

# **Global television news in Spanish: a comparison of news content on CCTV-E, RT and HispanTV**

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# Agenda

1. Power and international broadcasting
2. Global information flows
3. Research questions
4. Methods and sampling
5. Results
6. Discussion

# IBC | Definitions

«the elegant term for a complex combination of state-sponsored news, information, and entertainment directed at a population outside the sponsoring state's boundaries» (Price 2003, p. 53)

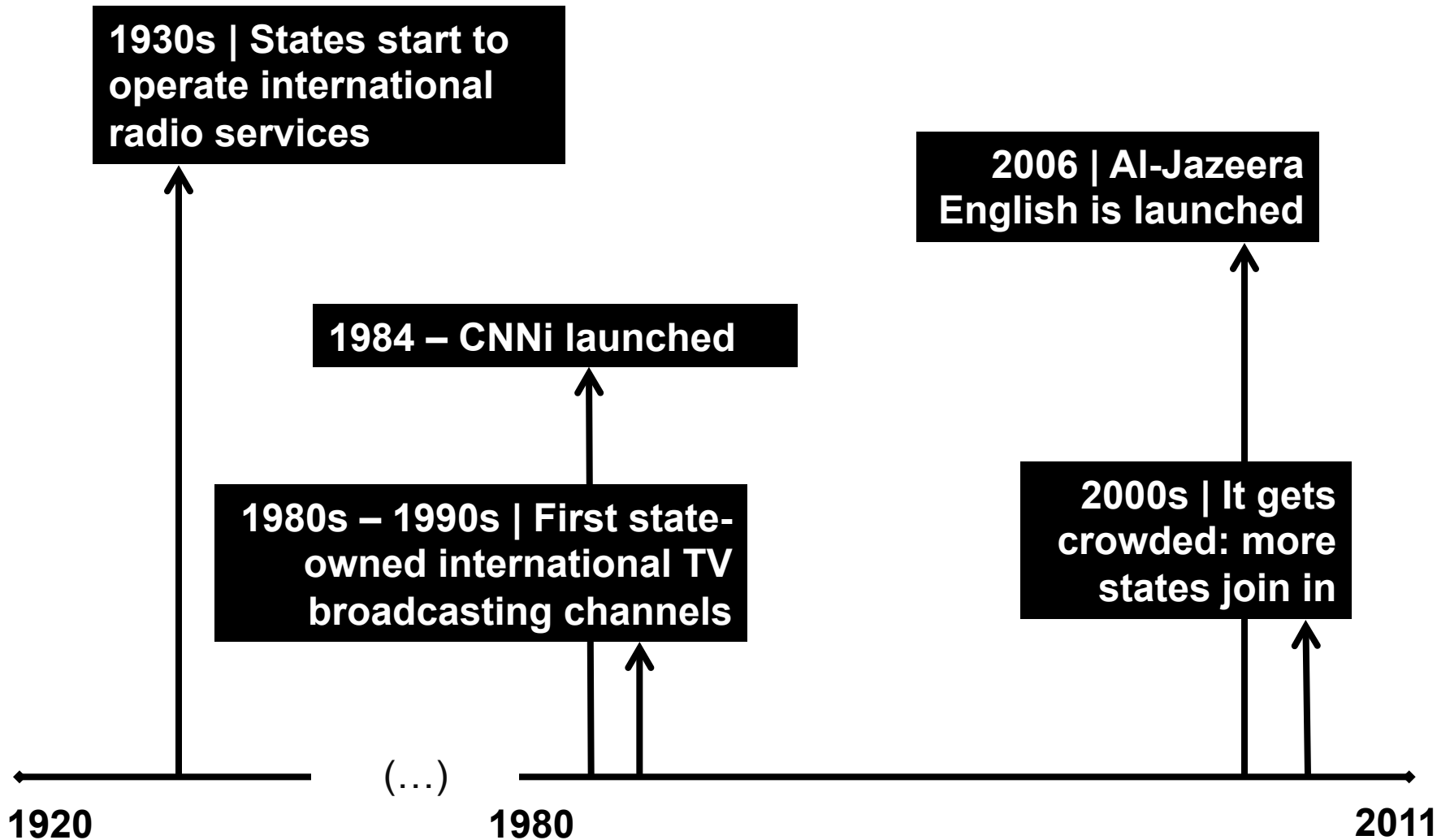
«an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by using the technologies of radio, television, and the Internet to engage with foreign publics» (Cull 2008, p. 34)

# IBC | Formula & Goals

- As a public diplomacy tool, IBC serves a double purpose:
  - Generate (national) appeal
  - Shape opinions and perceptions

IBC = Resources x Credibility x Audience

# IBC | Evolution



# Information flows

- There has been a monopoly of Anglo-American news narratives and discourses (BBC, CNN...). Alternatives are born often in opposition to them
- “RT tells the stories of anonymous heroes of our times to whom others do not listen”
- There is little evidence on how these (if so) counter-hegemonic discourses are crafted.

# IBC in Spanish

- Radio broadcasting was largely dominated by the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain.
- The TV sector is a mixture of:
  - Latin American stations (TeleSur)
  - North American enterprises (CCN Español)
  - Global actors (CCTV-Español)

# Research questions

- RQ<sub>1</sub>: What genres, reporting patterns and journalistic styles are used in the 3 channels?
- RQ<sub>2</sub>: What are the most often covered countries and topics, and what actors are most often featured on news shows?
- RQ<sub>3</sub>: How are the United States and Latin American countries covered?

# Methods

- Content analysis of news content over a period of 4 months (April to July 2014)
  - Two randomly constructed weeks
  - One daily news show (30') from 3 international broadcasters from 'Global South'
    - CCTV-E
    - HispanTV
    - RT Actualidad
  - News stories as unit of analysis

# The three broadcasters

	<b>CCTV-E</b>	<b>HispanTV</b>	<b>RT Actualidad</b>
<b>First broadcast</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Home country</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>Russia</b>
<b>Channel content</b>	<b>News &amp; entertainment</b>	<b>News &amp; entertainment</b>	<b>News</b>
<b>% current affairs</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Europe, Latin America, Internet</b>	<b>Europe, Latin America, Internet</b>	<b>Europe, Latin America, Internet</b>
<b>Other languages</b>	<b>English, Arabic, French, Russian [Chinese]</b>	<b>English, Arabic</b>	<b>English, Arabic, [Russian]</b>

# The three broadcasters



# Findings |

- News show has three fixed sections
  1. Domestic news
  2. International news
  3. Cultural/Entertainment news
- Format was ‘modernized’ in early April 2014, but is rather limited in diversity of formats and genres.

# Findings |

- The predominant format is that of package, news are rarely interpretative and there is a clear agenda in stories about China
- Geographically Asian countries are featured more prominently and the US is just a marginal actor.

# Findings |



- Employs Iranian, Latin American and Spanish journalists. It has a large network of freelance reporters.
- HispanTV has a majority of “hard news” (over 70%) and is the only channel that has regular sport news (20% of news items).

# Findings |



- Self-called ‘experts/analysts’ are regularly interviewed and their opinions serve to reinforce HispanTV’s agenda:
  - This includes: anti-capitalist stance, pro-democracy position and New Leftism
  - Nonetheless HispanTV has the highest number of ‘balanced’ stories (60%)
- Iran is the most often mentioned country (China is in CCTV-E, Russia in RT)



- Misse-en-scene is very dynamic
  - Multiple camera movements
  - Video-wall is incorporated
- Makes uses of Internet and SNS often.
- Anchors are always female, but there are different anchors for different days.

# Findings |



- RT is the channel that uses analysis as a format most often (10% on stories).
- Stories are often opinionated and (55%) are interpretative (30%), with only one side of “conflict stories” being mentioned often (90%).
- RT often uses self-called “experts” to skew the perspective on a story.

# Framing the US

- The United States is a country around which foreign policy is determined in the 3 countries.
- The US was the main country in 20% of the stories. Almost as much as any of the other home countries.
  - Even when not central, the country was mentioned in another 5%.
- Over 60% of the mentions were in a neutral light, and 40% negative.

# Framing the US

## Political imperialism (30% of stories about the US)

- US imposes economic sanctions to Russia. Obama has accused Russia of not taking a peaceful route regarding Ukraine (CCTV, 28/04/14).

- Obama: “Our objective [in signing an agreement with the Philippines to promote regional peace] is not to control or contain China. Our objective is to guarantee that international laws and rules are respected, and that includes maritime disputes” (CCTV, 28/04/14).

## Double standards (30% of stories about the US)

- ‘An expert’: “US criticizes Syria’s decision to go forward with their elections, but they do recognize the coup and spurious government in Ukraine. The West always tries to legitimize their puppet friends, while criticizing those who do not suit them” (RT, 28/04/14)

- “The US punishes the use of bombs in their country, but encourages them in Ukraine”(…) “The US are responsible for the *coup d’état* in Ukraine and want to control the country” (RT 15/05/14)

# Latin America

- Although the 3 channels use Spanish and are said to be targeting Hispanic communities, coverage of Latin America is poor. Less than 5% of stories have a Latin American country as the main actor. Stories about Spain are less than 10%.
- Coverage of Latin American nations tends to be positive and in alignment with foreign policy.
  - Covering protests of opposition in Venezuela, RT alleges that arrests are made in protection of human rights.
  - In HispanTV, Nicaragua is praised for maintaining peaceful relations with Iran, when only a few still do.

# Discussion

- IBC comes in different shapes and it would be misleading to assume that it is possible to reduce it all to one single label.
  - Reporting patterns vary and, thus, discourses are crafted differently.
  - Some stations are overtly opinionated and feature straight forward agendas.
  - There is considerable difference within channels (inter-program variety)

# Discussion

- The US or European countries sometimes are not even openly referred to, but they are present in the political context around which news stories are constructed.
  - For example, in Syria, Ukraine or Iraq, developments are judged through these countries.
  - European and American cultural activities are the first to receive attention.