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Review

Los estudios de la audiencia: De la tradición a la innovación

Natalia Quintas-Froufe and Ana González-Neira (Coords.)

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This book deals with audience measurement, especially in what concerns the main Spanish media industries. This collective work consists of ten chapters, signed by 17 scholars and professionals. It includes a prologue by Margarita Ollero, former president of the AIMC, the Spanish association for media research, which runs studies such as the renowned EGM (General Media Study).

In the first chapter, Amparo Huertas makes a literary review of the notion of audience. She remarks the historical evolution of this concept in rapport to various economic and political conditions; the understanding of the audience as citizens, public or commodity; and issues that affect audience measurement. She also makes a case of why advertising-free media do not show much interest in running representative samples.

She concludes that this practice could lead to a “proliferation of micro-sociological studies” (p. 39) in case each media focuses only on those niches they are targeting. In the second chapter, Juan-José Igartúa focuses on reception studies. He includes a large number of references on these studies where “interaction between a person and a media message” occurs (p. 44). He underlines the survey and the experiment as quantitative methods to analyse reception, as well as self-report and physiological measures as instruments to that end. In the third chapter, Javier Callejo undertakes matters related to audience, attention and interactivity. However, the methodologies applied to audience research constitute the main contribution of this chapter. He throws light upon “observation strategies” (p. 81), but also includes surveys or qualitative studies (which are not observation), and cross-media studies that can apply methods such as panels or census.

In the fourth chapter we find a change of scope, from measurement to participation. The authors discuss fan studies, activism (exemplified by cases of citizen journalism), and content consumption and content creation on social media.

The remaining chapters focus on audience research and they are organised according to the different types of media. The structure of each chapter varies. But they all contribute to the goal of offering the reader a complete view of audience measurement systems, emphasising the studies available in Spain. Luis Miguel Pedrero and Jose María Legorburu give accounts of radio audience research. They thoroughly explain the EGM, as a key study for radio stations –as well as other media– in Spain. They refer to studies in Spain (such as *Navegantes en la red*, or the Q panel) and in other countries that can be useful to measure digital and on demand listening. They conclude the chapter making remarks about the contributions of social media. The second section of the next chapter is devoted to audience research methods as well, but related to the study of newspapers and magazines, as to identify the main sources to collect data for Spanish brands (AIMC and OJD). In the final section, the authors run an analysis of the main characteristics and evolution of these audiences. Although complete, its reach is constrained to our present time. In the chapter devoted to television audience measurement, Ana-Isabel Rodríguez-Vázquez describes *Kantar’s people meter panel* in Spain, with a complete account of what it currently measures and how. She explains concepts as ‘reach’ or ‘rating’ (section 3) and summarises the main

challenges of the panel system, in relation to the incorporation of OTT platforms. She studies how these challenges have been tackled in foreign countries, as well as the main needs of these companies in the Spanish media market. Luis Deltell focuses on film audience research through a historical overview of the box office measurement system and runs a comparative analysis between the Spanish and the American industry. He reasons on the effect of the Covid pandemic on cinema, and on how platforms such as Filmin, Netflix or social media do not usually share the information they gather. In chapter 9, devoted to Internet audience research, Natalia Papí and Marta Perlado embark on the study of three of its challenges: measuring population, users or audience; measuring actively or passively; and having adequate metrics. In section three they give a detailed account on Spanish studies. They summarise the main characteristics of those studies on a final table (pages 234 and 235) along with a useful list of key terms.

Vanessa Rodríguez and Jorge Gallardo wrap up the book with a chapter on the main challenges faced by audience measurement with up to date and significant references. They deepen on issues such as participation and multi-device and delayed consumption, as seen in previous chapters. But they also offer solutions as *Kantar's focal meter* in Spain. They meditate on the contribution of measuring social networks or the challenges of including OTTs. The section about hybrid audiences can serve as an inspiration for future research proposals for professionals as well as scholars.

In summary, Quintas-Froufe and González-Neira have coordinated a book of great interest to find out how the audience is measured in Spain and the challenges it currently faces. Each author has freely structured their chapters, but the set includes all the key Spanish sources of media data. The various literary reviews and references offered by the contributors are useful to dig into these topics. Therefore, the reader could go through it thoroughly or just look for a specific contribution on a specific medium and find a rewarding work on the matter.