



Carmen Sarmiento: the inclusion of feminism in francoist television as a method of opposition to dictatorship¹

Dunia ETURA²

Virginia Martín JIMÉNEZ³

Abstract:

During the Francoist dictatorship, a female model was imposed in Spain relegating women to what was called “ángel del hogar” (“home angel”). Spanish women were thought of only as daughters, mothers and wives subordinate to men. In this socio-political context, in 1973, a program called *Informe Semanal* (Weekly Report) aired on the only television network in Spain in those times (TVE) and was a complete audience success. Every Saturday, reports were broadcast which set the socio-informative agenda of the week. Within the program’s professional team, Carmen Sarmiento stood out as a feminist journalist who managed to introduce feminism in Televisión Española (Spanish Television), denouncing the reality of Spanish women, fostering a social change aimed for gender equality and democracy. To carry out this investigation that recovers the figure of Carmen Sarmiento, a qualitative study has been developed based on the audiovisual documents at the TVE archives and interviews with the journalist.

Keywords: feminism; agenda setting; dictatorship; Carmen Sarmiento; television.

Carmen Sarmiento: a inclusão do feminismo na televisão franquista como método de oposição à ditadura

Resumo:

Durante a ditadura de Franco, impôs-se na Espanha um padrão que rebaixava a mulher ao que se denominou “anjo do lar”. As espanholas eram consideradas unicamente filhas, mães ou esposas e estavam subordinadas aos homens. Nesse contexto sócio-político, nasceu em 1973 o programa *Informe Semanal*, um sucesso de audiência na única emissora de televisão que existia na Espanha naquele momento (TVE). Todos os sábados, o programa exibia reportagens que marcavam a agenda sócio-informativa da semana. Uma das profissionais de maior destaque foi Carmen Sarmiento: jornalista que introduziu o feminismo na Televisão Nacional e denunciou a realidade das mulheres espanholas, promovendo uma mudança social que repercutiu positivamente na igualdade de gênero e na democracia. Para realizar esta pesquisa, que tem como objetivo reconstituir a imagem de Carmen Sarmiento, foi realizado um estudo qualitativo dos documentos audiovisuais presentes no acervo da TVE, além de entrevistas em profundidade com a própria jornalista Sarmiento.

Palavras-chave: feminismo; agenda setting; ditadura; Carmen Sarmiento; televisão.

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2 Associate Professor in the University of Valladolid (UVa). E-mail: dunia.etura@uva.es

3 Associate Professor in the University of Valladolid (UVa). E-mail: virginia.martin@uva.es





Carmen Sarmiento: la inclusión del feminismo en la televisión franquista como método de oposición a la dictadura

Resumen:

Durante la dictadura franquista se impuso en España un modelo de mujer que las relegaba a lo que se denominó “ángel del hogar”. Las españolas eran consideradas únicamente como hijas, madres o esposas y quedaban supeditadas al varón. En este contexto socio-político nace en 1973 el programa *Informe Semanal*, todo un éxito de audiencia en la única televisión que existía en España en aquel momento (TVE). Cada sábado emitía reportajes que marcaban la agenda socio-informativa de la semana. Dentro del equipo de profesionales de *Informe* destacó Carmen Sarmiento, una periodista feminista que logró introducir en Televisión Española el feminismo y denunciar la realidad de las mujeres españolas, promoviendo un cambio social encaminado a la igualdad de género y la democracia. Para llevar a cabo esta investigación que recupera la figura de Sarmiento, se ha recurrido al estudio cualitativo de los documentos audiovisuales del archivo de TVE y a las entrevistas en profundidad con la periodista.

Palabras clave: feminismo; agenda setting; dictadura; Carmen Sarmiento; televisión.

Introduction, objectives and methodology

One of the fundamental elements for the legitimation of the Franco dictatorship in Spain was the control of women. To achieve this, Franco established a sociocultural model based on the submission of women to men, which was imposed on citizens through legislation, education and the media.

In 1973, during the final stage of the dictatorship, the public network *Televisión Española* (Spanish Television) – the only network that existed at the time – launched a news program called *Informe Semanal* (Weekly Report), which would soon become an audience success and a reference for Spanish society. Until then, the professional practice of women journalists on public television was subject to continuity tasks and as sidekicks (Tuchman, 1993). However, *Informe Semanal* gave women at TVE the opportunity to work on equal terms with their male counterparts, deciding on topics and approaches. Among the professionals of the program, Carmen Sarmiento stands out. This journalist and feminist was a member of the original team of *Informe Semanal*, acted as assistant-director and produced many reports with an unprecedented feminist perspective in Spanish television through the Francoist regime as well as during period of transition.

In this context, we ask ourselves: to what extent Carmen Sarmiento was decisive in introducing feminist concepts and categories to an exceptionally large part of the population that would otherwise have been very difficult to reach, in a context in which equality was not



recognized? To answer this research question, this work focuses on the contents elaborated by Carmen Sarmiento, since she was the only female journalist who worked on the program from March 31st, 1973, until December 31st, 1978. To define the corpus of the research, we have initially selected reports broadcast from March 31st, 1973, until December 31st, 1978, from which we have extracted those signed by Sarmiento, to later select those which dealt with topics that directly or tangentially affected women (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Carmen Sarmiento's reports on women topics

Broadcast Date	Title
7/4/1973	The fans
14/4/1973	Abortion
16/6/1973	The invaders
28/7/1973	The playboys
29/9/1973	The mayoresses
27/10/1973	A lagarterana wedding
4/5/1974	The forty years crisis
11/5/1974	The divorce in Italy
6/7/1974	Ad lib en Ibiza fashion
7/9/1974	Women's equality
14/9/1974	Pilar Primo de Rivera interview
23/11/1974	Eva Perón's last trip
7/12/1974	The demografic problem
26/4/1975	Abortion at the ballot boxes
28/6/1975	The woman of today: women's creativity
28/6/1975	The woman of today: woman and future political power
25/10/1975	Home, sweet home
3/1/1976	Woman: a revolution in motion
26/2/1976	A step forward woman
31/7/1976	Amnesty
9/4/1977	Housewife: home and market
21/1/1978	The pelotaris downfall
11/3/1978	They always worked
1/4/1978	The streaking
1/4/1978	Adultery
13/5/1978	Woman, new image

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

After reviewing all the reports, we focus on the study, through qualitative content analysis of the reports (Tuchman, 1993) focused, on one hand, on the oppression that women suffered for having to play the role imposed on them as mothers and housewives, and on the other hand, the struggle of those women, who rebelled against this role in search of personal fulfillment (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Carmen Sarmiento's reports about feminism and feminist vindications

Broadcast Date	Title
25/10/1975	Hogar, dulce hogar (Home, sweet home)
9/4/1977	Ama de casa: hogar y mercado (Housewife: home and market)
11/3/1978	Siempre trabajaron (They always worked)
13/5/1978	Mujer, nueva imagen (Woman, new image)

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In addition to content analysis, it seemed necessary to implement a series of in-depth interviews with professionals who were key players and witnesses to the object of study in this research, in order to “gather descriptions of the interviewee's life regarding the interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 2011), among which stand out Pedro Erquicia (the program's creator and director) and the journalist, Carmen Sarmiento.

To legitimize the regime through women. The imposition of the ideal Francoist woman

During the Franco's dictatorship, the Spanish faced restricted liberties and diminished rights. Even though virtually all Spaniards became victims of the dictatorial system, it was women who suffered the most as any glimpse of their basic rights were encroached upon. These were rights they had obtained during the Second Republic where, among others, women's right to vote and to divorce were approved.

Even before the end of the Spanish Civil War, the Francoist army launched the means it considered necessary to enable the new dictatorial government that it aspired to impose. Beyond coercion, repression or violence applied to its victims, the durability of the regime was duly based on broad social support (Ortiz, 2005). So, as soon as the war ended, in 1939, an intense process of ideologization was initiated through legislation and ideological apparatuses of the State, namely the Church, education and the media (Díez Fuentes, 1995).



Within these key elements, the control of women as cardinal subjects for the establishment and continuity of the dictatorship was fundamental. To achieve this, three fundamental axes were established: absolute governmental support for the Feminine Section (a single-party organization aimed exclusively at women), control of education entrusted to the Catholic Church differentiated qualitatively and quantitatively if was male or female. And, finally, the legal system that was developed considering the primary role that women had to play in Franco's society: the procreation and education of children. It is not surprising, therefore, that it was even before the Civil War ended when the coup army began to develop its first legal norms, such as *El Fuero del Trabajo* (Labor Charter), approved on March 9, 1938, which intended to "liberate" the women from workshops and factories, thus promoting reactionary policies which sought the returning of women to the private space of the home, assuming "The Nazi Trilogy: Children, Kitchen, Church (*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*)" (Ortiz, 2006).

The discourse, therefore, on which the ideal Francoist woman is based, backed by Falangist's ideas, Church doctrine and by legislation, upon three fundamental foundations that Franco himself defends in his speeches: the principle of God's Law, service to the homeland and the general good of the Spaniards. In this way, a "Machiavellian" strategy is established in which the indoctrination of women, with "the annulment of the critical sense and the uniformity of criteria", make up "a life insurance" for the regime (Palacios, 2014).

Franco proclaims that his mission is not his mission, but the will of God: "Lord God, in whose hands is all right and all power, lend me your assistance to lead this people to the full freedom of the Empire for the glory of you and your Church"⁴. In the same way the mission of women, their social function, is determined by the will of the creator, hence "the confusion between the moral and the political in Francoism, reached its maximum expression in all areas related to women" (Moreno, 2013).

In this way, with the purpose of revoking the rights obtained, and in the face of the threat that women could demand to occupy places until then vetoed, the Franco regime set in motion a series of resources or formal and informal mechanisms that would empower the control and submission of women (Nash, 2013). For this reason, the Civil Code of 1889 and the criminal

⁴ Franco's speech in the solemn ceremony of offering the Sword of Victory, in the Church of Santa Bárbara.





code of 1870, both of marked patriarchal character, were rehabilitated. In addition, *ad hoc* laws were created which allowed the establishment of a model woman, based on the naturalism and biological determinism, which imposed and perpetuated the submission of women to men. However, it must be taken into account that, due to the peculiarity of the dictatorship, which remained the form of government for almost four decades⁵, the legislation was varied in accordance with the needs of the dictatorship. So, the laws and other social issues that directly affected women were also redefined, especially in the last years of the dictatorship when Franco considered, for international political reasons, the desirability of exhibiting a kinder, more open face of his government for its own survival.

In this context, the work of some women who first individually and later collectively, aided by the public explosion of the Spanish feminist movement in 1975, played a decisive role and was key in the paradigm shift of the legal and social situation of women during the democratic transition.

Female Journalists on *Televisión Española*: from accessories to essentials

From the beginning, Televisión Española (Spanish Television) broadcasted women appeared on the screen, but always in the role of “side-kick” and in entertainment programs, namely, as an ornament for the male host. Such feminine figures as Blanca Álvarez or Laurita Valenzuela were usually address with diminutives by the professionals in the publications of that time, which, in a way, indicates that they were treated as inferior.

Rosa María Mateo’s statements were a clear reflection of the context in which professional women in television lived in Spain at that time: “I started with *Informe Semanal* by the end of 1973 or early 1974, and on television in November of 1966 in the second network, and there was not a single woman in the news programs, not only not as a hostess, but not even in the newsroom. Not a single woman. It was the men’s private room”. In fact, it was not until 1971 when a journalist, Elena Martí, presented a news program when the director of the program, M. Martín Ferrand, was relieved of his functions for requesting a minute of silence

⁵ It is not the object of study of this work to define the nature of Franco dictatorship, but we are not alien to the academic and social debate that this fact has aroused throughout the last decades in Spain. To deepenthisissue, see: Asunción Esteban, Dunia Etura & Matteo Tomassoni. *La alargada sombra del franquismo. naturaleza, mecanismos de supervivencia y huellas de la dictadura*. (Granada: Comares, 2019).



for the victims of Vietnam. Since the gap opened by Martí, female journalists were integrated into news services, such as Carmen Sarmiento (who would become part of the founding team of *Informe Semanal*), Ana Cristina Navarro, Sol Alameda, Rosa Maria Calaf, Mercedes Milá, Mari Carmen Izquierdo, Isabel Tenaille, Victoria Prego, and Mari Carmen García Vela among many other journalists.

All of these professional women of TVE would make a qualitative leap in the moment they could shed “being a nice face that is limited to reading what men or editors teams write” (Blas, 1999). The possibility of journalists to influence and decide the approach and the issues to be addressed was decisive for the inclusion of new topics that bring forth to the public opinion a new ideal of an antagonistic woman that Francoism had imposed. Thus, the silent revolution that some women had initiated decades before came to TVE to spread among society, as only television was capable of doing.

***Informe Semanal*: to inform and train public opinion from unprecedented perspectives**

On March 31, 1973, a weekly news program, called *Informe Semanal*, was broadcasted for the first time through the First Channel of TVE, which would later become the longest running program on European television⁶. A program of current news reports, which aired on Saturdays between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m., became an informative referent for thousands of Spaniards in a short time, even over the daily newscasts (Telediarios) (Montero; Antona; Martín-Jiménez, 2018). The remarkable audience, linked with the novel approach to current affairs and the young staff of professionals granted the program prestige, credibility and support among spectators, which favored its influence and gave it greater resonance compared to other news programs. This point began to be echoed, on the one hand, in the prizes that it soon began to reap, and on the other, in the positive evaluations that it received from specialized critics: “they develop the program, which revels in prestige and high audience ratings, with evident professionalism” (ABC, 30 Dec. 1975, p.110).

The first staff of *Informe Semanal* was formed by young people of modern appearance and character. “Melenudos” (shaggy haired men) such as Pedro Erquicia, who joined TVE in

⁶ *Informe Semanal* continues its broadcast in the First Network of TVE, the same day and at the same time that in 1973.



1965, had previously seen his screen appearance hindered due to his long hair (Baget, 1993). This novelty was one of the fundamental elements to give style and personality to the program that broke, at first glance, through the personal image of the professionals, going against the model of typical journalists during Franco's regime. The original program team only had two women: a journalist, Sarmiento and the secretary of the program, Carmen Hernanz. Little by little, and on a regular basis, the incorporation of many female journalists would take place (Etura, 2020).

The innovations carried out by the program director weren't only reflected in the selection of a young professional staff. Erquicia revolutionized the way of working by introducing unprecedented concepts in TVE. Thus, he brought in the editorial board every Monday, where the entire team reviewed the program and issued and proposed topics and approaches for the following programs; he brought in tandem producer-editor teams, a working method that is still valid today (Magro, 2003); he influenced the presence of journalists on screen to provoke a link between the public and reporters; he allowed the collaboration of external journalists to the staff to broaden content and approaches; he used marketing techniques to advertise the program such as self-promotion and he consciously moved away from the topics and approaches that were shared in other news programs or in the *Telediario* (daily news). Therefore, little by little, in a totally democratic newsroom in a non-democratic country, the program began to win the favor of the public to whom it offered novel content from unusual perspectives. The editorial novelty, the innovation in the treatment and exposure of content, as well as the integration of a young and open-minded staff that was committed to work towards a democratic society, would be the program's passport, despite being born during the dictatorship, towards the democratic transition.

Pedro Erquicia, ultimate responsible for the selection of personnel, assures that he did not leave anything to chance, that those who were called to be part of the first *Semanal Informativo* (Weekly News) team were there for both their professional and personal profile⁷. In this regard, Carmen Sarmiento recognizes the influence of the director, but also which the team members instilled in him. "I give Erquicia the credit of bringing the idea of the program to Spain, the merit that he was a liberal, he was not a left-wing person. Back then he found

⁷ Pedro Erquicia, personal interview, January 26, 2017.



himself surrounded by a series of young people, very strong, very leftist, and he let us, quote unquote, do our thing”⁸.

It must be taken into account that during the last years of the dictatorship, some RTVE professionals suffered an obvious politicization. “A new generation of journalists from the Official School of Journalism had been climbing positions in television organizational charts since the early seventies. [...] In late Francoism, on TVE, there was a high level of anti-Franco militancy brought out, and of course, those hundreds of men and women left a democratic mark on their professional work as soon as they could” (Palacio, 2012).

Focusing exclusively on the *Informe Semanal* team, many of its members recognize its anti-Franco stance and some even went to jail, such as the film director Emilio Martínez Lázaro. To the young team clearly committed to democracy, we should add another unusual characteristic for the time: the feminization of the newsroom. We have already stated that the lack of women in the technical part was an evident reality in public broadcasting in Spain, so it comes as no surprise not to find women in the production and editing area of the program, with the exception of the video editor Cristina Pérez Cubero (Etura, 2020).

The reality is that, at the beginning of the program only two women were part of its staff: the journalist, Sarmiento, and the secretary, Hernanz. However, little by little, some female journalists came on board, who expanded and feminized the team. According to the program’s director, all this responded to a logical question that reflects how society is shaped: “I’ve always believed that women and men are different beings. I want different beings, because they think differently. A man can be one way or another, but in essence he moves by very similar professional coordinates. But a woman will always have a point of view, a point of projection, a point of execution, a language, a way of narrating, a way of exposing things, different than mine. I was very interested in the program delivering that. And to transmit it to the audience, which was made up of both” (Erquicia, 2017)⁹.

Step by step, the program was consolidated and began to need to expand its team. That’s when Ana Cristina Navarro, Sol Alameda, Mercedes Milá etc. arrived. All these young journalists, who were in the early stages of their careers, acquired in the program the

⁸ Carmen Sarmiento, personal interview, February 9, 2017.

⁹ Pedro Erquicia, personal interview, January 26, 2017.

opportunity to show their potential as professionals on equal terms with their peers, proposing topics at editorial meetings, granting them this diverse approach which Erquicia speaks of, going to where the news took place regardless of their female condition¹⁰.

Image 1 – Carmen Sarmiento, TVE's first war correspondent



Source: Image provided by the journalist.

In this, the role of these reporters was decisive; not only did they enter the program to occupy a journalist position on equal terms with their colleagues, but also, for the first time, they had the opportunity to intervene in editorial decisions and in the approach that they would give to the content. Among all of these journalists, one stood out above the rest: Carmen Sarmiento, a founding member of the program and a forerunner in dealing regularly and conspicuously, as disclosed later, with issues that denounced the situations of inequality suffered by women in Franco's Spain and in the world. In addition, she tried to transmit, through audiovisual narration, a new model woman in which Spanish women could be reflected.

¹⁰ Carmen Sarmiento was TVE's first war correspondent, a job she did for a decade. For it, she had to fight with the TVE bosses that did not understand how a woman would go to war to inform the spectators.

However, although these women worked on equal terms with their male colleagues, they were not exempt from suffering inequality and male chauvinism in their professional field.

In 1978, Pedro Erquicia ceased to be director of the program and Martínez Durbán took over, while Carmen Sarmiento left *Informe Semanal* to become part of the Dossier program team – a matter that draws attention if we consider that Sarmiento was the assistant director of the program, as stated in a television review for the newspaper ABC, published on February 7, 1978. This is striking because the natural course, before the departure of the program director to the New York correspondence, would have been that the assistant director filled the vacant position, which the program coordinator did from a position of less responsibility than that of assistant director. When Sarmiento was asked about this fact, she assures that she was indeed the assistant director of *Informe Semanal* almost from the beginning of the program:

This is reflected in the press, in my books etc., but the appointment was never made effective. I persistently asked Pedro [Erquicia] about it, until one day he told me there was a “black legend” about me. At that time, Rafael Ansón was the director of RTVE and I could never understand what they were referring to as black legend – if to my personal life choices, if because I was a leftist woman, the issue was never clarified, but the fact is that I was acting as assistant director and director when Pedro would go on a trip, and they did not acknowledge it neither economically nor formally. That’s why, when Pedro went to the United States, I was not surprised that they did not name me director, because they hadn’t even been able to name me assistant director” (Sarmiento, 2017)¹¹.

Carmen Sarmiento and the inclusion of feminism in TVE through categories and theoretical concepts naturalized in the daily discourse of *Informe Semanal*

One of the first reports that was issued in *Informe Semanal*, in the third week of the program’s broadcast, was entitled The Abortion signed by the journalist Carmen Sarmiento and issued on April 14, 1973. Let’s not forget that the dictator Franco did not die until November 20, 1975, and that the last executions of the dictatorship took place on September 27 of that same year, so that control, repression and censorship continued to be present until the end of the Franco’s regime. From this first report, Sarmiento began to produce reports with an international focus, which sometimes allowed her to bypass censorship, in which she dealt with

¹¹ Carmen Sarmiento, personal interview, October 28, 2017.

issues that had to do with the legal and social situation of women: Divorce in Italy, Abortion at the polls, Equality of women and Adultery, among many others.

Feminism was present in Sarmiento's reports, either directly - due to the focus given to the topics covered, by the sources selected to develop the reports, by the chosen theme etc. - or indirectly, through off comments, or by the inclusion of questions about gender equality or on the feminist movement in interviews with relevant personalities. With her work, this journalist sought to bring the issue of women's rights and gender equality to public television both in the years of the dictatorship and during the process of building a democratic system after the death of the dictator.

Reports such as *Hogar, dulce hogar* (Home, sweet home); *Ama de Casa: hogar y mercado* (Housewife: home and market); *Siempre trabajaron* (They always worked) and *Mujer, nueva imagen* (Woman, new image); dedicated exclusively to disseminate the vindications of feminist movements, illustrated how much progress was being made. In this way, it was transmitted to Spanish public opinion, without even mentioning it directly, the theory proposed by Betty Friedan in her work *The feminine mystique*, in which she explains the submission of women through the role of mother and wife as a reaction of the patriarchal system to the incorporation of these women into the public spheres, thanks to the work of the suffragettes and during the war, when women took many jobs from which they were later deprived. This work, published in 1963, caused an authentic revolution in the United States, becoming the seed of what is considered to be the third wave of feminism, which emerged in 1966 with the founding of NOW, almost a decade before the Spanish feminist movement.

We have already advised that this type of reflection can be found crosswise in many reports, although the subject is not exclusively dedicated to it, like in the report developed by Sarmiento entitled, *La crisis de los cuarenta años* (The Crisis of the Forties), issued on May, 4, 1974. But we wanted to select those programs in which they are addressed directly, although the current hook that motivates them was obviously diverse, in order to determine if *Informe Semanal* led to the introduction, in a clear and standardized way, of concepts and feminist categories to a very large part of the population that would have otherwise been very difficult to reach, and in a context in which equality between women and men would not be recognized until years after the death of the dictator, with the approval of the Constitution of 1978.

In the first two reports *Hogar, dulce hogar* (Home, sweet home) and *Ama de casa: hogar y mercado* (Housewife: home and market), the same topic is addressed, even using identical data. But we found some disparities (despite being done by the same journalist), that have to do with the temporal difference to which their elaboration was ascribed, a distinction that frames them in a different political context. Both contents address the situation of housewives in Spain. The journalist tries to dismantle the myth of the home as locus *amoenous* (latin for “pleasant place”), and warns that the idea of *home, sweet home* “is, in reality, a masculine desire”, that “the maternal and domestic vocation does not need to be an exclusively feminine «privilege»”. “Because the fact of being born a woman should not condition one to performing household chores exclusively”. To dismantle the idyllic call to become a housewife, the journalist uses the data extracted from a UNESCO study which states that women work between 70-80 hours a week, a number significantly higher than those worked by the man out of the house.

The journalist continues explaining how the associationism of housewives, a structure that she also uses in the second report *Ama de casa: hogar y mercado* (1977), motivated above all by “the indifference of society to the work performed by housewives”; and born to defend their interests, is not a new issue in Spain, but one that began to emerge in 1963, with the first associations which she calls “*la rebelión de las cacerolas*” (the uprising of the casseroles).

In 1968, she adds, “the Federation of Associations of Housewives is founded, with more than 156.000 associates throughout the country”. However, in this first report she does not address the existence of different associations, an issue that is exposed in the second report in which she differentiates the first association, dependent on the Feminine Section, from democratic associations. In addition, she explains the difficulties they suffered to get the associations legalized, as well as sheds light on the Castilian Association of Housewives, a seed of feminist associations, which, in addition, she interviewed in her program via a spokesperson of the Castilian Association.

The first report also includes the complaints of the housewives: the double work shifts, the difficulty in finding child care centers and the exorbitant prices they maintained, the high cost of living, and the salary gap between men and women for the same work, which they estimated can be found between 50 and 80 percent: “in the transformation of plastics, a female manager earns 5.490 *pesetas* and a second in-command man earns 7.230 *pesetas*, meaning that

there is a difference of 1.740 *pesetas* for a job position twice superior to that of a man. In addition, a married woman has many difficulties finding a job, because they think that motherhood can be a handicap”. In the report, they address what they consider “legal traps” in which the married woman, in case she works, is forced to stop working. As we see it, it’s not that in this first report the discriminations to which Spanish women are subjected to aren’t exhibited, but we do show a different tone to that found in *Ama de casa: hogar y mercado*, which was broadcast two years later, with the dictator already gone.

In this second feature, attention is drawn to the music, which Sarmiento uses to open and close the report. In the first, we find an instrumental accompaniment melody, which does not intend to convey anything concrete to the audience. But in this second case, there is a purpose in the selected music as it isolates them from the off, at the beginning and at the end, so that the verses that are sung are perfectly heard, and because they are not the first verses of the song, they are intentionally sought to be heard at that precise moment.

The report begins with the song: *No estés así* (Don’t be like that) of Pablo Guerrero, who sings: “don’t be like that, my friend ... don’t be like that”, and concludes with the song by Luis Eduardo Aute, *De alguna manera* (Somehow) with the verses: “no matter how much you want it is not easy you know ... I lack the strength, it’s been too late, and nothing more”.

But in addition to these details, Sarmiento is much clearer, much more direct and sometimes even sarcastic when addressing the issues. For example, when she explains the birth of the Associations of Housewives, stating that “In light of the disinterest in their existence and the isolation to which they have been condemned the ‘peaceful and resigned’ housewives of a few years ago have been sensitized and have understood that in order to solve many of their problems, they have to walk from the kitchen to the platform to expose the politics of the shopping cart” (Sarmiento, 9 Apr. 1977), introducing the famous idea of “the personal is political” proposed by Kate Millet in her work *Sexual politics* (1975).

In this case, in addition, alternatives for the liberation of women are proposed, although they understand that it has to be through the State, via the incorporation of housewives into the socio-political life in the country, and with the man’s income coming into the home. They talk about the “alienation from domestic work”, a task that never begins or ends and that furthermore, others always take advantage of. Sarmiento (9 Apr. 1977) adds that the idea of



women contributing to maintain the productivity of men is not valued. They wouldn't be able to dedicate hours to work if there was not a woman there, who silently, "feeds him, washes his clothes and contributes to his mental and sexual stability". And the report concludes by saying "women will understand that housewives associations can channel their diffused nonconformity and turn it into a protest movement to reclaim some of their problems as citizens", carrying out, in a way, a proselytizing work around the feminist movement tightly linked to the associations of housewives cited in the report.

Moreover, in the occasion of commemorating Working Women's Day, celebrated for the first time in Spain, and organized by the groups that made up the platform of feminist organizations, though supported by the most important trade unions in the country, the piece: *Siempre trabajaron* (They always Worked) was broadcasted on March 11, 1978.

There is evidence that interviews with representatives of the feminist movement were carried out in the studio, but the images are not preserved as collected in the TVE documentation system, so it can be assumed that the program gave importance to the event, since it was not very usual to conduct interviews on set.

The report includes the images of the demonstration held three days earlier in Madrid under the slogan "for a job without discrimination". In this case, the journalist Carmen Sarmiento plays with the environmental sound and the off, thus intersperses silences in which you can hear the chants of "the thousands of women of all ages and social classes" who cry out "equal pay for equal work", "government listen, the strike is the fight 'and' amnesty for women", with her narrative explaining the origin of the International Women's Day in New York, in 1908. It also describes the types of jobs that women did in Spain which are marked by being less qualified and holding fewer positions of responsibility than men, in addition to addressing the problem of the wage gap. Finally, the journalist took advantage of the use of two brooms to hold the banners to emphasize that the participants "used as a revulsive the instruments with which the housewife has traditionally been enslaved" (Sarmiento, 11 Mar. 1978).

Finally, on May 13, 1978, Carmen Sarmiento reported again on the Spanish feminist movements and the struggle of women to get rid of an imposed role that seemed to be part of the discomfort they suffer. This report is very symbolic. First of all, because it is the last one



Sarmiento did on this issue in *Informe Semanal*, and secondly because it's a compendium of everything exposed in the previous programs in which the struggle of women is addressed: feminist movements, contraception, abortion, discrimination against single mothers, gender roles, housewives, wage and work discrimination etc.

The report begins with the sound of hundreds of women chanting proclamations in a demonstration: “birth control” and “women: come out of your kitchen and join us” and Sarmiento's phrase “women, tired of not being protagonists of public life, tired of not having a voice, have come out to the streets to show that they want to transition from passivity to activity” (Sarmiento, 13 May 1978).

From here, she talks about two well-differentiated groups of women; those who are aware of their oppression, and are active in feminist groups, and those who are not aware of the discrimination they suffer. She makes use of declarations and images that have been used in other reports, though there are also new sources, such as the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE)¹² congresswoman Carlota Bustelo, who addresses the scarce participation of women in politics, linking the lack of female representation with Friedan's *The feminine mystique*. She brings in, when speaking with representatives of feminist movements, the concept of socialization of domestic work and the opposition to differentiated education as one of the fundamental origins of socialization in inequality.

As we have seen in all these reports, feminist theoretical proposals have been introduced like those outlined by Betty Friedan or Kate Millet, though in no case are they cited, probably to make a more informative story far from theoretical approaches to reach a wide and heterogeneous audience as was that of *Informe Semanal*.

Moreover, we have also observed how it includes feminist concepts and categories in each and every one of the reports in a direct way such as patriarchy, male chauvinism, double shifts, discrimination, oppression, liberation; or indirectly, that is, explaining the concept without naming it: gender, wage gap, glass ceiling etc.

In addition, in the reports they propose alternatives to the system of oppression, with the change in women's rolls, the involvement of men into the household, the socialization of domestic tasks, the self-awareness of women and associationism as a formula for struggle. It

¹² The Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) is a social-democratic political party in Spain.



encourages women to participate in the public sphere, in order to “overcome the centuries-long marginalization to which they have been and are still subjected to” (Sarmiento, 11 March 1978).

Conclusions: the journalist Carmen Sarmiento as a source of innovation and change

Carmen Sarmiento, journalist, and member of the original *Informe Semanal* team, included in the contents of the program her reports, which would show the vindications of the feminist movements, managing to convey to the Spanish public opinion the urgency and need to carry out legislative and social reforms that would impact the freedom and rights of women of her time. In addition, she regularly included feminist categories that were clearly named, such as patriarchy, misogyny, double shifts, discrimination, oppression; and even unraveled concepts not explicitly mentioned, such as gender, salary gap or glass ceiling. Carrying out a labor opposition counteraction to Franco as well as feminist literacy to the millions of viewers, who only had the existing television program in still Francoist Spain.

If we consider some of the analyzed data of this work, such as the number of reports produced by Sarmiento, they are significantly higher than those of her other colleagues, with a constant insistence on thematic proposals, according to oral and newspaper archives testimonies, it shows that her journalist interests did not decay overtime. She continued her projects after *Informe Semanal*, with important programs like: *Mujeres de América Latina* (Latin American women, 1992); *Los marginados* (The marginalized, 1984), and *Los excluidos* (The outcasts, 2000), that made history in Spanish television and for which, according to her own testimony, she even suffered professional repression due to her journalistic approaches and topics. We can affirm that Sarmiento’s professionalism and feminist commitment was an effective and decisive influential element, among colleagues and audiences alike. Her work served to transform, in a congruent way, a consensus counter-regulation. For this reason, we have found it interesting to address the influence of Sarmiento from the perspective of the theory of social psychology of active minorities, proposed by Moscovici (1981).

We could define Sarmiento, a declared feminist activist, as an active minority within a fundamental medium for the creation of alternative social models and representations to the prevailing norm, such as television, managing to involve fellow program members in her approach of favoring the inclusion of new topics and non-androcentric approaches, introducing



feminist concepts and categories to the general informative storylines, and giving new meanings to concepts, which at that time had a marked negative bias, such as feminism, divorce, abortion, contraception etc.

Ultimately, as an alternative to the imposed female model, she developed a great deal of work, for reception purposes, of the proposed counter-regulation carried out by feminist movements. It is essential to highlight the consistent behavior of Sarmiento as a feminist and journalist, in order to argue her impact as an individual, belonging to an active minority in television.

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