CULTURE ON SPANISH TELEVISION: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THE ROLE OF CULTURAL MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS IN FUTURE PROGRAMMING

LA CULTURA EN LA TELEVISIÓN ESPAÑOLA: DESAFÍOS, OPORTUNIDADES Y EL ROL DEL PROFESIONAL DE LA GESTIÓN CULTURAL EN LA PROGRAMACIÓN DEL FUTURO

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	ABSTRACT
Keywords: cultural programming, television, streaming, cultural management, challenges	This study addresses the current landscape of television in Spain regarding cultural programming, analyzing how it has evolved and the challenges it faces. Over time, spaces dedicated to cultural and educational content have been decreasing, replaced by commercial formats. This change has been driven by the pursuit of economic profitability, the lack of regulations ensuring the presence of cultural programming, and the competition from streaming platforms. The study is based on a comparative analysis of the weekly programming of the main television networks in 2016 and 2025. For this, quantitative techniques were used to compare the presence of various television genres over time and determine whether the differences are statistically significant. The most relevant results show that cultural content has been displaced, while informational and entertainment programs dominate the schedule. Moreover, the influence of streaming platforms has led to a more homogeneous and superficial television. In light of this situation, the article concludes that it is crucial to rethink the role of public audiovisual service by implementing policies that ensure the inclusion of cultural content during prime-time slots. As a solution to revitalize cultural programming on television, the incorporation of cultural management professionals with multidisciplinary training is proposed. These professionals would be capable of designing innovative strategies to adapt cultural content to new audiovisual consumption trends, promoting dynamic, accessible, and relevant formats for a diverse audience.
	RESUMEN
Palabras clave: programación cultural, televisión, streaming, gestión cultural, desafíos	Este estudio aborda el panorama actual de la televisión en España en relación con la programación cultural, analizando cómo ha evolucionado y los desafíos que enfrenta. A lo largo del tiempo, los espacios dedicados a contenidos culturales y educativos han ido disminuyendo, siendo reemplazados por formatos comerciales. Este cambio ha sido impulsado por la búsqueda de rentabilidad económica, la falta de regulaciones que garanticen la presencia de

programación cultural, y la competencia de las plataformas de streaming. El estudio se basa en un análisis comparativo de la programación semanal de las principales cadenas de televisión en los años 2016 y 2025. Para ello, se utilizaron técnicas cuantitativas para comparar la presencia de los diversos géneros televisivos a lo largo del tiempo y determinar si las diferencias son estadísticamente significativas. Los resultados más relevantes muestran que los contenidos culturales han sido desplazados, mientras que los programas informativos y de entretenimiento dominan la parrilla. Además, la influencia de las plataformas de streaming ha llevado a una televisión más homogénea y superficial. Ante esta situación, el artículo concluye que es crucial replantear el rol del servicio público audiovisual, implementando políticas que aseguren la inclusión de contenidos culturales en franjas horarias de alta audiencia. Como solución para revitalizar la programación cultural en la televisión, se propone la incorporación de profesionales en la gestión cultural, con formación multidisciplinaria, capaces de diseñar estrategias innovadoras que adapten el contenido cultural a las nuevas tendencias de consumo audiovisual. Esto permitiría promover formatos dinámicos, accesibles y relevantes para una audiencia diversa.

Introduction

Television in Europe, unlike in the United States, has been, since its invention, a primary medium for the dissemination of cultural content, playing a key role in education and access to culture. However, over time, as television networks have prioritized economic profitability and mass audiences, cultural content has been progressively displaced to marginal time slots, losing both visibility and impact.

Mass entertainment programs, such as *reality shows*, contests, *talent shows*, among others, have monopolized the limelight on television, relegating cultural productions to the background. This change has reduced diversity in programming and limited access to quality cultural content, especially affecting audiences that previously found in television a significant source of knowledge and cultural reflection (Laverón, 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2022).

The Origins of Television: Two Founding Models

To understand the full impact of television on culture, it is essential to address the two fundamental television models that emerged after World War II: the U.S. model and the European model. Both models profoundly influenced current conceptions of television and its relationship with culture.

The U.S. model is characterized by being eminently commercial, with programming aimed primarily at obtaining economic benefits through advertising. This structure, controlled by private companies, considerably reduces the presence of cultural content, relegating it to second place to mass entertainment programs. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) attempted to counteract this phenomenon by establishing regulations to limit advertising and encourage the inclusion of educational and cultural content, although the ratings of public networks such as *PBS*, created in 1969, are still low compared to commercial networks (Ruano, 2006).

In contrast, the European model, which emerged under the premise of offering television as a public service, was aimed at guaranteeing access to culture and education. Most European countries considered television as a tool to promote culture among the general population, in order to broaden access to artistic, educational and informative content (Lukács, 2007).

This approach was also supported by the State, which financed the public broadcasters and guaranteed "high culture" programming (Pastoriza, 2003). In the late 1970s, the "Golden Age" of European public television began with the creation of channels such as the *BBC* (UK), *ARD* (Germany), *FR-3* (France), *RAI-3* (Italy) and *La 2* (Spain) (Ruano, 2006). However, as Laverón (2015) notes, the lack of competition and state support led to a gradual loss of quality in cultural content, as the networks began to face pressure from new commercial players.

The Evolution of the Television Model in Spain: From Public Service to Commercial Television

Cultural content on Spanish television has undergone several transformations since its inception. In 1956, regular broadcasts began on *Televisión Española (TVE)*, financed and managed by the Francoist government, which structured the programming according to its ideology (Bustamante, 2013). In this period, the first broadcasts included religious programs, official speeches, fragments of NO-DO and musical varieties, and closing with the national anthem (Palacio, 2008).

Starting in 1957, television began to be partially financed by advertising, following the U.S. model (Bustamante, 2013). In the 1960s, television was consolidated in Spanish homes, initiating the "Golden Age" of Spanish public television. *TVE* studios were inaugurated in 1964 and two channels were created; *TVE-1*, with generalist programming, and *TVE-2 (La 2)*, with a cultural and educational focus (Quinteiro Otero, 2014). During this stage, foreign productions such as *Bonanza* and *Los intocables* were broadcast, as well as fiction and variety programs, including *Gran Parada* and *Salto a la Fama* (Bustamante, 2013).

Cultural programs gained importance with *Estudio 1*, which broadcast theatrical plays and remained on the air for 20 years. *La 2* opted for elitist content, such as classic film series and debates with filmmakers (*Los libros, Metrópolis*), while informative programs such as *Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente* and *Érase una vez el hombre* were aimed at children.

However, the influence of the U.S. model and the increase in advertising reduced the presence of cultural programs. In the 1990s, with the emergence of private networks, public television experienced an audience crisis and began to prioritize entertainment formats in order to compete. According to Ruano (2006), this damaged cultural programming, relegating it to marginal schedules and reducing its quality. In this new landscape, culture took a back seat, while low-cost programs dominated programming. Although private channels were born in the last decade of the 20th century, the relationship between culture and television has been a constant topic of debate since the beginning of the medium, which makes it necessary to analyze the transformations of cultural television over time.

European Policies and Models to Strengthen Cultural Programming on Television

Unlike Spain, countries such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy have implemented strict regulations that guarantee the presence of cultural programming on television. In France, the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA)* oversees the inclusion of cultural content in television programming, while in Germany and the United Kingdom there are quotas that oblige public broadcasters to broadcast a minimum percentage of cultural programs. In Italy, *RAI* is also obliged to include cultural programming in prime time, which guarantees the accessibility of these contents for a wide audience (Bustamante, 2013; Pastoriza, 2003).

In Spain, there have traditionally been no clear regulations requiring broadcasters to devote a specific percentage of their programming to cultural content. The *2010 General Law on Audiovisual Communication* mentioned the importance of promoting culture, but lacked effective mechanisms to ensure its inclusion in daily programming. However, the recent *Law 13/2022, of July 7, General Law on Audiovisual Communication*, establishes broadcasting quotas for European productions and independent audiovisual works, as well as a commitment to promote cultural and linguistic diversity in audiovisual services. It also reinforces the role of the public service in the dissemination of cultural and educational content. Despite these advances, cultural content on Spanish television is still relegated to marginal time slots or low audience channels (BOE, 2022; Ruano, 2018).

This analysis suggests that, in order to revitalize cultural programming on Spanish television, policies similar to those of other European countries should be considered, including more specific regulations, monitoring mechanisms and the participation of cultural management professionals in programming teams, in order to design innovative strategies and guarantee the presence of cultural content in high audience slots, adapting to new forms of audiovisual consumption.

The Crisis of Linear Television and Digital Competition

In recent years, there has been a notable shift of audiences from traditional television to new digital platforms and devices such as mobiles, computers and *smart TVs* in force (Vázquez et al., 2020). However, this change does not imply the end of television, but rather its transformation. As pointed out by Scolari (2008) and Carlón and Scolari (2009), television as a language and device is still in force and maintains its hegemony.

Through these new screens, users consume both linear television and on-demand content and programs on platforms such as YouTube (Alonso et al., 2016). These practices have favored the emergence of social audiences, but according to Van-Dijk (2009), most viewers remain passive in the creation of content, using social networks more for information than for production.

The second screen phenomenon -the simultaneous use of mobiles or tablets while watching television- reveals the crisis of the traditional model in the face of digital competition (Vázquez, Torrecillas, & Suárez, 2020). Moreover, according to De-Moragas (2012), the Internet does not displace television, but rather enhances it, generating a "call effect" (Clares-Gavilán, 2019) towards complementary audiovisual content.

Today, linear television is facing a profound crisis due to the rise of streaming, which weakens traditional models based on rigid programming and advertising. In this context, digital platforms have transformed consumption, offering content that is customizable and accessible anytime, anywhere (Vaca, 2015; Pérez-Guerrero, 2018).

This change especially affects cultural content. While platforms invest in global productions, traditional television has lagged behind (Pastoriza, 2003), without adapting to the expectations of the new generations, who seek greater interactivity, flexibility and personalization (Pichel-Vázquez et al., 2019). Audience fragmentation and the shift to on-demand consumption models have reduced the presence and visibility of cultural programs, traditionally associated with public television and specific time slots.

In addition, the loss of power of broadcasters as *gatekeepers* has made cultural content increasingly dependent on digital convergence strategies, social networks and interactive platforms to remain relevant (Vázquez et al., 2020). However, as Casero-Ripollés (2017) and Van-Dijk (2009) warn, although technology enables mass self-communication (Castells, 2011), the active participation of the public in the production of cultural content is still limited and conditioned by educational, technological and access factors.

The Role of the Cultural Management Professional on Television

The professional figure of cultural management has gained significant relevance in recent decades, positioning itself as a key professional for the administration, promotion and development of culture. According to Canadell and Sais (2011), this professional is in charge of ensuring equitable access of citizens to cultural goods and services, promoting inclusion and respecting legal frameworks. This profile is defined as the person in charge of managing an organization's resources to offer products or services that reach the largest possible number of people, optimizing their satisfaction (Bernández, 2003).

In the television field, the cultural management professional can play an essential role in the coordination and planning of programming, ensuring that the content is of high quality and responds to contemporary social demands (Rodríguez-Trigo, 2024). To this end, in addition to having a solid background in the humanities, they must be trained in areas such as management, marketing, audience analysis and new technologies (Martinell, 2001).

In a media environment characterized by its dynamism, this professional must be able to adapt content to current consumption habits, ensuring that public television not only informs, but also manages to connect emotionally with viewers (Scolari, 2008).

The role of this professional in television goes beyond the creation of educational content. Its ability to design programs that balance education, entertainment and innovation is crucial to respond to the growing demand for interactive and personalized content. In this sense, these professionals become facilitators of experiences that enrich social life, acting as links between creators, artists and the public (Canadell & Sais, 2011). In addition, they promote intercultural experiences by being sensitive to the new creative and innovative expressions that drive culture in the modern era. In this way, it stands as a key agent in building bridges that connect and enrich the contemporary cultural experience.

In an increasingly fragmented television landscape, where audiences are distributed among multiple platforms, this professional figure is responsible for maintaining the relevance and appeal of cultural programs. To do so, it must adapt content to new forms of consumption, such as transmedia narratives, augmented reality and gamification (Alonso et al., 2016).

In addition, they must ensure that the distribution of content is carried out in an appropriate manner, establishing alliances with digital platforms and media outlets to reach both local and global audiences. Also, they must guarantee the quality of content, maintaining high production standards and reflecting the fundamental cultural values of society (Pérez-Guerrero, 2018).

In conclusion, the role of the cultural management professional in television is essential to ensure that culture remains accessible, relevant and of quality in an ever-changing media world. His ability to adapt to change and offer balanced content makes him a key figure for the future of cultural television.

Method

The research is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part establishes a conceptual framework to understand the evolution of television programming in Spain, through a bibliographic review that analyzes the changes in cultural programs and their relationship with culture.

In the practical part, quantitative techniques are used to evaluate television programming at two key moments: 2016, when this study was initiated, and 2025, to represent a current framework. The choice of these years responds to the interest of observing the changes in programming over a decade, making it possible to compare trends in the presence of cultural content and to analyze whether the television offer has evolved, improved or reduced such cultural content during this period.

Justification of the Sample

The selection of these years and television channels is relevant, as both 2016 and 2025 saw significant changes in television programming and cultural context in Spain. In addition, we have chosen to analyze the main national channels, both public and private, which represent a varied sample of the television offer. In particular, the following chains were selected: Televisión Española (TVE 1 and La 2), Antena 3, Cuatro, Telecinco and La Sexta.

Data Collection Instruments

The analysis of television schedules was carried out by consulting public databases, programming records and sources available on digital platforms specialized in

television. A representative week of programming was selected in both years, considering key time slots to identify the percentage of time devoted by the networks to the different television genres. The reference week in 2016 was May 2-8, while in 2025 the week of March 3-9 was taken. Data collection was done manually and systematically to ensure accuracy in the identification of cultural contents.

Analysis Criteria

The programs were classified according to their content, and descriptive statistical techniques were used to analyze the percentage of programming dedicated to each genre, with special emphasis on cultural content. Data from 2016 and 2025 were compared to evaluate the evolution of programming and the presence of cultural content. The television genres analyzed were as follows:

- **News and current affairs:** They include live news and analysis, with the objective of keeping the public informed about current events, sports, politics, economics and general interest events.
- **Magazines:** Variety programs that combine interviews, entertainment, lifestyle, cooking and current affairs, offering dynamic and entertaining content for a general audience.
- **Entertainment (contests, reality shows, talk shows):**
  – Contests: Competitive programs where participants must pass tests of skill, knowledge or chance to win prizes.
  – Reality Shows: Spaces that show the life of people in different contexts, from coexistence in homes to extreme competitions.
  – Talk Shows: Programs in which a presenter interviews guests, such as celebrities, experts or citizens with compelling stories.
- **Fiction (series, soap operas and movies):**
  – Series: Fiction programs divided into episodes, with self-conclusive or continuous plots over several seasons.
  – Soap operas: Long dramatic stories centered on love stories, family conflicts and intense plot twists.
  – Cinema: Films of various genres broadcast on television, whether premieres or reruns of great classics.
- **Musicals and shows:** Programs focused on live music and entertainment, such as concerts, festivals, awards and musical talent shows.
- **Reports and documentaries:** Research productions that delve into historical, scientific and social issues through detailed analysis.
- **Informative and cultural:** Educational and cultural programs focused on the dissemination of knowledge about science, art, history and technology, contributing to cultural reflection.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the results, strict consistency criteria are applied in data collection and programming analysis. In addition, time slots and genres have been closely monitored to avoid bias in the classification of programs, and inter-observer controls have been implemented to ensure that the categories and criteria used are consistent throughout the analysis process.

Results

Spanish television programming has undergone significant changes between 2016 and 2025. Analysis of the predominant genres and programs on channels such as TVE 1, La 2, Antena 3, Cuatro, Telecinco and La Sexta has shown a change in audience preferences. While some genres remain stable, others have changed due to the impact of digital platforms. These services have changed the way cultural and entertainment content is presented on traditional television. The following details the transformations by gender, highlighting representative programs from 2016 and 2025, and outlines possible future trends.

Figure 1

Comparative analysis of television genres in 2016 vs 2025
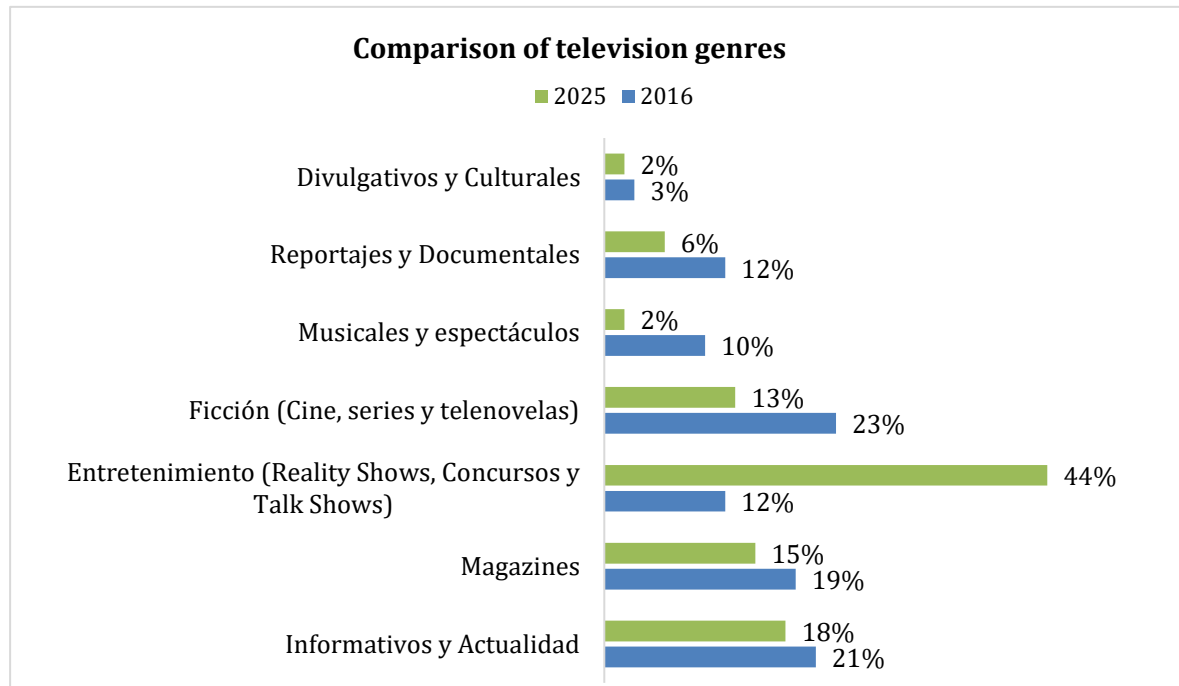
Note. Own elaboration

News and Current Affairs: Adapting to New Digital Dynamics

In 2016, News and Current Affairs programs accounted for 21% of television programming in Spain, with key slots such as newscasts and news dominating the most important time slots. These formats were essential for daily information, consolidating themselves as the main sources of access to current affairs in traditional television.

However, in 2025, programs focused on News and Current Affairs have decreased to 18% of programming, reflecting a loss of space in the face of the growth of digital platforms. These have transformed news consumption, offering information in real time, adaptable to users' interests and schedules, with more dynamic and interactive formats. The migration of the audience to these media has been fundamental in this reduction, as viewers seek immediacy, personalized access and greater participation in the construction of the informative discourse.

Despite the decline, news programs continue to be the genre with the highest number of viewers on conventional channels. Even in the digital era, they continue to occupy key slots such as *prime time* and *second time*. Although expensive to produce, they maintain a loyal audience. Since 2016, TVE continues to be the channel that devotes the most time to these programs, combining newscasts, debates and current affairs programs.

La Sexta also maintains a strong presence in this genre with programs such as *La Sexta Clave* and *Al Rojo Vivo*.

This evolution shows the adaptation of news programs to the new digital dynamics, integrating interactivity through social networks and offering on-demand content. To remain relevant, they must balance three key elements: immediacy, in-depth analysis and active audience participation.

Magazines: Diversification and Increased Entertainment Presence

In 2016, magazines accounted for 19% of television programming in Spain, combining entertainment, information and debate. Programs such as *Sálvame* (Telecinco), *El Programa de Ana Rosa* (Telecinco) and *Espejo Público* (Antena 3) mainly dominated the morning slot and, in some cases, the afternoon. These long-running formats, up to 4 hours, kept the audience loyal with a mix of news and entertainment.

Currently, the presence of magazine programs has decreased to 15%, reflecting a slight decrease in their relevance within conventional television. However, they continue to be key formats, especially on networks such as Telecinco, which maintains programs such as *TardeAR* and *¡Fiesta!*. On La Sexta, programs such as *Aruser@s*, *Zapeando* and *Más Vale Tarde* continue to stand out.

Despite the reduction, magazines have evolved to integrate more interactivity, allowing audience participation through social networks and online discussions. Programs such as *Zapeando* have expanded their format, combining entertainment and current affairs to attract different segments of viewers. This ability to adapt has allowed them to remain competitive, even in the face of the growth of digital platforms.

In the future, it is likely that magazines will continue to evolve towards more interactive and digitalized models, with a greater presence on streaming platforms and social networks. This transformation could bridge the gap between traditional television and digital consumption, making magazines more dynamic and accessible.

Entertainment: Reality Shows, Contests and Talk Shows Are Booming

The entertainment genre has experienced remarkable growth in Spanish television, from representing 12% in 2016 to 44% in 2025, consolidating its position as the most predominant content in the television grid. In 2016, programs such as *Pasapalabra, Ahora Caigo or El Hormiguero*, were entertainment benchmarks, combining interviews, competition, talent and humor. However, in 2025, reality shows and contests have taken the lead with formats such as *La Revuelta*, *Maestros de la Costura*, *El Desafío*, *Supervivientes, Gran Hermano* and *La Isla de las Tentaciones*, which dominate audiences and set trends in social networks. Television has found in these programs a formula for success based on emotion, audience interaction and spectacularity, which has led to a notable reduction in other genres such as fiction and cultural programs.

Despite this boom, the overexploitation of entertainment has generated a more homogeneous and predictable television, with a clear commitment to repetitive formats that seek virality rather than quality. Channels have prioritized immediate profitability, leaving in the background more varied and enriching content, such as documentaries or cultural programs, which have drastically reduced their presence. Although entertainment continues to be the driving force of television, its excess can lead to a loss of diversity in the television offer, limiting the options for an audience that seeks something more than shows designed for mass consumption and immediacy.

Television Fiction and Its Shift to Streaming Platforms

The fiction genre has experienced a notable reduction in traditional television, from representing 23% of programming in 2016 to only 13% in 2025, reflecting the impact of streaming platforms. In 2016, programs such as *Cine de Barrio* and *El Cine de La 2* maintained a presence, and *El Peliculón* on Antena 3 was a reference for movie nights. However, by 2025, the networks have significantly reduced their commitment to prime-time movies. Despite this decline, TVE and Antena 3 continue to offer foreign and low-budget films on weekends, especially in the afternoon slot, attracting a loyal audience, particularly on Antena 3.

As for telenovelas, which accounted for 4% of programming in 2016, they have fallen to 2% in 2025, with a shrinking audience. However, in previous years, Turkish series were a *boom* that dominated several networks. Antena 3 continues to be the main broadcaster of these series, to the point of having a thematic channel dedicated to them within Atresmedia.

On the other hand, series in general have withstood better the decline of fiction in traditional television. While in 2016 they represented 8% of programming, in 2025 they have increased to 10%, driven by competition with streaming and the commitment to national productions.

Despite the slight resistance of some series and evening movies, linear television has ceded control of fiction to digital platforms, which offer greater variety, immediacy and quality. Traditional networks have opted for more accessible and low-cost productions, limiting their competitiveness against giants such as Netflix, HBO or Disney+. This change has reduced the diversity of programming, prioritizing other formats such as entertainment, to the detriment of more elaborate narratives. Although television continues to bet on fiction, its relevance has become marginal in the face of the personalization of streaming platforms.

Musicals and Shows on Linear Television

In 2016, music programs accounted for 10% of television programming in Spain, with formats such as *La Voz*, *Operación Triunfo* and *Tu Cara Me Suena* dominating the prime time slots. These programs combined big productions and musical talent, attracting millions of viewers. However, by 2025, this genre has suffered a notable decline, representing only 2% of television programming.

The main factor behind this drop has been the saturation of music programs, which has led to audience burnout. The excess of similar formats and the lack of innovation have reduced the audience's interest, leading the networks to relocate these contents to lower-rated slots. Although the program *La Voz* is still present, it has lost much of its impact, as the genre has ceased to be a main attraction.

Despite this decline, music programs continue to have a presence on traditional television, but in an increasingly secondary role. Its future will depend on the networks' ability to renew the format and adapt it to new audience demands. However, compared to other forms of television entertainment, musicals have lost their relevance in a landscape dominated by on-demand content and are unlikely to regain their privileged position.

Reports and Documentaries in Decline

In 2016, reporting accounted for 12% of television programming, with programs such as *Equipo de Investigación* (La Sexta) and *Cuarto Milenio* (Cuatro) standing out for their in-depth analysis of social, political and cultural issues. Although they were popular with specific audiences and had a loyal following, they remained a niche within the general television offerings. Documentaries, with programs such as *Documentos TV* (TVE)

and *En Portada* (La 2), also maintained a respectable presence, attracting viewers interested in cultural and current affairs.

At present, although reports continue to be relevant, their presence in the grid has decreased considerably, dropping to 6%. Although programs such as Equipo de Investigación and Cuarto Milenio are still on the air, their weight has decreased and they have been relegated to less competitive time slots. Reportage programming has been marginalized, struggling for attention in the face of the rise of more popular genres. As for documentaries, their presence in linear television has been fragmented and reduced, appearing mainly at marginal times and competing with on-demand content.

Between 2016 and 2025, features and documentaries have decreased their presence on television from 12% to 6%. This change responds to the growing preference for lighter and more quickly consumed content, such as *reality shows*, competitions and *talk shows*, which has led to reports and documentaries being placed in less competitive time slots and targeting more specific audiences.

Decrease in Cultural and Informative Programming

In 2016, cultural and informative content occupied approximately 3% of television programming. TVE's 2 stood out as the public channel that kept alive the commitment to this type of programming, with emblematic programs such as *La Aventura del Saber*, *Metrópolis* and *Páginas Dos*. Although the private networks did not have exclusively cultural programs, some quiz shows such as *Ahora Caigo* and *Pasapalabra* played an important educational role, encouraging learning and memory through general cultural questions. These programs managed to balance entertainment and education, actively involving the audience and stimulating knowledge in a playful way. *Saber y Ganar*, an undisputed benchmark, consolidated its position as the most solid cultural pillar of La 2, having been on the air since 1997.

By 2025, however, this trend has changed significantly. Cultural and informative programming has dropped to represent only 2% of total television programming. La 2 continues to be the channel that is most committed to this type of content, although its efforts seem to be increasingly isolated and concentrated on very specific audiences. The grid now focuses on educational and reflective content, such as *Los Conciertos de La 2* (dedicated to classical music), *Saber y Ganar* or *Cachitos de hierro y cromo*, where entertainment is combined with musical and audiovisual culture from a nostalgic and informative approach. In addition, La 2 has reinforced its programming with reports and documentaries on social and global issues, seeking to offer quality content to an audience that looks for depth beyond the purely entertaining.

In contrast, the main generalist channels such as Antena 3, Telecinco, La Sexta and even TVE's La 1 have relegated culture and popularization to the background. Its programming is almost entirely oriented towards fast-paced entertainment, light-hearted contests, fiction, and current affairs and debate programs. Although Cuatro still has some informative programs, their presence is marginal and lacks any real weight in the overall programming.

Thus, this analysis shows how cultural programming on conventional television has gone from being a mainstay to become marginal and niche content for most of the channels analyzed. Linear television now prioritizes immediacy and mass entertainment, displacing culture to uncompetitive slots. Between 2016 and 2025, this trend has become more pronounced, and culture only survives in hybrid formats that combine entertainment and dissemination. Digital platforms have become the main refuge for audiences interested in cultural content, while conventional television is no longer considered a priority target.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results obtained in this study confirm the historical trend in Spanish television, showing the progressive disappearance of cultural and educational content in favor of the rise of commercial entertainment formats. Television, which for decades played a fundamental role as a cultural agent and opinion maker, has given way to a model focused on economic profitability. Dependence on advertising funding and the absence of regulations to protect cultural content in prime time -as in other European countries- has relegated culture to marginal slots and residual audiences.

The data obtained in 2016 and 2025 show a profound commoditization of television programming. Although news and magazine programs retain some relevance, entertainment has gone from 12% to 44%, led by reality shows, contests and *talk shows.* At the same time, educational genres such as culture, reports and documentaries have been reduced to minimal percentages (2% and 6%, respectively). For its part, fiction has moved to *streaming* platforms, leaving traditional television unable to compete and thus reducing the diversity of its offer.

In this scenario, La 2 remains the last cultural refuge, but with a limited screen share that does not allow it to fully fulfill its public service function. The lack of audiovisual policies to encourage or regulate the presence of culture in prime time, and the unwillingness of private networks to assume this responsibility, aggravate the situation.

To reverse this trend, it is necessary not only to rethink the role of the public audiovisual service, but also to promote a joint commitment between the State, private broadcasters and digital platforms. The creation of tax incentives or broadcasting quotas for cultural and educational content in *prime time*, as is the case in France and Germany, could be a fundamental step.

In this context, the figure of the cultural management professional becomes key. Not only as a content designer, but also as a mediator between creators, institutions and audiences, capable of innovating formats, adapting them to new languages and designing promotional strategies to increase their visibility and attractiveness. This professional can also facilitate collaboration between broadcasters and platforms to generate synergies and co-productions that bring culture back to spaces of great media impact.

Finally, it is essential to involve the audience itself. Media literacy and the promotion of critical thinking should be part of educational policies, so that the public demands cultural content and not just easy and massive entertainment. Television, although it has lost ground to digital platforms, continues to be a powerful medium for reaching diverse audiences and, with political will, technological innovation and specialized professionals, it can recover its role as an engine of education, diversity and cultural enrichment in society.

The future of cultural programming depends not only on television stations, but also on a strategic vision that involves public institutions, the private sector, creators and audiences in a common effort to preserve culture as an essential part of collective well-being and social identity.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable findings, there are some limitations that should be considered:

- *Temporal scope:* The analysis focuses on data from 2016 and 2025, so it would be useful to extend the observation period to capture longer-term trends. In addition, it is based on a representative week, which may not reflect all variations during the year.

- *Audience data:* Another relevant limitation is the lack of quantitative data on audience data and perception of cultural content, which would have allowed for a more complete analysis of its reception and social impact.
- *Influence of digital platforms:* Although the rise of streaming platforms is mentioned, there was no in-depth analysis of how digital consumption habits affect cultural programming on television.
- *Limited sample:* The study focuses on the main national channels, leaving out other less visible channels and digital platforms that also influence the cultural offer.

Future Lines of Research

A priority line of research consists of incorporating audience data to evaluate not only the presence of cultural content, but also its reception and evaluation by the public. Perception surveys, segmented ratings analysis or case studies on specific programs could enrich the diagnosis and provide a more complete vision of their social impact.

It is also necessary to explore how new digital consumption habits, especially on *streaming* platforms, modify the public's preferences regarding cultural content, as well as its accessibility and visibility.

In addition, it would be pertinent to investigate the role of the cultural management professional in television programming, analyzing whether his or her participation influences greater quality, innovation or connection with audiences.

These future lines would help to design more effective strategies to promote culture on television, taking into account both market dynamics and audience needs.

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