cohesión en Viena.' *El Mundo*. 11 December 1998

Cruz, Marisa. 'Aznar retrasa la batalla del dinero y proclama 'mission cumplida'''. *El Mundo*. 13 December 1998

Cruz Marisa. 'Por una vez llegamos a tiempo y nadie nos ha regalado nada.' *El Mundo*. 3 May 1998.

D'Haenens, Leen. Euro-Vision: The Portrayal of Europe in the Quality Press. *International Communication Gazette* 2005; 67; 419.

Estudio General de Medios (EGM). Asociación para la investigación de Medios de Comunicación (AIMC). Capitán Haya, 61 28020 Madrid. <http://www.aimc.es>

Estefanía, Joaquín. 'Europeos Tambien para lo bueno.' *El Pais*. 26 April 1998

Estefanía, Joaquín. 'La larga marcha.' *El País*. 3, May 1998.

Fuchs, Dale. Spanish Journalists Adore the Euro. *International Journalism*. Nieman Reports Fall 1999.

Guitérrez, Paula y Juan Diez Medrano. Nested Identities: National and European Identity in Spain. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 24. No. 5 September 2001, pp753-778. 2001 Taylor and Francis Ltd.

Gunther, Richard. *The Media and Politics in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy*. Institut de Ciéncies Polítiques i Socials (ICPS). Barcelona 1999.

Inthorn, Sanna. What does it mean to be an EU Citizen: How News Media Construct Civic and Cultural Concepts of Europe. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*. 2006, University of Westminster, London, Vol. 3 (3): 71-90

Jiménez, Antonia Maria Ruiz y Victor Sampedro. *La Constitución Europea en la prensa española de ámbito nacional; un análisis comparativo de El País, El Mundo y ABC*. Real Instituto Eleano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos. Documento de Trabajo (DT) 1/2005

Larraya, J.M. and W. Oppenheimer, "Aznar satisfecho porque la cumbre no fija un tope financiero." *El Pais*, 14 December 1997

Llamazares, Ivan and Wladimir Gramacho. Eurosceptics among Euroenthusiasts. An Análisis of Southern European Public Opinions. Area De Ciencia Política, Facultad de Derecho. Universidad de Salamanca. 200?.

Medrano, Juan Diez. Framing Europe: Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Princeton University Press. 2003.

Peter, Jochen. Country Characteristics as Contingent Conditions of Agenda Setting: The Moderating Influence of Polarized Elite Opinion. *Communication Research* 2003; 30; 683. Sage Publications.

Peter, Jochen. Our Long "Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media"—A cross National Comparative Investigation of the effects of constant media coverage. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. Vol. 16, No. 2. World Association for Public Opinion Research 2004.

Rato, Rodrigo. 'España has cogido al fin el paso de la integración europea.' *El País*. 3, May 1998.

Sanders, Karen and Maria Jose Canel. Spanish Politicians and the Media: Controlled Visibility and Soap Opera Politics. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 57 No. 1, 196-208. Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government 2004.

Schuck, A. and Claes H. de Vreese. Between Risk and Opportunity: News Framing and its Effects on Public Support for EU Enlargement. *European Journal of Communication* 2006; 21; 5. Sage Publications.

Segovia, Carlos. 'Es España un país pobre?' *El Mundo*. 11, December 1998.

Semetko, H. et al. Europeanized Politics—Europeanized Media? *European Integration and Political Communication*.

Senante-Berendes, Heidy Christina. La Opinión Pública Española ante el tratado de la Unión Europea. Insitut de Cultura Juan Gil-Albert, Generalitat Valenciana, Conselleria d'Educació i Ciència. 1999.

Szmulka, Inmaculada. Opiniones y Actitudes de los Españoles ante el proceso de integración europea. *Opiniones y Actitudes* N. 21. Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. 1999.

Standard Eurobarometer "How Europeans See themselves" 2000

Standard Eurobarometer 63.4 Public Opinión in the European Union National Report, Executive Summary, Spain- Spring 2005

Special Eurobarometer "The Future of Europe" 2006