

The Treaty of Nice and the Spanish Press

News coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda by
El País, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* (2000- 2003)



MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The Treaty of Nice, signed on 26 February 2001, reformulated the European Union in order to facilitate the entry of new members. After the enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe, Spain would stop being a recipient of European Aid, and then onwards would become a Member State that would contribute more than it receives from the EU budget. However, the Spanish Parliament surprisingly approved the Treaty of Nice in October of 2001 with no “against” votes.

The purpose of this research project is to examine the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda through three ideologically different Spanish newspapers, *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*, between February 2000 and February 2003. The work is expected to make a contribution on three main points. Firstly, it aims to provide an understanding of the ideological tendencies of the newspapers when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda; secondly, it strives to discuss the news coverage of the results obtained by Spain with the Treaty of Nice, and thirdly it attempts to ascertain which topics concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda that the Spanish press addressed.

The results found through quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis methods highlight that *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* reflected their ideological positions when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. It has also showed that these newspapers tended to report on the Spanish interests through an interpretative discourse showing more clearly their ideological positions. Moreover, this Master’s thesis reveals that political issues took priority on the agenda of the Spanish press.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIM	Adequate Information in Europe
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CAP	Common agricultural policy
CEEC	Central and Eastern European countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIU	Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union)
COR	Committee of the Regions
EC	European Commission
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EGM	Estudio General de Medios (General Media Study)
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom)
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Freedom Party of Austria)
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
IU	Izquierda Unida (United Left)
PP	Partido Popular (People's Party)
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Spain polarises politically into two main parties: the centre-left Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the centre-right People's Party (PP) (Balfour 2005: 146). These parties have taken turns in office since 1982, and they seldom agree on anything (ibid). However, the Spanish Parliament surprisingly approved the Treaty of Nice, i.e., the Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaties establishing the European Communities, in October of 2001 with no “against” votes¹.

Spain joined the European Union (EU) on 1 January 1986. The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party was in office at that time. When negotiations on the Treaty of Nice began (2000), when it was signed (2001) and when it came into force (2003), the People's Party was the ruling party. The PP has defended a nationalist discourse when dealing with European Union affairs (Closa & Heywood 2004: 47), unlike the PSOE, which has been the party that has most defended the integration process (ibid: 46). Thus, there is traditionally no clear common standpoint on the European Union between the major parties in Spain.

Historically, the media in the Mediterranean countries has been linked to political conflicts and this strong connection to politics has marked its development. In these countries the media has served as ‘ideological expression’ and ‘political mobilisation’ (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 90). Because of the history and its relationship, nowadays each newspaper has its own political tendency. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that the media in the Southern European countries is ‘strongly politicised’ (ibid: 98). Thus, political events can be studied through the press inasmuch as the newspapers follow the ideology of political parties and the press becomes the medium to spread this political attitude to the citizens.

1.2 The case

On 26 February 2001, the Treaty of Nice was signed in the French city of Nice. This Treaty reformulated rules of the European Union in order to facilitate the entry of new

1

Details of the approval of the Treaty of Nice by the Spanish Parliament ('Congreso'- lower Chamber- and 'Senado'- Upper Chamber-): <http://europa.eu/bulletin/en/200112/p101002.htm>

members (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania). The negotiations to prepare the content of the Treaty of Nice were based on the Intergovernmental Conference held in Brussels on 14 February 2000 and the European Council Summit was organised in Nice in December of the same year. It was in the latter Summit where the major agreements about the Treaty of Nice were laid down.

There are different opinions about the Treaty of Nice in scholarly literature. Some authors contend that it was not a satisfactory Treaty. The enlargement and the contributions of the Treaty of Nice were questioned. Others state “the Nice negotiations [had] primarily not dealt with the consequences of the enlargement, but with the balance of power between the Member States” (Favret, 2001, quoted by Dehousse 2000: 40). On the other hand, it can be said that a big step was taken in the reform of the European judicial system, but it would perhaps be insufficient in an enlarged Europe (Dehousse 2000: 32).

There are, however, positive opinions about the Treaty of Nice. It is possible to see in this statement how some authors think that the Treaty of Nice fulfilled its task, “the Nice Treaty successfully fulfilled its primary purpose which was to provide a deep institutional reform in order to ensure a well-functioning Union of twenty-seven member states (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 42). The same opinion is voiced by Guillermo de la Dehesa (2002: 46), who maintains that the Treaty of Nice opened a door to enable reform in 2004, albeit stating that “the Treaty of Nice [was] not the solution” (ibid: 47). The Treaty of Nice also formulated positive improvements, such as the size and composition of the Commission (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 182).

The Treaty of Nice granted Spain 27 votes in the Council and 50 seats in the European Parliament. As a consequence, Spain accordingly lost 14 Members of the European Parliament and would have no more than one commissioner from 2005 onwards. As far as Cohesion funds are concerned, the veto right was maintained until 2007. Subsidies would be extended until 2014.

Spain has benefited considerably from the Structural and Cohesion Funds, which “have contributed significantly to reducing regional disparities and fostering convergence within the EU” (Closa & Heywood 2004: 213). From 1986 to 2005, Spain received 211,007 million Euros from the EU (Muñoz Ramírez 2006: 200) and “during 1994-99 EU aid accounted for 1.5 per cent of the GDP in Spain” (Closa & Heywood 2004: 213). With the Treaty of Nice the amount assigned to Spain from the Cohesion and Structural Funds would not change from 2000 to 2006 (ibid: 199), but would start to be considerably reduced from 2007 onwards (ibid: 201). As a

consequence, the Treaty of Nice considerably reduced the amount of European aid to Spain from 2007 and opened the door to new countries, whose citizens could see Spain as a possible country to emigrate.

1.3 Aim and justification of the study

The purpose of this Master's thesis is to look more deeply at the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda by examining three ideologically different Spanish newspapers, *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* between February 2000 and February 2003.

Some opinions contending that the Treaty of Nice was not a satisfactory treaty have been cited above. Some of the consequences that the Treaty of Nice would bring about in Spain have been mentioned. However, no members of the Spanish Parliament voted against the Treaty of Nice. There was almost unanimity when the Treaty was approved. Considering these facts, it is important to ascertain whether the Spanish press shared a common discourse when they reported on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

Therefore, the overall plan of this study is to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent did *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* reflect their ideological tendencies when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda?
- How were the Spanish results obtained in Nice covered by the Spanish press?
- Which topics related to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda were reported on in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*?

There is a shortage of research projects about the Treaty of Nice and the Spanish press. The researchers have tended to focus on other European Union events, for example, Eduardo Martín Segovia (2003) and Joaquín Sotelo González (2005), who focused on the Economic and Monetary Union, and Delia Contreras García (1995), who published her doctoral dissertation on the news coverage of the negotiations of the Treaty of Maastricht. For this reason, it is necessary to study the Treaty of Nice and its agenda from a journalistic perspective in that “the politicisation of the mass media and the ‘mediatisation’ of politics will continue to be a major issue in contemporary Spanish politics” (Magone 2009: 279).

1.4 How to investigate?

a. Analysing the Spanish Press

The press was chosen as the medium for carrying out the investigation on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda because newspapers often deal with information in more depth than other media (Lyons 1965: 122). In addition to this, the press reporting could be expected to be more interpretive than the broadcast reporting (ibid). Therefore, I expected a daily newspaper to be more explicit on its political tendency than radio or television, which spread information in a shorter period of time than the press does. In order to carry out the research on the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda I had to rule out radio and television inasmuch as I had to limit myself on time and space and the press was the medium which best fulfilled these requirements.

I decided to choose three ideologically different newspapers so as to analyse the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Each paper has a clear ideological tendency. Two of them are national: *El País* and *ABC* and the other is regional, *La Vanguardia*. Starting with *ABC*, it was founded in 1905, so it is a newspaper with a tradition of long standing. It has witnessed considerable political unrests in Spain and it has a conservative and pro-monarchy ideology (Contreras García 1995: 33).

The second paper is *La Vanguardia*. This daily newspaper has followed a conservative and pro-monarchy ideology from its founding in 1881. Nonetheless, it is perceived as “the most leftist newspaper among the right-wing papers” (Contreras García 1995: 44). One of the primary characteristics is that it is a regional paper “and it often reflects special political alignments of the autonomous regions” (Barrera, quoted by Hallin & Mancini 2004: 105). Hence, “it is close to the Catalan Nationalist CiU (Convergence and Union)” (ibid).

The third newspaper is *El País*. It was founded in 1976 with the goal of being an independent, pro-European and liberal newspaper (Contreras García 1995: 33). It appeared at the same time as democracy gained ground and their journalists aimed “to promote the new democratic regime and to oppose Francoism” (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 104). It was perceived as a newspaper close to the PSOE in the 1980s and 1990s (Magone 2009: 264).

Four events concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda will be analysed. These events took place from February 2000 to February 2003. Therefore, the four periods selected are as follows:

- The Intergovernmental Conference (1 to 28 February 2000). On 14 February 2000, under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, an Intergovernmental Conference was held in Brussels, so as to continue the work on institutional reform started with the Treaty of Amsterdam. These reforms were hitherto insufficient to support the prospective addition of members into the European Union (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 28).

- Nice European Council (1 to 31 December 2000). A European Council Summit was held in Nice from 7 to 9 December of 2000, under the French Presidency. It was there that the major agreements about the Treaty of Nice were laid down (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 30-31).

- The signing of the Treaty of Nice (15 February to 15 March 2001). On 26 February 2001, a new Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaties establishing the European Communities was signed (Treaty of Nice).

- Entry into force of the Treaty of Nice (1 to 28 February 2003). The Treaty of Nice came into force on 1 February 2003.

b. Methodology

In order to carry out the research about the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda the methodological approach was based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The methodology will be based on content analysis, which is quantitative in nature, and qualitative discourse analysis. Chapter four concerns the methods and will present them in detail.

c. Theoretical Framework

The Agenda-Setting Theory and framing will be presented in chapter three, which concerns the theoretical framework. These theories were selected for this project because the study deals with issues reported in the Spanish press and these theories focus on the issues covered by the media. The subjects of analysis will be articles from *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* from the four periods selected. Content and discourse analysis will also be considered in order to deepen the analysis. The content analysis was inspired by Berelson, Wimmer and Dominick. Regarding the discourse analysis, Van Dijk and Norman Fairclough will be taken into account and they will be also presented in the chapter concerning the theoretical framework.

In order to better understand the Treaty of Nice and its agenda examined from the perspective of the Spanish press, a broad background to the study is included in this thesis in chapter two. Firstly, an overview on the Spanish integration in the European Union will be presented. Secondly, the relationship between journalism and politics in Spain will be expounded. Finally, the main features of the Treaty of Nice will be presented.

d. Outline of the thesis

This project begins with an introduction explaining the frame of reference in order to clarify the aim of the research. The background to the study and the theoretical approaches follow in the second and third chapter. The next part is dedicated to methodology. Here, the reader will find a description of the methods used for the research. The fifth section contains the findings, showing the results of the analysis of articles from *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* through quantitative and qualitative analysis. Finally, the conclusions of this Master's thesis are presented in chapter six.

CHAPTER TWO – BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 Journalism and Politics in Spain

In examining Spanish journalism, it is necessary to have a look at the history. The main feature here is that Spanish journalism has had strong links to literature and politics. Journalism began to be important in Spain in the nineteenth century (Cruz Seoane & Sáiz 1983: 11). Journalists were writers and most belonged to the elite, i.e., were from upper class families and talked about their work with other intellectuals in cafés and salons of the main Spanish cities. They discussed issues from the perspective of journalism, literature or sometimes both, if they had an interest in both. It is possible to find novels based on journalistic issues in the literary history of the 19th century in Spain. Moreover, the journalist was also an orator inasmuch as the press was substantially linked to politics (ibid: 13). Spain went through many wars and the newspapers were, in general, the ideological support for politicians. Hence, it is interesting to cite Max Weber (1947, quoted by Mancini 2005: 81) in order to see the relationship between journalists and politics because, “the journalist is a type of professional politician.”

Let us now consider the 20th century starting with the dictatorship from 1939 to 1975 of Franco. Journalism was linked to Franco’s party (*Movimiento Nacional*) and the press became the *Prensa del Movimiento* (State-owned press). There was no freedom of expression because censorship of the regime frequently stepped in. According to Rosario de Mateo (1997: 195) “the press, according to the [Press] law of 1938, was considered a national institution and its organisation was under state control.” Newspapers were also close to the Church – for example, the paper *Ya*. Some national and more market-oriented newspapers were launched after the end of the dictatorship (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 95-96). Currently, Spain is a democratic country and freedom of expression is mentioned in the 20th Article of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. In Spain, newspapers articles tend to overlap the interpretation, the description and the evaluation of the events, due to literary and political origin of journalism (Mancini 2005: 85).

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004: 90), in the Mediterranean countries “there is a strong tradition of regarding [the media] as a means of ideological expression and political mobilisation.” The media in Spain is closely involved in politics. Hence, each newspaper has its own audience in line with its political stance (ibid: 98). Nowadays, most of the national newspapers tend to follow the positions of the two major parties in Spain, the right-wing People’s Party (PP) and the left-wing Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE). One example is *El País*. It

was launched in 1976 during the new democratic period, and “in the 1980s and 1990s [it] was perceived to be close to the policies of the Socialist Party” (Magone 2009: 264). On the other hand, *El Mundo* was founded in 1989 and it began reporting on the corruption scandals of the PSOE’ governments (ibid). Willnat (1997: 53) quotes Cohen in saying that, “the mass media not only tell us ‘what to think about’, but ‘what to think’.” This is clearly seen in Spain because readers, in my view, think in line with the stance of the newspaper, i.e., the party.

The Spanish national newspapers are of high quality (Magone 2009: 265) and serve a comparatively small number of readers with political and cultural interests in society. On the other hand, it is in the local press where the quality in terms of writing and style is different compared to that of the national ones. The readership is not the same either, because, in general, educated people tend to read national papers (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 97). There are some exceptions to the rule: some newspapers from Catalonia, such as *La Vanguardia* and *El Periódico de Cataluña*. These have high circulations in spite of being regional papers. Catalonians who are living in other parts of the country also read these newspapers.

There are tabloids in many countries; however these do not exist in Spain (Magone 2009: 264). The idea of newspapers in Spain is on the whole, quality, good writing and good news, avoiding celebrity gossip. Specialist niche magazines exist for people who want to know about celebrities (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 97). In any case, there is not a huge overall readership in Spain. The main reason for this is historical: the level of illiteracy in Spain was high until relatively recently.

I have mentioned that the Spanish press has been closely linked to politics from the beginning of journalism in Spain. I have decided to study three newspapers in order to analyse the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Each paper has an ideological tendency. It will be possible to see in the conclusions of this project whether or not the newspapers followed their ideological positions when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Let us start with *ABC*. It is a newspaper with tradition of long standing. It has had a conservative and pro-monarchy ideology since its creation in 1905. Moreover, this daily newspaper “has been witness to numerous political unrests in Spain” (Contreras García 1995: 33). The second paper is *La Vanguardia*. This daily also followed a conservative and pro-monarchy ideology from its beginning in 1881. It is also perceived as “the most leftist newspapers among the right-wing papers” (ibid: 44). This paper and *ABC* were the only two Spanish newspapers that survived the Civil War and the Press Law of 1938 (Hernández Vázquez 2001: 90). One of its primary characteristics is that it is a regional

paper, “and it reflects the often special political alignments of the autonomous regions” (Barrera, 1995, quoted by Hallin & Mancini 2004: 105). Hence, “it is close to the Catalan Nationalist CiU (Convergence and Union)” (ibid).

Finally, the third newspaper is *El País*. The principal stock-holders who founded *El País* belonged to “representatives of the political families that would govern during the transition to democracy” (Gunther & Wert, 2000, quoted by Hallin & Mancini 2004: 103-104). This daily newspaper was created in 1976 with the goal of being an independent, pro-European and liberal newspaper (Contreras García 1995: 37). It appeared at the same time as democracy gained ground and it was created by the left-wing opposition to the Franco regime. A new era began with a new newspaper. It was perceived as a newspaper close to the PSOE in the 1980s and 1990s (Magone 2009: 264).

Let us now consider the kind of reader of papers in Spain. In 2000, the daily print run of *El País* was 1,447,000; *ABC*, 923,000 and *La Vanguardia*, 623,000. This is not a large circulation considering that the population of Spain was almost 40.5 million at that time. Spaniards do not usually read much. Hence, on average, only 36.3% of Spaniards read a newspaper every day in the year of the beginning of the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice. In addition to this, according to the *Estudio General de Medios* (General Media Study), the upper and middle classes read more newspapers than the lower classes, which in contrast, tend to watch television instead.

Throughout the history of Spanish journalism, readership figures have been low. The main reason is the level of illiteracy. For instance, in 1887, over 70% of Spaniards could not read and write and this was true of about 33% of the population in 1940 (Ortiz, 1995, quoted by Hallin & Mancini 2004: 93). In fact, it may be the case that one of the reasons for the low number of current readers in Spain, whether of newspapers or books, is the educational methodology used under Franco’s dictatorship. The system was authoritarian and children went to school in fear. Every day teachers hit children. One of the slogans of the dictatorship related to education was *la letra con sangre entra* (or ‘spare the rod, spoil the child’). Thus, many adults do not read nowadays. They learnt to hate reading in their childhood and, now, as adults, they find it difficult to change. Therefore, the number of citizens who read newspapers during the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice was probably less than the number of people who watched the news on television.

2.2 Spanish integration in the European Union

It is necessary to jump back in the middle of the twentieth century to track the beginning of the European Union (EU). It started after World War II in order to secure peace in Europe (McCormick 2005: 58). On 18 April 1951 six countries: Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the Treaty of Paris establishing The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (ibid: 61). The same countries signed, in 1957, the Treaties of Rome laying the foundations of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) (ibid: 63). Ireland, Denmark and the United Kingdom joined the European Union in 1973. Three Mediterranean countries: Greece (1981), Spain (1986) and Portugal (1986) entered in the following decade (ibid: 67). The European members signed the Single European Act in 1986 so as to start working for a single European market (ibid: 69). In 1995 Sweden, Finland and Austria joined the EU. 1999 was important in the history of the integration because it was when the Euro became the single currency for financial transactions in the EU (ibid: 74). Finally, in 2004 the European Union enlarged to include to the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta (ibid: 75) and then Bulgaria and Romania in 2007.

Let us now consider the evolution of Spain in relation to the EEC and later the so-called EU. Even though Spain possessed a great empire during several centuries, it had lost its last overseas colonies: Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, in 1898. Hence, an enormous financial crisis absorbed Spain at that time. While some intellectuals thought that the best way to overcome this crisis was to maintain the Spanish identity, others held that approaching the democratic values of other European states would be the best solution (Closa & Heywood 2004: 6-7). Spain did not take part in World War I or II. As a result, Spain disassociated itself from the European context during the 30s and 40s. In addition to this, from 1936 until 1939, Spain experienced a civil war where Republicans and Nationalist forces, led by Franco, fought. The latter side won the war and Franco became *caudillo*, i.e., leader of Spain. In 1939 Spain started a long dictatorship, that is, a period of isolation inasmuch as the rest of the democratic countries were against Franco and they closed the doors to Spain (ibid: 7). For example, Spain did not receive funds from the Marshall Plan in 1951 (Royo & Manuel 2003: 7). Obviously, Spain could not participate in the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 nor in the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1952. Franco did not support the idea of joining the EEC, in that he did not want establish relations based on economic agreements. In Spain he attempted to introduce the

so-called 'essential' values: Christianity and anti-Communism (Moreno, quoted by Closa & Heywood 2004: 7-8). However, Franco realised during the 1950's that Spain could no longer be isolated because the Spanish economy needed to integrate in the international context. In the late fifties there were two new international bodies of which Spain wanted to become members: the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the EEC. The regime opted for the second because it included agriculture and this sector was relevant for the Spanish economy (Closa & Heywood 2004: 10). Therefore, even though Franco was averse to take part in the European Economic Community in the beginning, some years later the regime recognised that this choice was the best for the future of the country.

In the 1960s, the Spanish government asked for diplomatic relations with the EEC so as to know the integration process better. The government located a Spanish ambassador in Brussels and launched a special 'Interministerial Committee' (*Comisión Interministerial*) in order to prepare the negotiations. On 9 December 1964 the Spanish delegation had its first meeting with the European Economic Community in Brussels. The members of the Spanish delegation attempted to convince the representatives of the EEC of the advantages (commercial, financial and labour force) that Spain could offer if it became a member of the EEC. During the 60s the Spanish negotiators travelled to different countries to ascertain the opinions of other governments about Spain. Initially, the Iberian country found support in France and Germany. However, Italy, Netherlands and Belgium did not support Spanish membership because Spain was not a democratic country. Moreover, the Spanish negotiations were not a priority issue on the EEC agenda, in that other features were more relevant for the Community at that time (Senante Berendes 2006: 113-134).

The Spanish government also met opposition from some sectors. The European trade unions and the Spanish intellectuals living abroad did not support the Spanish government's attempts to join the EEC because they wanted Spain to first become a democratic country. The Spanish exiles expressed their contempt for Franco's undemocratic regime, at the Fourth Congress of the international association *federalist European Movement* (Moreno Juste 2001: 182). The Spanish democrats declared that Spain had to establish democratic and representative institutions; guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms; recognise trades unions and to establish "the right to create political parties" (Preston, quoted by Closa & Heywood 2004: 10-11). The Spanish government interpreted this declaration as conspiracy ("Munich's conspiracy"). On the other hand, Spanish employers held that the EEC would not contribute favourably to Spanish national

industry. Furthermore, the above-mentioned group and the public opinion wanted more detailed information about the negotiations. Therefore, the government held several press conferences in order to explain the negotiations (Senante Berendes 2006: 148-151). This shows that the first attempts to negotiate with the EEC were not easy, owing to the diversity of opponents in both the national and international context.

In any case, the Spanish government went on with the European plan since, “Spain was paying a high price for its exclusion because of the increasingly important economic roles played by foreign investment, tourism and emigration” (Powell 1995, quoted by Closa & Heywood 2004: 9). For that reason, as Ramírez (1996, quoted by Closa & Heywood 2004: 9) contends, “the 1960s saw Spain turn towards ‘economic Europeanism’.” Spain pursued an association agreement first but it intended to end in full integration. However, the membership in the EEC required “the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights and liberties,” (ibid 2004: 10) and Spain did not fulfil this criteria. Nonetheless, Spain signed a Preferential Agreement with the EEC in 1970 even though economists noted that this agreement would not produce benefits to the Spanish economy (Tamames, 1978, quoted by Closa & Heywood 2004: 15). Although this achievement was relevant, it was not enough, because the EEC already had similar trade agreements with other countries. The latter issue was damaging to Spain because Spain had to compete with the products of the other countries that had similar agreements. Moreover, not all the member states of the EEC supported the agreement due to some of the non-democratic characteristics of Spain at that time. An example was the terrorist group, ETA (Closa & Heywood 2004: 12). Another event that showed Spain as non-democratic country was the executions carried out by the government in October 1975. These stopped the negotiations between the EEC and Spain because all of Europe condemned the event (Moreno Juste 2001: 187). It seemed that just when the negotiations were culminating, new problems appeared. In any case, even though Spain made an effort to belong to the EEC, the government was still a dictatorship. Consequently, it stands to reason that all the above-mentioned obstacles interrupted the process of Spain joining the EEC.

When Franco died in 1975 Spain began the transition to democracy. The new and democratic regime was internationally recognised and it formally applied to join the EEC in July 1977 (Closa & Heywood 2004: 13). The core issue herein was that “the Spanish application was unanimously supported by all political parties represented in the Spanish parliament” (ibid: 15).

Thus, in October of that year, Spain asked to join the Council of Europe; it entered two years later (ibid: 13).

In 1981 Antonio Tejero attempted to stage a coup in Spain (Agüero, 1995, quoted by Closa & Heywood 2004: 16). The EEC condemned Tejero's coup and "its institutions reaffirmed their desire to see a democratic Spain become a member state" (Closa & Heywood 2004: 16-17). All the parties held that Europe was the best choice for a new and fragile democratic state (Moreno Juste 2001: 190). Thus, the results of several years of negotiating were reached in the first years of democracy.

The accession negotiations began in 1978 and ended in March 1985. The most important issues for Spain were agriculture and industry. The Spanish politicians were very eager to join the European Economic Community, but they felt that, "they would pay too high a price for accession" (Bassols, 1995, quoted by Closa & Heywood 2004: 21). France and Germany were in favour of the Spanish membership in the beginning, however, they later opposed because Spain would be their competitor in agriculture. They also held that the European aid funds would have to increase to help a country like Spain, in that this was a poor country. Nevertheless, Germany did not oppose so much as France because the main feature at stake for Germany was to maintain the peace and democracy in Europe. Therefore, Germany finally relented, stating that the membership of Spain was as a result of the democracy and this was certainly the most important issue (ibid 2004: 23-24).

Spain became full member of the EEC on 1st January 1986. During the first years of membership the objective was to restructure the country, both socially and economically. As a result, Spain strengthened its democracy; it profited from European aid and it benefited from some EEC policies. Moreover, Spain became a non-isolated southern country (Moreno Juste 2001: 201).

During the 90s Spain experienced two major events in relation to the EEC after joining. One event was during Felipe Gonzalez's government and the other one was when José María Aznar was in office (Moreno Juste 2001: 204). In 1992 Felipe Gonzalez's government achieved the inclusion of the *economic and social cohesion* as a European principle in the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty of Maastricht (Moreno Juste 2001: 204; Closa & Heywood 2004: 188). Hence, the European Union created a new fund, i.e., the Cohesion Fund, (Moreno Juste 2001: 207) in order to establish "economic, social and territorial convergence" (Lambach & Schieble 2007:

117). Despite this achievement by the Spanish government at the EU level, some sectors did not support the Spanish government since they were against the Treaty of Maastricht (Moreno Juste 2001: 208).

The other important event in the history of the Spanish integration was in 1998 when José María Aznar, the Spanish Prime Minister at that time, endeavoured for Spain to gain importance in the EU and to join the group of countries which were able to adopt the single currency, e.g., the Euro (Moreno Juste 2001: 204). Morata (1996: 148) states that “entry into the EEC in 1986 [was] perceived as the final step of the process to democracy as well as the end of the secular isolation from Europe that [had] characterised Spain since the last century, especially during the Franco regime.” Nonetheless, although it seems that Spain gained more than it lost joining the EEC (EU currently), there were also difficult moments in the Spanish history of the European integration process, which cast doubt on the relationship of Spain in the EEC/EU.

2.3 Treaty of Nice

This section deals with the Treaty of Nice. First, a detailed background will be presented in order to clarify why the Treaty on the European Union had to be amended. Later, an overview about the Nice European Council, where the major agreements about the Treaty were laid down, will be discussed. The last part deals specifically with the content of the text of the Treaty of Nice.

The European Council met in Helsinki on 10 and 11 December 1999 with the heads of state or government of the then 15 Member States of the European Union. In 2000 it was agreed to hold new Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in order to work on some issues concerning the reform of the European Union (EU) in preparation for its future enlargement (Dehousse 2000: 20). Subsequently, on 14 February 2000, under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, an Intergovernmental Conference was held in Brussels to continue the work on institutional reform started with the Treaty of Amsterdam. These reforms were hitherto insufficient to support the addition of prospective members to the European Union. The *weak points* highlighted in Amsterdam were the size and composition of the European Commission, the weighting of votes in the Council and the extension of the qualified majority voting (QMV) in the latter institution (ibid: 27-28). The above-mentioned Intergovernmental Conference could not resolve all the issues and a new European Council Summit was held in Nice from 7 to 9 December of the same year, under the French Presidency (ibid: 30).

Let us refer to the previous Nice Summit because it was there that the major agreements about the Treaty of Nice were laid down. It was one of the largest Council meetings in the whole history of the EU and it finished very late on Sunday night (9 December). Some issues had already been worked on in previous meetings, but it was important that the core issues be resolved during that weekend. The negotiations were certainly complicated. The weighting of votes provoked strong disagreement among countries. On one hand, the large countries wanted to have more representation because of their correspondingly large population while the small countries would not accept to lose the weight that they had at that point (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 30-31).

On 26 February 2001, a new Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaties establishing the European Communities was signed (Treaty of Nice). Thereafter, the Treaty of Nice entered into force on 1 February 2003. It is a controversial treaty because there are different viewpoints on it. On one hand, it obtained the support of some authors: “The Treaty of Nice laid the foundations for subsequent reform of the Union model” (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 42). On the other hand, there were critical points of view: “Logically, a treaty about the enlargement should have reduced strongly the veto right, simplified the procedures, facilitated the decision process, opened more possibilities of closer cooperation, and basically deepened the Community method. Basically, but, obscurely, the Nice Treaty does the reverse” (Dehousse 2000: 41).

Now, the structure of the Treaty of Nice, by taking into account the content of the main parts, will be presented.

The Treaty of Nice was published in number C80 of the Official Journal of the European Communities on 10 March 2001. The Treaty consists of one main part, four protocols and a final act. The whole Treaty sums eighty-seven pages. The main part is divided in other two so-called *substantive amendments*, consisting of six articles, and *transitional and final provisions*, comprising seven articles. The protocols are composed of sixty-four articles in total and the final act includes three protocols and twenty-seven declarations. The content of the parts constituting the Treaty of Nice will be now described in more detail.

Let us start by considering the first part, the substantive amendments, to be precise. Article 1 includes points dealing with the democratic requirements in the EU, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the enhanced cooperation, the judicial system and some competences of the European Council, the European Commission and the Court of Justice.

Article 2 expounds diverse themes: enhanced cooperation, free movement of individuals, common commercial policy, workers and social rights, economic cohesion, taxation, utilisation of natural resources in the EU, economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries, the Official Journal of the European Union, the Economic and Social Committee, the EU budget and the working languages in the institutions. There are several points concerning the following institutions and financial and advisory bodies: the Council of the European Union (Council), the European Parliament (EP), the Court of Justice, the Court of First Instance, the European Commission (EC), the European Court of Auditors, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank.

Article 3 basically concerns the institutions. The seats in the EP or the method of voting in this institution are first mentioned, then, the composition of the EC and its functions are described. The composition and jurisdiction of the Court of Justice, the Court of First Instance, the Court of Auditors and the Economical and Social Committee are also discussed. Finally, the article deals with the working languages in the institutions, the European Union budget and the Official Journal of the European Communities.

Article 4 first explains the composition of the EC, its functions and the election of its members, then the EP, its tasks and members are mentioned. The Court of Justice is cited in order to explain its composition, the process of election of its members, its jurisdiction and its Statute. The Court of First Instance, the election of its members and its functions are also cited. The last part refers to the composition and tasks of the Court of Auditors.

Article 5 concerns the European Central Bank and the European System of Central Banks. Article 6 deals with the members of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance.

The second section of the first part of the Treaty of Nice is called Transitional and Final Provisions. This part consists of seven articles essentially concerning the Statute of the Court of Justice and the legal procedures linked to ratification, the entry into force of the Treaty, the archives where the Treaty will be kept and its subsequent translation into other languages. Lastly, it contains the signatures of all the plenipotentiaries who agreed to the Treaty of Nice.

The next part of the Treaty of Nice is the protocols. This first one deals with the enlargement of the European Union, to be precise, with the changes concerning the composition and size of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council.

The next protocol touches upon the Statute of the Court of Justice. Title I concerns the Judges and the Advocates-General; title II, Court Organisation; Title III, Court Procedure; Title IV, the Court of First Instance, and the Final Provisions are presented in Title V.

The third protocol tackles the financial consequences of the expiry of the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty and on the research fund for coal and steel. This part considers the Treaty that established the founding treaty of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the transfer of its funds to other sectors as a consequence of its expiry when the Nice Treaty comes into force. The last protocol explains an important issue, where the Council should act only by qualified majority.

Finally, the Treaty of Nice presents a final act which summarises the adopted texts including (except those mentioned above) twenty-four annexed declarations and three declarations which were recorded at the Conference of the Representatives of the member state governments, convened in Brussels on 14 February 2000. In addition to this, it contains the signatures of the Treaty by the representatives concerned.

2.3.1 What is new and important in Nice?

2.3.1.1 The institutional, financial and advisory bodies' reform

As Galloway (2001: 162) states, “the Treaty of Nice marks the completion of the structural renovations deemed necessary by the Union to allow more residents to be accommodated.” There were essentially two aims in enlarging the European Union. The first was solidarity towards *the other Europe*, in other words, the ex-communist countries. The second concerned political and economic interests: to maintain peace and security in Europe and to create an internal market consisting of almost 500 million people (Blázquez Peinado 2004: 5).

Let us now start by considering the European Commission (EC). First, the Treaty of Nice changed the composition of the EC, the way it nominated its members, and the role of its President. The Council would designate the President and the members of the EC by qualified majority voting. The powers of the President were increased inasmuch as he could nominate the vice-presidents and was able to distribute the posts among the members of this institution. Moreover, the President could request the resignation of any member of the Commission; if the entire College of Commissioners approved, the member in question had to resign. This process was called *lex Prodi*. The second change introduced in the Treaty was the size of the EC. When

the European Union had 27 members, the EC would have fewer commissioners than member states. They would be elected according to an equal rotation (Blázquez Peinado 2004: 7-9).

The Council is another institution to take into account because the weighting of votes in the Council was one of the most important topics reported on in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. The essence of qualified majority voting would change with the Treaty of Nice. Dehousse (2000: 24) describes the new voting system by stating that any decision would require 258 votes of 345 when the EU has 27 Member States. Moreover any decision should “be potentially approved by the Member States which represent 62% of the Union’s population.”

The Treaty of Nice satisfies France’s wish of having the same number of votes as Germany. In addition to this, the medium and small size countries agreed with the results. The weighting of votes in the Council would be: Germany (29), United Kingdom (29), France (29), Italy (29), Spain (27), Poland (27), Romania (14), Netherlands (13), Greece (12), Czech Republic (12), Belgium (12), Hungary (12), Portugal (12), Sweden (10), Bulgaria (10), Austria (10), Slovakia (7), Denmark (7), Finland (7), Ireland (7), Lithuania (7), Latvia (4), Slovenia (4), Estonia (4), Cyprus (4), Luxembourg (4) and Malta (3).

Additionally, qualified majority voting would approve decisions in over 80% of Council matters. The remainder will require unanimous votes. Some examples are “taxation policy, culture, accession of third countries, language regulations in the EU institutions and the assurance of minimum standard” (Lambach & Schieble 2007: 62). Hence, decision-making should be easier due to the elimination of the right to veto in a large number of fields.

The European Parliament was another institution reformed by the Treaty of Nice. EP would have a maximum of 732 seats. When Bulgaria and Rumania entered, it would be possible for there to be more than 732. The number of seats for each Member State shall be as follows: Germany (99), United Kingdom (72), France (72), Italy (72), Spain (50), Poland (50), Romania (33), Netherlands (25), Greece (22), Czech Republic (20), Belgium (22), Hungary (20), Portugal (22), Sweden (18), Bulgaria (17), Austria (17), Slovakia (13), Denmark (13), Finland (13), Ireland (12), Lithuania (12), Latvia (8), Slovenia (7), Estonia (6), Cyprus (6), Luxembourg (6) and Malta (5). Moreover, the competences of the EP increased. For example, the EP improved its role towards the other institutions (Blázquez Peinado 2004: 14).

Let us now look at the European Court of Auditors. The Council would elect its members before consulting the EP, by qualified majority voting. Moreover, the Court would be allowed to establish its own internal rules, and it would have the opportunity to better organise the work that it was supposed to carry out (Blázquez Peinado 2004: 15).

Concerning the Court of Justice, Gutiérrez Espada (2003: 14) explains that changes were applied in this institution in four major aspects. Thus, the Treaty of Nice “reorganises and simplifies the legal instruments of the Court of Justice of the European Communities; redefines the Court of Justice; reorganises and expands its powers; and finally, changes its composition, organisation and its rules of procedure.”

Concerning the Court of First Instance, its new responsibilities were the following. The first was the, “general jurisdiction to hear and determine at first instance direct actions and other proceedings specified in the Statute” (Gutiérrez Espada 2003: 16). The second was, “the jurisdiction to hear and determine questions referred for a preliminary ruling in specific areas laid down by the Statute” (ibid) and the third, “jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals lodged against decisions given by judicial panels” (ibid).

The two advisory bodies, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (COR) also underwent changes with the Treaty Nice. The EESC would not be able to have more than 350 members, who would be elected by the Council by a qualified majority (Blázquez Peinado 2004: 16). There would be one representative for each member state. Hence, the composition of the European Economic and Social Committee would be the following: Germany (24), United Kingdom (24), France (24), Italy (24), Spain (21), Poland (21), Romania (15), Netherlands (12), Greece (12), Czech Republic (12), Belgium (12), Hungary (12), Portugal (12), Sweden (12), Bulgaria (12), Austria (12), Slovakia (9), Denmark (9), Finland (9), Ireland (9), Lithuania (9), Latvia (7), Slovenia (7), Estonia (7), Cyprus (6), Luxembourg (6) and Malta (5).

The number of members of the Committee of the Regions would also be limited to 350, who would be nominated by the Council by qualified majority voting (Blázquez Peinado 2004: 17). This would be the same as the European Economic and Social Committee.

2.3.1.2 Other issues presented in Nice

The Treaty of Amsterdam introduced the concept of closer cooperation² concerning the organisation of the European institutions. This was revised at the Nice Summit, the main point being that the veto right of the states was eliminated. Secondly, just eight member states would be needed to begin a closer cooperation mechanism. Finally, the necessary conditions to establish an enhanced cooperation would be strengthened in some issues. Moreover, it would be able to be used in all the three pillars of the EU³, except issues linked to defence and the armed forces (Dehousse 2000: 28-31).

The Declaration on the Future of Europe (number 23 of the Final Act of the Treaty of Nice) contains important information. The Treaty pointed out that a new IGC would have to be held to continue debating the future of the EU. Two issues pending were a delimitation of powers between the EU and the Member States, and the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The latter was negotiated at the Nice Summit, but the Charter would not have legal value in the Treaty of Nice (Dehousse 2000: 35). A third issue pending was the simplification of the Treaties and, finally, the roles of national parliaments in EU matters.

During the Nice Summit, the European Council⁴ worked on a great number of issues. Those concerning institutional reform were discussed here as being most relevant. The French Presidency presented its conclusions starting with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the work carried out by the Intergovernmental Conference concerning the Treaty of Nice. However, the above-mentioned summit covered other fields that are also important for the European Union and for the citizens living in the Member States.

The EU had to be restructured in order for the enlargement to be successful. For this reason, the issue of restructuring became important in the European Council. Next was the issue of Common European Security and Defence Policy. Matters concerning European economic and

² Definition of closer or enhanced cooperation: "Enhanced cooperation allows those countries of the Union that wish to continue to work more closely together to do so, while respecting the single institutional framework of the Union. The Member States concerned can thus move forward at different speeds and/or towards different goals." Source: http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/enhanced_cooperation_en.htm

³ The first pillar concerns the Community, i.e. the European Community, the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the former European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The second pillar is the common foreign and security policy and the third pillar concerns the police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. Source: http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/eu_pillars_en.htm

⁴ Visit the web page of the Council for more detailed information concerning the French Presidency conclusions about the Nice Summit: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00400-r1.%20ann.en0.htm

social policy were worked on in detail at the Nice Summit. Some conclusions linked to the European Social Agenda, employment, anti-social exclusion and discrimination, social protection and workers' involvement were presented, followed by two points connected to innovation, knowledge and coordination of economic policies. The next topic was European citizenship, which included areas as diverse as consumer health and food safety, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), maritime safety, the environment, food security, area of freedom, security and justice; culture, and the outermost regions and islands. The last point was about external relations including references to Cyprus, the Western Balkans, the Mediterranean and some measures linked to development.

The French Presidency added eight annexes to the above-mentioned items. The first annex was about the European social agenda. The second was about the services of general economic interest. Appendices three and four were connected to the precautionary principle and sport and its social function in Europe. The next three refer to mobility, the European Security and Defence Policy, and the Middle East. The last annex – and final document of the Treaty – was a list of all the documents submitted to the European Council in Nice.

The main amendments agreed on at the Nice Summit concerned the reform of the political institutions of the European Union, e.g., the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament. The European Commission changed in size and composition, and the powers of its President were increased. In the Council, the weighting of the votes was adjusted and most of the decisions adopted through qualified majority voting, the veto right being conversely reduced to just a small number of issues. The Parliament had greater powers and increased its number of seats to 732. As has been mentioned, a large number of other issues were also worked on at the Nice Summit. In the following chapters of this thesis it will be possible to see whether the three newspapers focused merely on the main issues or whether they attached importance to other fields, such as the enlargement, the environment, social affairs, culture and so forth.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is relevant to mention the results of the Nice Summit with reference to Spain. Spain was granted 27 votes in the Council and 50 seats in the European Parliament. Spain accordingly lost 14 Members in the European Parliament and would have no more than one commissioner from 2005 onwards. Concerning the Cohesion funds, the veto right in this issue was maintained until 2007. Subsidies would extend until the year 2014. Spain would also be able to use the veto right in connection with external border control in issues submitted to qualified majority voting.

CHAPTER THREE – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Agenda-Setting Theory and framing will be presented in this thesis since the study deals with topics covered by the Spanish press and these theories focus on issues reported by the media. The second part of this chapter is based on theories touching upon the analysis of a text, in that the unit of analysis of this project is the newspaper article. Hence, content and discourse analysis have been chosen as references when examining the news.

3.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

Let us start by defining the Agenda-Setting Theory. In the words of Dearing and Rogers (1992: 1-2), it is “an ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites. Agenda-setting offers an explanation of why information about certain issues, and not other issues, is available to the public in a democracy; how public opinion is shaped; and why certain issues are addressed through policy actions while other issues are not.”

Agenda-Setting Theory was initially mentioned by certain authors at the beginning of the 20th century. Wimmer and Dominick (1994: 353) quote some of these authors. Walter Lippman (1922) holds that, “the media were responsible for the ‘pictures in our head’.” Along the same line, Cohen (1963) contends that the media tend to tell people what to think about. Finally, Lang and Lang (1966) state that, “the mass media force attention to certain issues... They are constantly presenting objects, suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about.”

Having information about the new things occurring around us is a human necessity. For that reason, people need orientation, for instance, in primary elections where the candidates are almost unknown (McCombs 2004: 53). The empirical origin of the Agenda-Setting Theory came from the latter statement. It started as a result of a study of a poll about presidential elections in the U.S. in 1968, in the city of Chapel Hill (North Carolina). The undecided voters chose their political directions according to the media content during the campaign (McCombs & Shaw 1972: 177; McCombs 2004: 58). The study reveals that the presidential election and its diffusion in the media were only really relevant for people with a high necessity for orientation (McCombs 2004: 57-58).

In the context of this theory, it is important to explain what an agenda is. According to Daring and Rogers (1996: 2), “an agenda is a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time.” On the other hand, the latter authors (ibid) cite Roger Cobb and Charles Elder (1972/1983) in order to define an agenda according to political terms in which an agenda is, “a general set of political controversies that will be viewed at any point in time as falling within the range of legitimate concerns meriting the attention of the polity.” As a result, the agenda-setting process is based on the media agenda, the public agenda and the policy agenda. Hence, this process works with a group of issues relevant for media professionals, the public and policy elites (ibid: 5-6).

Other authors have also tackled the Agenda-Setting Theory. One statement by Brian McNair (1998: 49) summarises very well one of the assumptions of this theory: “events, which are not reported, have little or no social significance.” In other words, many diverse events happen daily in the world. Nevertheless, the audience only perceives those covered by the media. The general public does not evaluate the relevancy of the facts. However, the media do just this. Turning to the Chapel Hill case, the main issues on the media agenda were the same as those on the public agenda. Hence, it can be concluded that issues spread by the media on a large scale are perceived as being relevant and, on the other hand, issues spread by the media on a small scale end up being not so important on the public agenda (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 6-7).

Critchett (2005: 186) put forward that, “to become a national problem requiring intervention an issue must be prominent simultaneously on all three agendas,” referring to those of the media, the politicians and the public. Not all the topics have the same relevance for each individual. It is true that an audience perceives an issue as important according to its coverage in the media. Nevertheless, each subject affects each individual differently. Hence, it is possible to say that journalism is, “many things, and often different things to different people” (McNair 2005: 42). There are some variables that explain the last statements. First, there is the demographic point. A topic will have more effect if the person is interested in it. Thus, an educated person, with a broad cultural awareness, will be more susceptible to the effects or influences of the media. Moreover, this kind of person will be able to better understand the different events because of his or her background. Second, there is the psychological variable. The media have greater influence if people have a close interest in politics and believe in the media. The third variable is behavioural. People do not only get news from the media. Individuals receive information by talking about and discussing news with others. To sum up, the effects of the media on a person depend on three

factors: the cultural level, the interest in the topic and the means of receiving information (Wanta 1997: 18-48).

Let us now consider the press compared with television. Television is currently the most powerful medium. However, there are some characteristics of the press that cast doubt on this statement. For example, reading a newspaper takes longer than watching the news. Another characteristic is that in many countries, newspapers are privately owned but television originally was state-owned. Hence, the press has more credibility among its audience. Printed, audio or audiovisual information is spread to a large section of the population and, arguably, a single most powerful medium does not exist. There are simply different types of audience, each receiving a particular message in a different form (McCombs 2004: 49-52).

McCombs and Shaw (1991: 17) quote Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee in order to put forward that people nowadays know about politicians through the media rather than in person. The more people receive information from the media the more they know about the political candidates. Moreover, well-educated people with an interest in politics are used to searching for information on the issue (ibid: 18). Thus, in the words of Wayne Wanta, (1997: 48), “individuals who are most likely to demonstrate strong agenda-setting effects are highly interested in political news and are high users of the news media and interpersonal communication.”

All types of media are different and they do not produce identical effects on the audience. Take the case of television. It is possible to say that news on television is easier to understand than news communicated via other media (Salomon, 1979, quoted by Wanta 1997: 65). This is probably one of the reasons why people tend to watch more television than read newspapers in Spain. It has been mentioned in a previous chapter of this Master's thesis that the upper and middle classes read more newspapers than the lower classes in Spain. In contrast, these tend to watch television instead of reading newspapers. Other authors hold that the effects of the events also depend on their coverage in the media. Therefore, a subject covered in depth will have more impact than another that is less well covered (Willnat 1997: 51). It is interesting to note that MacKuen (1981, quoted by Zhu & Boroson 1997: 70) argues that a highly educated person is less susceptible to the effects of the media than others with less cultural awareness. People with a broader cultural background can select information better and think about it in a more critical way than a naïve audience can. In addition, Weinstein, Appel, and Weinstein (1980, quoted by Willnat 1997: 63) state that printed media have more effect than audiovisual media because individuals retain the information better.

Two versions explaining the effects of the media on individuals have been considered. Some authors think that a highly educated person will be more susceptible to the effects of the media. However, the other group thinks the opposite. The first group argues that television has more effect than newspapers, whereas the other thinks that news from the press will affect people more strongly than television news.

3.2 Defining framing

The mass media plays a significant role in today's society. People use media to inform themselves and as entertainment. Hence, media has "become core systems for the distribution of ideology" (Gitlin 1980: 2). According to James William (1950, quoted by Goffman 1974: 2) the *world* or *reality* is different for each person and what we think is our world is actually a reality created by others. Along the same line, (Schutz, 1962, *ibid*: 5) states that, "our bodies always participate in the everyday world whatever our interest at the time, this participation implying a capacity to affect and be affected by the everyday world."

In examining the theory of framing, it is also necessary to mention the Agenda-Setting Theory because framing results from the phase or so-called first level of the agenda setting, i.e. framing is the second level of the agenda-setting process. On the one hand, "the first level of agenda setting deals with the selection of issues by the news media and its impact on the public agenda" (Ghanem 1997: 8). On the other hand, "the second level of agenda setting deals with the influence of the particular elements of an issue on the public's agenda of attributes" (*ibid*). Therefore, the first level refers to what issues are at stake and the second level alludes to how media use these topics.

When comparing framing and agenda-setting, the latter focuses on topics or issues selected for coverage by the news media, whilst framing examines, "the particular ways those issues are presented, on the ways public problems are formulated for the media audience" (Ghanem 1997: 7). According to agenda setting, "the media tell us what to think about" (*ibid*: 8). However, framing, "deals with the issue of the media telling us how to think about an issue" (*ibid*). Some authors discuss the notion of framing, by considering the term 'attribute'. Hence, "framing is the selection of – an emphasis upon– particular attributes for the media agenda when talking about an object" (McCombs 2004: 87). Thus, "a frame is an [special] attribute of the object under consideration because it describes the object" (*ibid*: 88). In the first level of the agenda

setting process the point at stake is the object, i.e. the issue, however in the second level the core point is the attribute referring to this object.

In order to understand the framing theory it is necessary to explain the meaning of some concepts linked to it. Let us start by defining 'schema'. Entman (1989, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 8) defines schemas as, "the cognitive structures that organise a person's thinking." Ghanem (ibid) reports that: "schemas deal with what a person brings with him or her when examining an issue. The focus of framing at the second level of agenda setting deals predominantly with what is out there (at least in term of representation in the media) and not what an individual brings to it and not how it came about psychologically." Accordingly, one can point out that the notion news schema refers to "the overall organisation of global topics a news item is about" (Hagen, 1995, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 8).

Another concept to deal with is 'priming'. Priming is "the process by which schemas are activated" (McLeod et al., 1990, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 9). Some authors characterise 'priming' as "a psychological process whereby media emphasis on particular issues activates in people's memories previously acquired information" (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987, ibid). While 'priming' refers to "the effect of the media's agenda on the public's evaluations of political leaders" (Price and Tewksbury, 1995, ibid), framing concerns how the media report things can change people's opinions (Price & Tewksbury, 1995, ibid).

The subsequent concept is 'bias' in that framing is a type of structural bias resulting from the selection of the news (Ghanem 1997: 9).

The next notion is 'indexing'. Some authors define this term as the way the media "tend to index the range of viewpoints expressed in government debate" (Bennett, 1990, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 9).

The last concept is 'cultivation'. This is, "the adoption of a particular point of view that is more in line with media presentation than with reality" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 9). One may get a distorted representation of reality when watching television. So, the more one watches television, the more one has a distorted perception of the reality (Ghanem, ibid: 10). In addition to this, Ghanem (ibid) also states that, "framing deals with the idea that the news media may also be presenting a worldview construed in a particular way that does not necessarily mesh with reality."

3.2.1 What is a *frame*?

Several authors have defined the concept of a frame. Some of them contend that frames are a set of principles of organisation of reality. Goffman (1974: 11) states that a frame is “the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify.” He also points out that frames are mentioned principles of organisation creating the definition of a situation (ibid: 10). Along the same line, “frames are organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (Reese 2001: 11). According to Gitlin, (1980: 6), “frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters.” In addition to this, De Vreese (2003: 27) quotes Gamson and Modigliani (1989) so as to define a frame as, “a central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue.”

According to the second level of the agenda setting in which the attributes play an essential role, a frame is “an emphasis in salience of some aspects of a topic” (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991; Kinder & Sanders, 1996, Nelson et al., 1997, quoted by De Vreese 2003: 27). At the same time, a frame is to “call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions” (Entman, 1993, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 6). Moreover, “media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which handlers routinely organise discourse, whether verbal or visual” (Gitlin 1980:7). Therefore, the mass media are able to create a manifest and concrete ideology when stating or omitting, through pictures or words or news, entertainment or advertisements (ibid: 2). Framing is to attribute an opinion to a topic emphasising some aspects of the world and hiding others. As a result, people understand and evaluate a determined issue according to how it is framed (Ghanem 1997: 6). Thus, Entman (1993, quoted by McCombs 2004: 87) defines frame as “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” Finally, framing can be summarised as, “the way interests, communicators, sources, and culture combine to yield coherent ways of understanding the world, which are developed using all of the available verbal and visual symbolic resources” (Reese 2001: 11).

3.2.2 News as a frame

Let us refer specifically to news as a frame. It is possible to link framing to news because, “framing is a multi-dimensional concept and has the potential to inform research on news production, contents and effects” (Entman, 1993; McQuail, 1994, quoted by De Vreese 2003: 21). Tuchman (1978: 4) states that news is a social institution because it “is an institutional method of making information available to consumers”. [It is] “an ally of legitimated institutions” [and] “it is located, gathered, and disseminated by professionals working in organisations” (ibid).

When attempting to determine frames in the news, scholars using the empirical approach point out that it is possible to measure the frames according to, “specific textual and visual elements” (De Vreese 2003: 34; Allern 2008). Some authors offer examples like keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, (Entman, 1993, quoted by De Vreese 2003: 33), “quotations, relevant information, choice about language” (Shah et al., 2002, ibid), depictions, visual images or metaphors (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, ibid 33-34). Allern (2008) and Tankard (2001: 101) contend that formulating headlines is a mechanism to identify framing. When applied to the media agenda, “a frame is ‘the central organising idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration’ ” (Tankard et al., quoted by McCombs 2004: 87).

It is essential to explain that in this second phase of agenda setting the behaviour of the audience is important inasmuch as, “depending on how an issue is presented or framed in the media, the public will think about that issue in a particular way.” Ghanem (1997: 7) quotes Machina (1990) by stating that decisions that people take depend on “how options are framed.” Therefore, Elster (1990, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 7) reports that: “If a situation is presented to a person in term of losses, the decision is very different than if it is presented to that person in terms of gains.” Media can shape the thinking of the audience and they can, in this way, have an influence on the behaviour of the individuals.

At this point it is important to mention some conclusions of the AIM-Project.⁵ This study on mass media and European Public sphere reveals that there is a communication deficit on the EU.

⁵ Visit the web page of the “Adequate Management Information in Europe (AIM)” for more detailed information about this project. <http://www.aim-project.net/>

For detailed information about the AIM-Project 2007, visit the web page: http://www.aim-project.net/fileadmin/docs/13_spokespersons.pdf

This fact can be explained by two reasons. The first one is related to the decision-making process within the EU, in that this is complicated and slow. The second one concerns the relationship between the EU and the citizens. Broadly speaking, the EU is far away from them.

This project also makes clear that the national press has a more extensive coverage of the EU than the regional press. This point is interesting in this thesis because *La Vanguardia* is a regional paper. In subsequent chapters it will be possible to see whether the three newspapers had similarities when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in terms of quantitative data.

The AIM-Project also highlights that when covering European Union affairs journalists tend to report on national issues concerning the EU rather than specifically EU matters. They often report on the achievements of their governments in the EU. These types of news are better ‘sold’ and closer to the citizens than the rest of EU affairs. *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* covered the Treaty of Nice. It will be possible to see how these daily newspapers framed the issues concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in the chapter concerning the findings.

Van Dijk (1988: 63) states that the press tends to portray foreign news concentrating on “elite topics (e.g., politics), countries and actors.” The public figures, countries and EU institutions addressed in the press will be also presented, in that reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda is dealing with European Union affairs and foreign news at the same time.

3.3 Content analysis

Different authors have dealt with the concept of content analysis. Walizer and Wiener (1978, quoted by Wimmer & Dominick 1994: 163) refer to, “any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information.” Krippendorff (1980, *ibid*) states that content analysis is a, “research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their context.” Kerlinger (1986, *ibid*) defines it as, “a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.” Summing up the main characteristics of the content analysis, according to the above-mentioned definitions, it can be argued that, “content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson 1952: 18). In the classical process of communication of: “who says what to whom, how, with what effect,” (*ibid*: 13), the content is the ‘what’. Therefore, “content analysis proceeds in terms of what-is-said, and not in terms of why-the content-is-like-that or how-people-react” (*ibid*: 16).

Berelson (1952: 26) proposes a classification of seventeen uses of content analysis. These are divided in other sub-areas; one of the uses will be employed in this thesis. This application refers to the description of trends in communication content. Several categories of information will be examined in different periods of time (from 2000 until 2003) in order to conclude what issues, public figures, countries and European institutions were more relevant for *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC*. According to Berelson (ibid: 29), “the classification into a single set of categories... taken at different times, provides a concise description of content trends, in terms of relative frequencies of occurrence” (ibid). Another relevant application of the content analysis is, “to identify the intentions and other characteristics of communicators” (ibid: 72). It is not the aim of this thesis to ascertain the intentions of the newspapers but to find out how *ABC*, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* reported on the Treaty of Nice. Thus, it will be possible see how they dealt with different topics or information.

Other scholars like Wimmer and Dominick (1994: 165-167) classify the uses of content analysis in five major categories. First of all, content analysis is used to describe, “communication content.” The second application is based on, “testing hypotheses of message characteristics.” The next one is, “comparing media content to the real world;” next is, “assessing the image of particular groups in society,” and the final category of the use of content analysis is, “establishing a starting point for studies of media effects.”

The above-mentioned authors (1994: 167-168) describe different steps when using content analysis. The first phase is to: “formulate the research question or hypothesis.” The second is, “define the population in question.” The next two steps are, “select an appropriate sample from the population,” and, “select and define a unit of analysis.” The next ones are, “construct the categories of content to be analysed,” and, “establish a quantification system.” Then, one has to, “train coders and conduct a pilot study,” and, “code the content according to established definitions.” The final steps are, “to analyse the collected data, draw conclusions and search for indications.” These phases will be considered in detail in the chapter concerning methodology.

The next part of this chapter relates to the discourse analysis. The main difference between using content analysis and discourse analysis is that mostly content analysis is employed in quantitative method (Berelson 1952: 114). It is also possible to apply the content analysis in a qualitative methodology. However, it is true that the quantitative analysis uses relative frequencies (categories) and qualitative analysis “is often based upon presence-absence of particular content” (ibid: 116-119).

3.4 Discourse analysis

Let us start by showing the differences between *text* and *discourse* inasmuch as some scholars identify differences between them. Kress (1985: 27) quotes Van Dijk (1978) in order to point out that a text is mainly used in a linguistic context while Corsaro (1981, quoted by Kress 1985: 27) contends that, discourse is frequently associated with a sociological perspective. Text is closely related to the, “materiality, form, and structure of language” (Kress 1985: 27). However, discourse specifically refers to the, “content, function, and social significance of language” (ibid). Therefore, the relationship between both can be explained through the following statement: “discourse finds its expression in text. However, this is never a straightforward relation” (ibid). Discourse can be at the same time defined as a, “*mode of talking*” (ibid). A discourse does not only belong to people because social institutions also use it (ibid). Hence, there are discourses about “gender, authority, race, professionalism, science or the family” (Muecke, quoted by Kress, 1985: 28). As far as Norman Fairclough (2003: 3) is concerned, he uses the term text in a broad field. For example, “written and printed texts such as shopping lists and newspapers articles are ‘texts’, but so also are transcripts of (spoken) conversations and interviews as well as television programmes and web pages.” On the other hand, the term discourse alludes to “the particular view of language in use... as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements” (ibid).

Fairclough (2005) proposes another definition of discourse in two ways. First, discourse is, “a category which designates the broadly semiotic elements (as opposed to and in relation to other, non-semiotic, elements) of social life (language, but also visual semiosis, ‘body language’ etc).” In the second sense, discourse is, “a count noun, as a category for designating particular ways of representing particular aspects of social life (e.g. it is common to distinguish different political discourses, which represent, for example, problems of inequality, disadvantage, poverty, ‘social exclusion’, in different ways.” To sum up, it has been shown that the term discourse is used in a sociological and broad context whereas text is specifically used in a linguistic perspective.

Van Dijk (1985: 1) points out that there is a large amount of work on mass communication researched from World War II. These studies have touched upon the audiences or effects, the relations among media, the society and the culture or the analysis of media from a sociological or psychological perspective. However, the information from the media has only been examined through content analysis. Van Dijk gives some reasons for the lack of studies on the media

discourse. Firstly, linguistics has not gone beyond the analysis of determining the structure of the text, for example, the analysis of a single sentence. Secondly, mass media research is a new field in the social sciences. In addition to this, research has mainly focused on a quantitative point of view (ibid: 2). Authors like Gerbner (1969, quoted by Van Dijk 1985: 2) or Holsti (1969: ibid) have worked on media research but using content analysis. They contend as well that content analysis is an interdisciplinary technique to be used not only on media research, but also in other disciplines, “for the objective, replicable and quantitative description of texts” (ibid). On the other hand, Van Dijk (ibid: 5) proposes a new theory concerning the analysis of media discourse as a, “central and manifest cultural and social product in and through which meanings and ideologies are expressed or (re-)produced.” In Van Dijk’s theory, the context of the discourse plays a main role inasmuch as the discourse is not an isolated item. This applies to both the social and cultural dimensions.

Van Dijk (1988: 1) points out that news reports are a particular type of discourse. The message of the mass media has been analysed from the perspective of content analysis. Hence, it is necessary to analyse the news discourse from other perspectives and in depth. Discourses are characterised by having complex and high-level properties, “such as coherence relations between sentences, overall topics, and schematic forms, as well as stylistic and rhetorical dimensions” (ibid: 2). The same author (ibid: 2) states that a discourse, “is a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context, featuring participants (and their properties) as well as production and reception processes.” As a result, Van Dijk suggests a qualitative method in order to examine the news discourse (see Figure 1.1). This analytical framework describes a few concepts. The first one is the ‘macro structure’ of news discourses, also called, “the global organisation of the news” (Van Dijk 1985: 69). That is to say that discourses are based on ‘thematic structure’ (ibid), i.e., they are composed of organised topics (themes) under a specific order and hierarchy. The next is the ‘micro structure’ (ibid), which refers to the syntactic, semantic, stylistic level or the graphical organisation. ‘Superstructure’ refers to a schema that describes the general form of a discourse. This means that, “schematic superstructures organise thematic macrostructures” (ibid). The term *relevance* is also important because the articles have a ‘relevance’ structure showing what is important (ibid: 70).

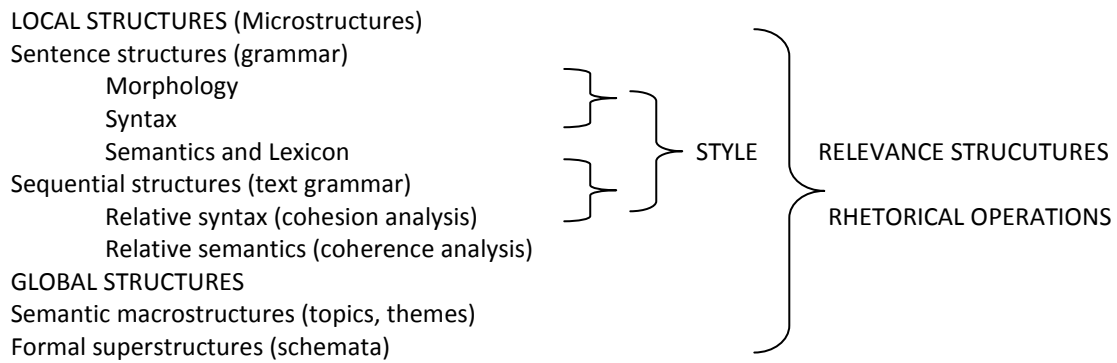


Figure 1 Structures of discourse
See: Van Dijk 1988: 17

Summarising, Van Dijk designs a method in order to analyse the content of the news discourse starting from two main structures, the ‘microstructure’ and the ‘global structure’. The ‘microstructure’ alludes to the style of the discourse and elements like grammar, cohesion and coherence are included in this part. As far as the ‘global structure’ is concerned, it refers both to the semantic macrostructure (topics or themes), i.e. the overall meaning of the discourse, and the formal superstructure. This organises the themes into different categories so that the reader may read the discourse. These used categories are called summary, main event, background and other sub-categories (Van Dijk 1985: 92).

The same author (1985: 75) states that readers are able to read newspapers and to extract the main topic of an article. This means that they are dealing with semantic macrostructures. The general topic that the readers are able to extract from an article refers to the global meaning of the discourse that they have read. Thus, it is relevant to mention that, “there is not just one topic or a possible summary of a text, but several.” The assignment of topics to, or the summarisation of a text-likely to be taken from the first sentences-is a subjective practice in that each person selects what is relevant for him/her and sees the article from his/her own perspective. In addition to this, summarisation is synonymous to generalisation and implies the deletion of some details of the text (ibid: 75-76).

News discourse has a specific structure. This can be examined as a cognitive construction in that the structure of a discourse is assigned both by the writer and the reader. The journalist writes an article based on a determined structure. However, the reader produces his or her own structure in his/her mind when reading the same discourse. People also produce the themes or topics in their minds in the same way. Journalists and readers write or read discourses depending on what is important for each of them. Therefore, the cognitive constructions produce macrostructures. It is important to add that it is relevant to have a background in order to be able to understand

determined discourses. The reader also uses the structure of the discourse to decode, as soon as possible, the topic or topics of his or her text. Hence, it is usual to use the headlines or the lead to decode the text. However, this structure is provided by the writer and not by the reader. She/he will produce their own structure according his or her background (Van Dijk 1985: 76-77).

Norman Fairclough has worked on discourse analysis and also on media discourse specifically. In order to examine the latter, Fairclough (1995: 54) uses the critical discourse analysis. He quotes Bordieu (1977) in order to explain why the discourse is critical. It is critical because it “is a recognition that our social practice in general and our use of language in particular are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions.”

Spanish newspapers write their articles according to the tendencies of major parties. Hence, each paper has its own discourse about the events becoming news. According to Fairclough, (1995: 56) discourse is, “the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view.” Moreover, the media do not only give information to the audience, they also try to persuade it. *El País*, *Abc* and *La Vanguardia* had their own point of view about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Thus, they covered the event trying to find evidence to answer the hypothesis for their readers. Hence, it is possible to say that, the media manipulates, “the truth in pursuit of particular interests” (ibid: 46).

Comparing the press with other media, the same author (1995: 38) affirms that, “print is, in an important sense, less personal than radio and television.” Newspapers are more distant because people only appear in still pictures, unlike in audiovisual images (ibid). This is an example confirming that some people prefer to watch television or listen to the radio rather than reading a newspaper.

CHAPTER FOUR – METHODS

The methodological approach to this study is based on a combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The methodology will be based on content analysis, which is quantitative in nature, although discourse analysis will also be employed. The use of content analysis was inspired by Berelson (1952) and Wimmer and Dominick (1994). As regards the discourse analysis, Van Dijk (1985, 1988) and Norman Fairclough (1995, 2003, 2005) have been considered.

The object of research in this thesis is the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. I chose to investigate the press because newspapers often deal with information in more depth than other media (Lyons 1965: 122). Thus, press reporting is more interpretive than broadcast reporting (ibid). In addition to this, the newspaper is “the principal rallying point for public opinion and remains the foremost vehicle for public service journalism” (Hohenberg 1973: 31). The same author (ibid) also contends that, “it is neither a tradition nor an accident that, despite the diversity of mass communications, the newspaper retains its place as the principal spokesman for the news media.” In addition to this, a daily newspaper can better show its political tendency than radio and television. These forms of media spread information in a shorter period of time than the press does. Moreover, the information in the press is more accessible than in television and radio for research purposes due to the medium through which it is spread. Therefore the newspaper is the best medium to be utilised in order to attain the objectives of this project.

The other key word to be considered besides the press is politics inasmuch as, “the media in the Mediterranean countries are relatively strongly politicised, and political parallelism is relatively high” (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 98). As a consequence, people read newspapers for political purposes, partly because newspapers play an important role in political movements. McQuail (1994: 15) states that, “it is not surprising that the newspaper should often have been used as an instrument for party advantage and political propaganda,” in that there are newspapers in Europe close to political parties. Along the same line, Mancini (2005: 81) cites Max Weber (1947) to define the figure of a journalist suggesting that some journalists can become “a type of professional politician.” Thus, it is often asserted that journalism and politics are closely related. Brian McNair (1998: 19) comments that journalism is the ‘fourth state’ and that journalists work as a watchdog. In fact, journalism is part of the ‘cultural apparatus’. In other words, media serves the state and provoke debate and discussion about it (Chomsky ,1989, quoted by McNair 1998:

27- 28). To sum up, politicians spread their ideology thanks to journalists. Thus, the political world views journalists as key cultural players (ibid: 82).

4.1 Quantitative method

As Berelson (1952: 18) states, “content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.” According to McQuail, (1994: 277) this “procedure is based on two main assumptions: that the link between the external object of reference and the reference to it in the text will be reasonably clear and unambiguous; and that the frequency of occurrence of chosen references will validly express the predominant ‘meaning’ of the text in an objective way.” McQuail deals with objectivity, but it is important to point out that to carry out a research objectively is, in part, a difficult task, because the researcher is a person and the background of him or her can influence the analysis.

Consequently, in employing content analysis it will be possible to create categories in the units of analysis and to measure the data collected through them. In addition to this, content analysis allows for conclusions to be drawn regarding which topics were considered priorities in the newspapers. This quantitative technique also offers the opportunity to see what issues were omitted or spread by the press on a small scale.

Wimmer and Dominick (1994: 167-168) mention different steps when using content analysis. I have taken into account these stages when researching. These will be now explained.

a) Formulating a Research Question

This Master’s thesis is guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent did *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* reflect their ideological tendencies when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda?
- How were the Spanish results obtained in Nice covered by the Spanish press?
- Which topics related to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda were reported on in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*?

b) Defining the Universe

This project considers the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda from 1 February 2000, to 28 February 2003.

c) Selecting a Sample

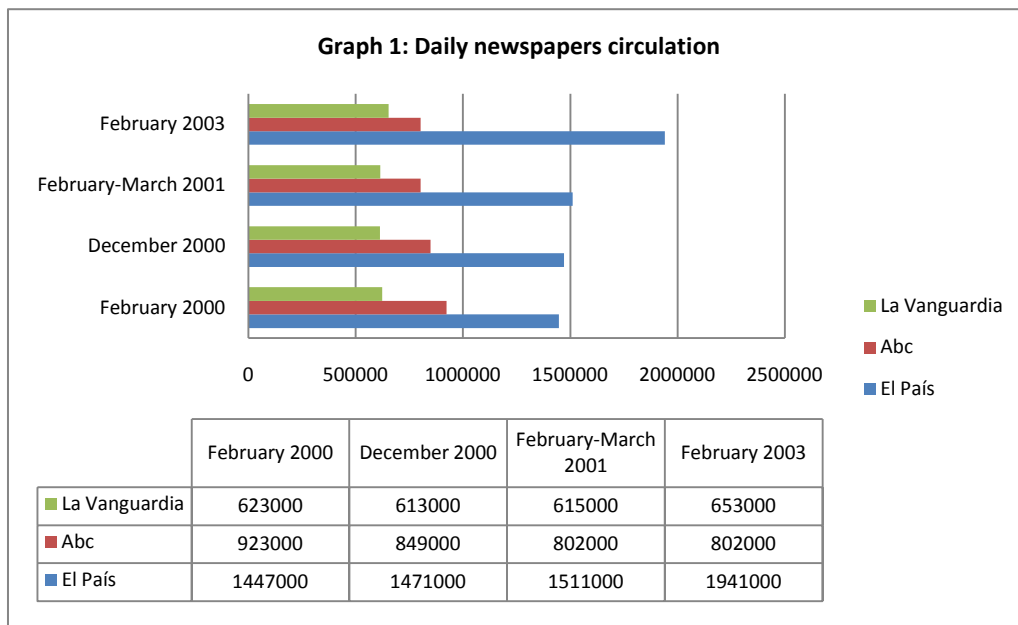
The three Spanish newspapers chosen are *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. In previous chapters it has been mentioned that *El País* was launched after Franco's dictatorship with the goal of being an independent, pro-European and liberal newspaper (Contreras García 1995: 37). *ABC* is a pro-monarchy and conservative paper (ibid: 33). It was set up at the beginning of the 20th century and followed Franco's guidelines during his dictatorship. Hence, it is a part of Spain's antidemocratic history. Both of them are national newspapers. However, *La Vanguardia*, launched in Barcelona in 1881, also has a conservative and pro-monarchy ideology (ibid: 44) but it is a regional paper. Furthermore, *La Vanguardia*, "reflects the often special political alignments of the autonomous regions," [in that] "it is close to the Catalan Nationalist CiU" (Barrera, 1995, quoted by Hallin & Mancini 2004: 105).

This project has analysed four events concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. These events took place from February 2000 to February 2003. Therefore, four periods of time were chosen as follows:

- The Intergovernmental Conference (1 to 28 February 2000). On 14 February 2000, under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, an Intergovernmental Conference was held in Brussels, so as to continue the work on institutional reform started with the Treaty of Amsterdam. These reforms were hitherto insufficient to support the prospective addition of new members to the European Union (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 28).
- Nice European Council (1 to 31 December 2000). A European Council Summit was held in Nice from 7 to 9 December of 2000, under the French Presidency. It was there that the major agreements about the Treaty of Nice were laid down. In addition to this, it was one of the largest Council meetings in the whole history of the EU and it finished very late on Sunday night, 9 December (Aldecoa Luzárraga 2001: 30-31).

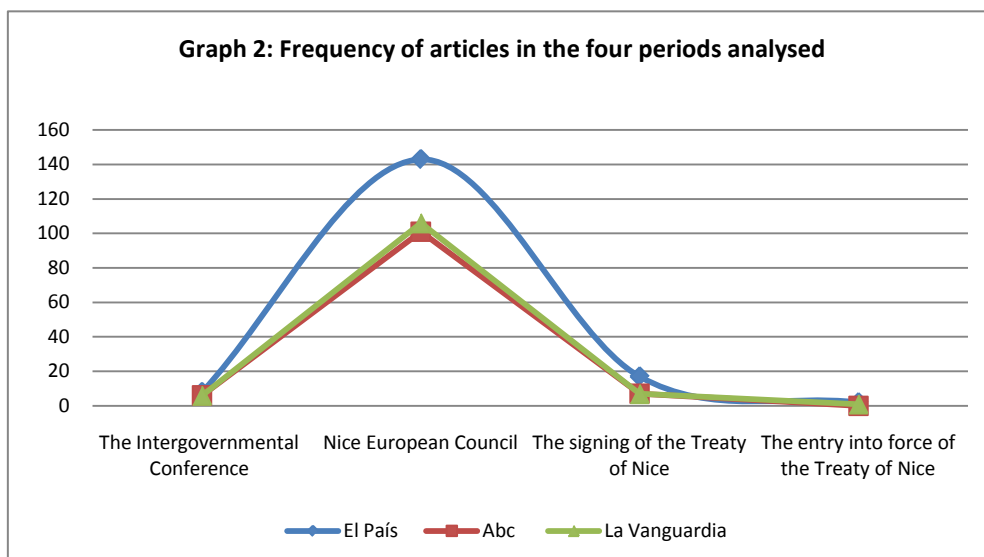
- The signing of the Treaty of Nice (15 February to 15 March 2001). On 26 February 2001, a new Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaties establishing the European Communities was signed (Treaty of Nice).
- The entry into force of the Treaty of Nice (1 to 28 February 2003). The Treaty of Nice came into force on 1 February 2003.

Graph 1 presents the daily circulation of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* during the above-mentioned periods of time. *El País* had the highest daily circulation in all the periods analysed. Peak daily circulation of both *El País* and *La Vanguardia* was reached in February 2003, whereas the circulation of *ABC* dropped from February 2000 onwards.



Own construction. Source: EGM (Estudio General de Medios- General Media Study). The first period of time corresponds to February-November 2000; the second, October-May 2001; the third, February-November 2001 and the fourth, February-November 2003.

The rate of frequency of articles during the periods of time analysed is similar in each of the three newspapers. The highest rate appears in the Nice European Council of December 2000. The next highest is when the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) was held in February 2000. On the other hand, few articles appeared in these papers concerning the signing of the Treaty in 2001 and the entry into force of the Treaty of Nice. *El País* was the newspaper with more articles dedicated to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda (170 articles). As regards the other papers, *La Vanguardia* had 120 articles and *ABC*, 114.



Own construction

d) Selecting the Unit of Analysis

This step concerns the selection of the unit of analysis. As Wimmer and Dominick (1994: 170) state, “the unit of analysis is the thing that is actually counted.” Berelson (1952: 141) calls the units employed in content analysis “items.” The items differ depending on the medium. An item “may be a book, a news story, an editorial, or any other self-contained expression” (ibid). Therefore, in this project, 404 entire newspaper articles (items) dealing with the Treaty of Nice and its agenda have been analysed.

The two main types of article analysed were opinion and news. The majority of the articles were news articles. However, it is important to consider the opinion articles and the editorials because the newspapers tend to show their political alignment more clearly in those than in the news items. In addition, “the style of journalism tends to give substantial emphasis to commentary in the Mediterranean countries” (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 98). The other kind of newspaper article considered is the interview.

The Internet was the tool used to consult the articles (paper and online version). The articles of *El País* were free to access on the net. However, it was necessary to pay a subscription fee to access the articles of *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. It is also important to mention that the main bibliography concerning the Treaty of Nice, its agenda and the Spanish integration in the European Union was collected from the European Commission’s Library in Luxembourg. I was able to access a large number of books and diverse types of publications there.

Table 1: Units of analysis

	El País	Abc	La Vanguardia
Intergovernmental Conference 1-28 February 2000	8	6	6
Nice European Council 1-31 December 2000	143	101	106
Signing of the Treaty of Nice 15 February-15 March 2001	17	7	7
Entry into force of the Treaty of Nice 1-28 February 2003	2	0	1
Total	170	114	120
Own construction			

e) Constructing Categories for Analysis

Berelson (1952: 26) proposed a set of categories for use in content analysis. Hence, the content of the items was coded by establishing different categories. These categories were equally applied to the three newspapers.

First of all, the articles were divided into three main categories, i.e., one category for each newspaper. Secondly, the articles from each newspaper were divided in groups according to the above-mentioned periods of time. Thirdly, the items were categorised in two groups regarding their main topic. This categorisation was carried out during a first reading of the articles at the beginning of the research. The first group consisted of the articles written specifically about the Treaty of Nice, whereas the second group was based on the items that merely touched upon the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in the general context of the article.

f) Establishing a Quantification System

Once the categories of analysis have been considered, it is necessary to establish a quantification system. The different elements extracted from the articles were measured according to their frequencies of occurrence. An example of an element is a determined country. If it is mentioned six times, its frequency of occurrence will be six. In order to analyse the data collected from the items, all the frequencies of all the categories and coding frames were plotted in graphs. This greatly facilitated the interpretation of the data, given the large volume of information collected.

g) Coding the content

Coding is the placing of, “a unit of analysis into a content category” (Wimmer & Dominick 1994: 174). In order to code the content of the items, a coding frame designed by Delia Contreras García (1995) for the analysis of the news coverage of the Treaty of Maastricht was taken as a starting point.

The core data was collected in a second reading of the newspaper articles. Coding frames, one for each of the 404 articles chosen, were obtained. The next stage was the production of four coding frames summarising the data obtained in each period of analysis. Next, three coding frames summing up the data collected in the three newspapers were created. Finally, all the data collected for each category of analysis were converted into tables and graphs. The following coding frame was used to extract the core information about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

Coding frame

- Headline
- Sub-heading
- Kicker
- Section: International, Opinion, Spain, Economics, Politics, ‘Autonomous Region’, Social, Sports
- Item type: News, Opinion, Editorial, Interview
- The article deals with:
 - oThe Treaty of Nice in general
 - oTopic of the agenda of the Treaty of Nice

THE COVERAGE IS

- Directly about Nice
- Indirectly about Nice

NEWS PROMINENCE

- Mentioned public figures
 - Spanish
 - European
 - Non-European
- Mentioned countries
 - Countries of the EU
 - Non-EU countries
 - Others
- European Union institutions

TENDENCY OF TEXT

- In favour
- Against
- Neutral
- In favour, but critical

AUTHORSHIP

- Anonymous
- Authored

As regards the sub-division ‘the Treaty of Nice in general’, in the category of ‘the article deals with’, the first refers to the information concerning exclusively the text of the Treaty. On the other hand, the sub-division ‘Topic of the agenda of the Treaty of Nice’ alludes to the agenda of the mentioned Treaty.

As far as ‘European institutions’ are concerned, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Court of Justice of the European Communities, the Court of First Instance and the European Court of Auditors were considered. In addition, the financial and advisory bodies were also taken into account. The European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank form the group of financial bodies and the advisory bodies are made up of the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee. The European Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor, two other European institutions, were not taken into account in the analysis because the Treaty of Nice did not refer to them.

h) Analysing the data

A large amount of data was extracted from the articles analysed. After completing the codification, the data was arranged into tables, and graphs were plotted, thus simplifying both access to the information extracted and the drawing of conclusions. There are graphs concerning the four periods of time for each newspaper including all the categories examined in the codification. It is important to point out that the data holding low frequencies of occurrence were not taken into account in the final interpretation of the results. Graphs showing a comparison between women and men and between politicians and other individuals mentioned in all the articles analysed were also produced for each of the periods of time.

i) Interpreting the results

The last stage of producing this thesis was the interpretation of the results. All the graphs mentioned above facilitated this task. Thus, it was possible to compare the data collected from the three newspapers, to formulate the findings and to draw some conclusions. It is important to mention that the qualitative analysis, which resulted from the previous quantitative analysis, was very important at this stage and it will be presented in the next section.

4.2 Qualitative method

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in several ways. First, while the reality can be objective from the quantitative research, the reality is subjective from the qualitative research. It cannot be divided into parts to be analysed, because the reality has to be examined as an entire process from the qualitative research. Quantitative research can analyse human beings as a whole and it is possible to create general categories of analysis. In contrast, for qualitative research all individuals are different and they have different behaviours and feelings. Therefore, it is not possible to establish an overall classification of them. In addition to this, qualitative research “strives for depth,” whereas quantitative research strives for breadth (Wimmer & Dominick 1994: 140).

Van Dijk (1985: 92) suggests a qualitative method in order to analyse the news discourse. Some points of this qualitative analysis were considered. I said in the previous chapter concerning the theoretical framework that the analysis of the content starts from two main structures, the ‘microstructure’ and the ‘global structure’. The ‘microstructure’ alludes to the style of the discourse and includes some elements such as grammar, cohesion and coherence. The ‘global structure’ refers both to the ‘semantic macrostructure’ (topics or themes), i.e. the overall meaning of the discourse, and the ‘formal superstructure’. This organises the themes into different categories so that the reader may read the discourse. These categories are called summary, main event, background and other sub-categories. When categorising the content of the items analysed in this thesis, the semantic macrostructure of the articles was taken into account, since all the articles were read and the main topic(s) of each item was extracted. This was carried out at the stage of construction of the categories for analysis. Subsequently, the items were coded and in order to achieve this, a set of categories was established to obtain information from each article. These categories summarised the most relevant information for the purpose of this thesis.

The assignment of topics to, or the summarisation of a text – likely to be taken from the first sentences – is a subjective practice in that each person selects what is relevant for him/her and sees the article from his/her own perspective. In addition to this, summarisation is synonymous to generalisation and implies the deletion of some details of the text (Van Dijk 1985: 75-76). Hence, the final summarised content of all the articles gave a subjective result: the author's result. This confirms the following statement: "in the qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument; no other can substitute for the qualitative researcher" (Wimmer & Dominick 1994: 140-141). One of the categories of the coding frame that I have employed was called 'tendency of text'. As a consequence, four sub-divisions were taken into account: 'in favour', 'against', 'neutral' and 'in favour, but critical'. Although measurable results were obtained, the way of obtaining the results in these four categories was subjective, as this generalisation was made according to my background.

The analysis of discourse was partly inspired by Norman Fairclough. He developed the critical discourse analysis. It is critical because, "it is recognition that our social practice in general and our use of language in particular are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions" (Bordieu, 1977, quoted by Fairclough 1995: 54).

Spanish newspapers write their articles according to the political stances of the two parties. Hence, each paper has its own discourse about the events becoming news. According to Fairclough (1995) discourse is, "the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view."

The following chapter will provide examples of the use of language of the three newspapers; they did not use the same discourse when referring to the different topics concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. This was a key point when drawing the conclusions. The media does not only give information to its audience, it also tries to persuade (Fairclough 1995: 56). *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* had their own point of view about the Treaty of Nice. Thus, they covered the event trying to find evidence to answer questions their readers might have. Hence, it is possible to say that the "media manipulates the truth in pursuit of particular interests" (ibid).

It will be also possible to see in the next chapter which issues *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* discussed. These topics probably agreed with topics on the policy agenda. Moreover, the three newspapers framed the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in their articles in a particular way. Thus, the agenda-setting process and framing are relevant in this project.

CHAPTER FIVE – FINDINGS

The first part of this chapter focuses on a discussion of the data collected from the extensive quantitative analysis. Then will follow a presentation of the results found from a thorough qualitative analysis, which could be applied to a selected data.

5.1 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Content analysis has been employed in the quantitative analysis. Recall that content analysis deals with what it is ‘said’ in a text (Berelson 1952: 16). For the purpose of this Master’s thesis it has been essential to extract selected information of the articles of *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* so as to know and to quantify what these newspapers ‘said’ about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. During this part of the investigation the goal was to find out what was ‘said’ and not how it was ‘said’, which will be presented in the second section of this chapter. In order to do this, a large amount of data was extracted from the articles examined. Even though it is complicated to present work with 100% objectively, I attempted to collect the data from the articles of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* in the most objective way. All the data was coded and turned into frequencies of occurrence. Subsequently, the frequencies were arranged into tables, and graphs were plotted, thus simplifying the presentation of the information extracted.

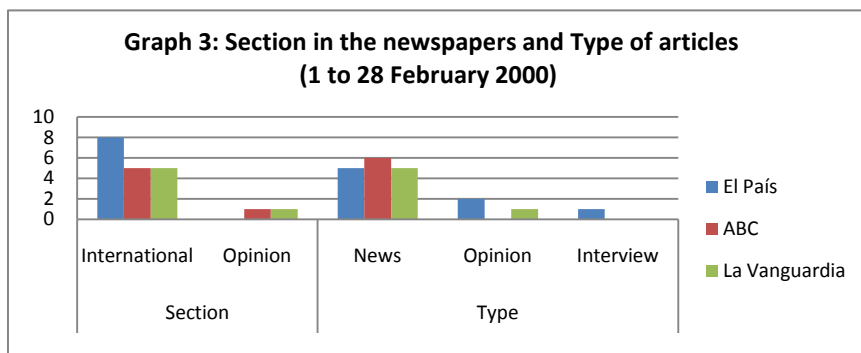
One of the uses of content analysis is to describe “communication content” (Wimmer & Dominick 1994: 165). Along the same line, as in a previous chapter was mentioned, Berelson (1952: 26) proposed a classification of seventeen uses of content analysis, one of which will be used in this thesis. It refers to the description of trends in communication content (ibid: 29). Hence, according to the same author, “the classification into a single set of categories... taken at different times, provides a concise description of content trends, in terms of relative frequencies of occurrence” (ibid). Therefore, several categories of information, based on the coding frame described in the chapter concerning methodology, were examined and quantified in different periods of time (from 2000 until 2003) in order to conclude what issues, individuals, countries and European institutions were more relevant for *ABC*, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. I analysed four events concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Therefore, the four periods were the following: The Intergovernmental Conference (1 to 28 February 2000), the Nice European Council (1 to 31 December 2000), and the signing of the Treaty of Nice (15 February to 15 March 2001) and the entry into force of the Treaty of Nice (1 to 28 February 2003).

The second part of this section concerning the quantitative analysis will focus on the discussion of some data about the public figures considered in the press, as well as the main topics reported.

5.1.1 The Intergovernmental Conference (1 to 28 February 2000)

El País published eight articles, and *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* each published six articles from 1 to 28 February 2000. All the articles from *El País* were included in the International section, while some articles of *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* were found in Opinion. *El País* was the sole newspaper that published three different types of articles: news, opinion and interviews.

El País, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* did not attach much importance to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in that none of them published editorials regarding them. The three newspapers, apparently, tended to present this topic describing the events and eluding the commentary since they principally published news rather than opinion articles.

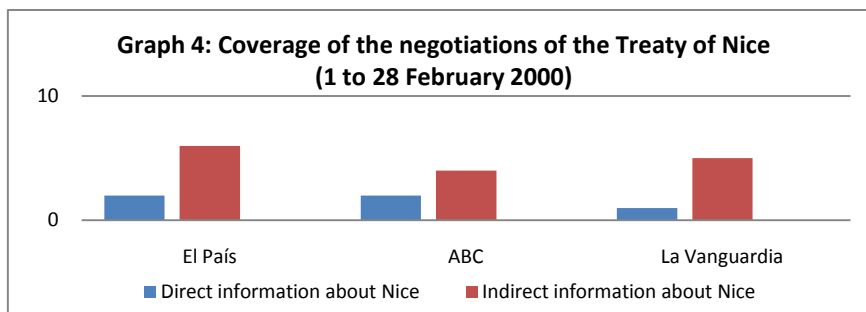


Own construction

Graph 4 shows the coverage of the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice from 1 to 28 February 2000, that is, it highlights whether *ABC*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* reported on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in an 'indirect' or 'direct' way. The former category included articles in which the Treaty of Nice or its agenda were not the main topic in the articles analysed. These items reported on other topics, though the Treaty of Nice and its agenda were included in the discussion. In contrast, the latter category, 'direct' refers to the articles primarily dealing with the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. In order to classify the news items according to these two categories, I utilised the concept of summarisation of Van Dijk (1985: 76) in which summarisation is a subjective practice where each person selects what is relevant for him/her and sees the article from his/her own perspective. In addition to this, summarisation is synonymous to generalisation and implies the deletion of some details of the text. Along the

same line, I also followed the concept of ‘schema’ expound by Ghanem (1997: 8) in which a ‘schema’ is “what a person brings with him or her when examining an issue.”

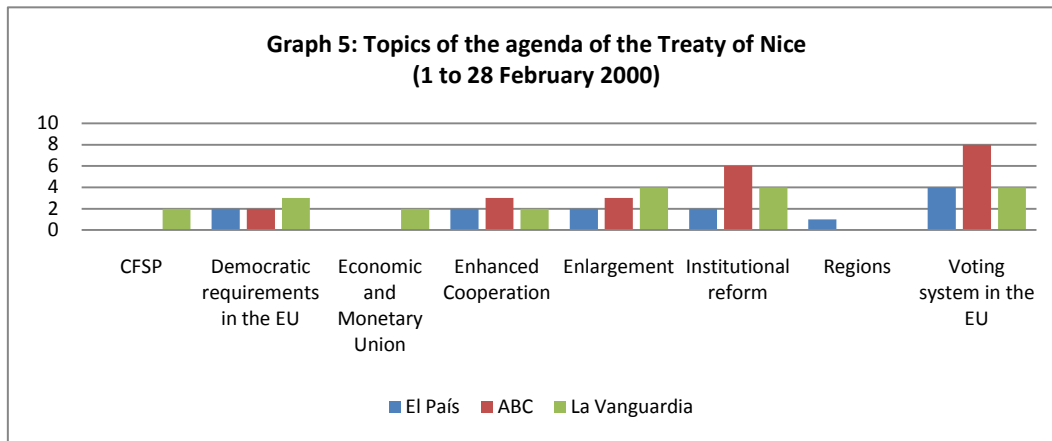
El País, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* principally reported on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in an ‘indirect’ way in this target period, that is, most of articles of these newspapers merely dealt with the Treaty of Nice and its agenda as part of the context. It may be assumed that neither the Treaty of Nice nor its agenda were a priority issue for the newspapers. This can be explained by the fact that the Intergovernmental Conference was merely the beginning of the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice. Hence, *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* solely published a small number of articles reporting on the text of the Treaty.



Own construction

El País attributed five articles exclusively to the text of the Treaty of Nice, *ABC*, three and *La Vanguardia*, two. The rest of the articles reported on other issues related to its agenda. The three newspapers discussed the following topics during this period: the democratic requirements in the EU, the enhanced cooperation, the enlargement, the institutional reform and the voting system in the European Union. *ABC* did not deal with other issues apart from the above-mentioned ones. However, *La Vanguardia* considered the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). *El País* was the only one to consider regionalism or regions. It is surprising that *La Vanguardia*, as a regional newspaper, did not publish any articles dealing with this topic.

ABC, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* dedicated some articles to Jörg Haider and the Austrian government in some articles dated 1 to 28 February 2000. The newspapers reported on the fact that an extreme right-wing party could reach to take part in a coalition government of a EU Member State. At first glance it seems that, owing to this situation and the fact the Intergovernmental Conference was only the beginning of the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice, this topic was not still relevant enough for the three newspapers in February 2000.

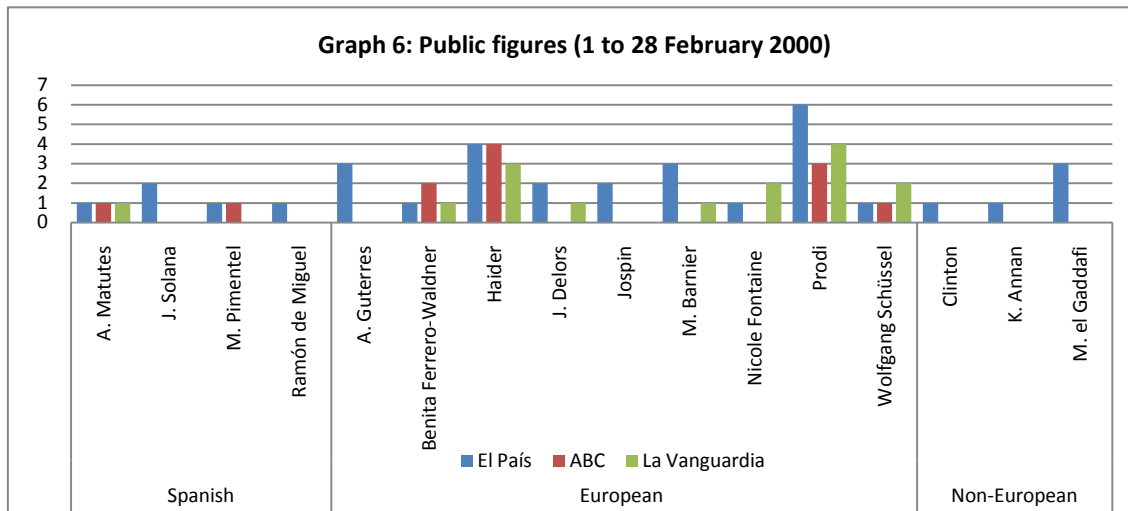


Own construction

The public figures mentioned in the articles of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* were categorised in three groups: ‘Spanish’, ‘European’ and ‘non-European’. Graph 6 shows that *El País* mentioned more and different public figures than *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. Moreover, *El País* was the only newspaper to mention public figures in the three categories, ‘Spanish’, ‘European’ and ‘non-European’. Nonetheless, the last category was not taken into account here – nor in the subsequent periods examined – in that when the newspapers portrayed ‘non-European figures’ they did not tend to link them to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

Prodi and Jörg Haider were the most mentioned public figures in *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* during this period. The former was President of the European Commission, one of the institutions that had to be reformed considerably at that time. The latter was the leader of the Austrian extreme-right party (FPÖ) and his party could take part in the coalition of the Austrian government. For that reason other Austrian politicians were also reported on: Benita-Ferrero Waldner, Austrian Foreign Affairs Minister and Wolfgang Schüssel, newly formed Chancellor of Austria at that time.

El País, liberal newspaper, was the only paper that mentioned someone who did not belong to the Spanish government (the conservative People’s Party was in office). It was Javier Solana, former Socialist minister and current High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Secretary-General of the Council. The other Spanish public figures were Abel Matutes, Foreign Affairs Minister from 1996 until 2000; Manuel Pimentel, Minister of Employment and Welfare from 1999 until 2000, and Ramón de Miguel, EU Secretary of State from 1996 until 2004.

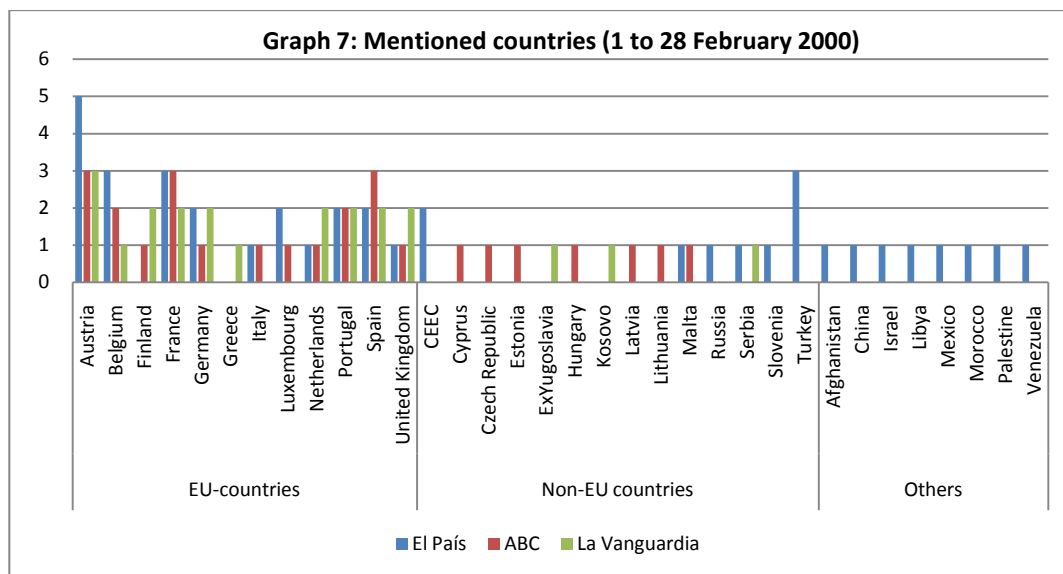


Own construction

The countries reported in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* were categorised in three groups: ‘EU-countries’ (EU Member States), ‘non-EU countries’ (European countries outside the EU) and ‘Others’ (the rest of the countries of the world). Nonetheless, the last category was not taken into account here – nor was it in the subsequent periods analysed – in that when the newspapers cited ‘Other’ countries they did not tend to link them to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

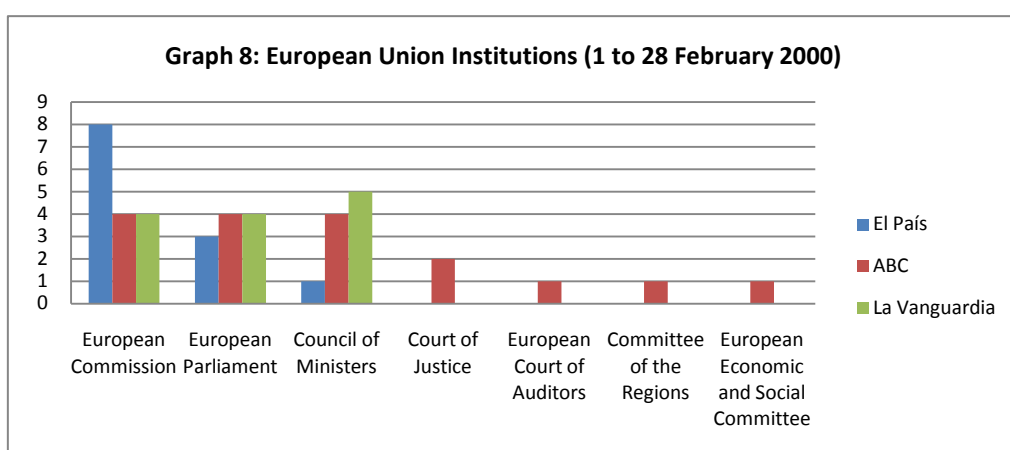
The three newspapers concentrated on ‘EU countries’. The country holding the highest frequency of occurrence in *El País* and *La Vanguardia* was Austria. In *ABC*, Austria and France shared this position. The relevancy of Austria, at first glance, seems to be due to the case of Haider, previously considered. The other two countries holding significant frequencies were two large states, France and Germany.

The three newspapers focused on reporting on the countries of the enlargement in the category of ‘non-EU countries’. This was predictable since the enlargement was one of the most frequently reported issues during February 2000. *ABC*, surprisingly, in that it is the most conservative among the three newspapers, published more articles dealing with more variety of countries of this category than *El País* and *La Vanguardia*. Turkey, portrayed by *El País*, and which was a candidate country to the EU, was the state which held the highest frequency among the ‘non-EU countries’.



Own construction

ABC, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* paid attention to the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament. *ABC* was the only one which dealt with institutions apart from those mentioned above. It reported on the Court of Justice, The European Court of Auditors, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. Starting from the fact that the institutional reform was one of the topics holding a high frequency of occurrence, it is not surprising that the most discussed European institutions in the three papers were the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the European Commission.



Own construction

In general, then, I proceed with the assumption that quantitatively the overall differences between *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* were only minimal regarding the amount and variety of articles and topics, countries, public figures and EU institutions reported from 1 to 28 February 2000.

According to Dearing and Rogers (1996: 5), in the context of agenda-setting process, the media agenda, the public agenda and the policy agenda are linked. Taking this into account, the agenda of the readers of *ABC*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* with regards to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda based on political themes during February 2000 in that the most discussed topics were the voting system in the EU, the institutional reform, the enlargement and the enhanced cooperation. Moreover, one cannot forget that three newspapers also assigned importance to the democratic requirements of the EU in relation to the case of Haider. The democratic requirements within the EU were finally included in the Treaty of Nice, specifically in the Article 1 of the first part of the Treaty of Nice so-called *substantive amendments*.

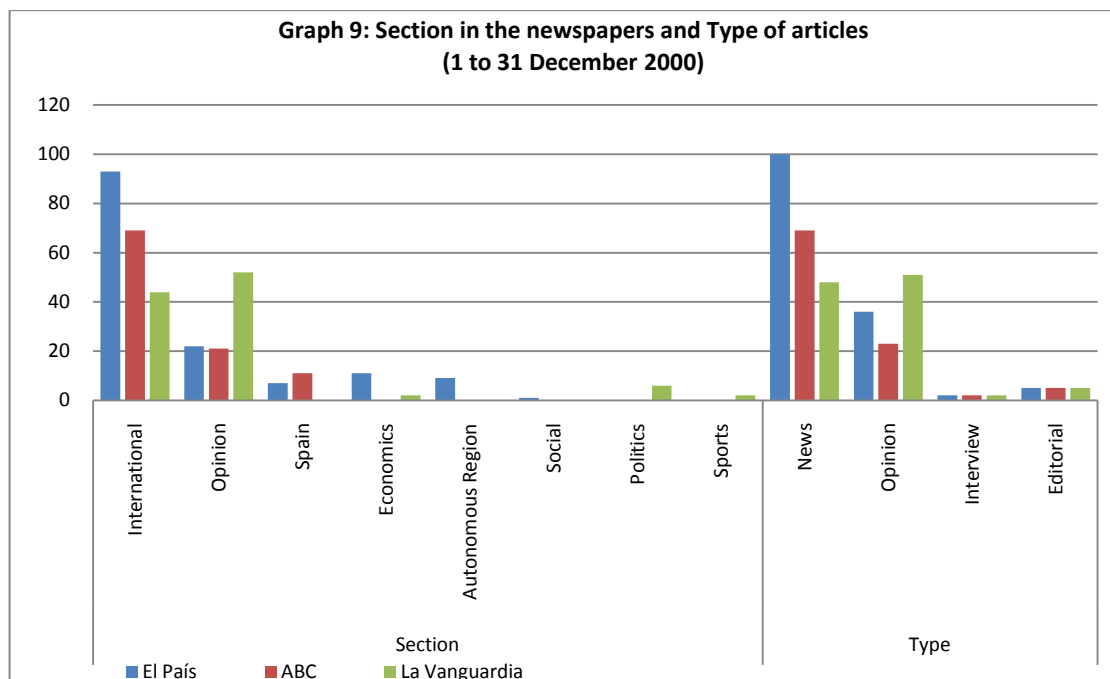
It can be also pointed out that, it is not surprising than the papers concentrated on ‘European’ public figures instead of ‘Spanish’, since the newspapers gave attention to the case of Haider. Hence, *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* did not give shape to the Spanish interests in its articles. For example, Aznar, the Spanish Primer Minister at that time, was not mentioned. This can be also attributed to the fact that the Intergovernmental Conference of February 2000 was only the beginning of the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice. The important decisions would be agreed in the European Council of December 2000.

5.1.2 Nice European Council (1 to 31 December 2000)

El País had the most extensive coverage about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda, in terms of number of articles published, from 1 to 31 December 2000, in that it published 143; *La Vanguardia*, 106 and *ABC*, 101.

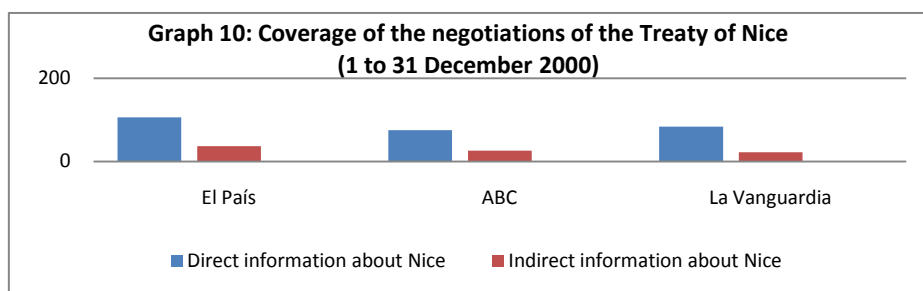
Most of the articles of *El País* and *ABC* were in the International section and were news. In contrast, *La Vanguardia* was the paper which paid most attention to commentary since it was the daily where most opinion articles were published.

El País was the only paper that included articles about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in the section ‘Autonomous regions’. *El País*, showing a diverse view about the topic, portrayed public figures from some Spanish regions. *La Vanguardia*, as Catalan newspaper, mentioned public figures from Catalonia. However, *ABC*, a national paper like *El País*, did not consider public figures from different ‘Autonomous regions’. Moreover, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* mentioned more public figures that did not belong to the government than *ABC*.



Own construction

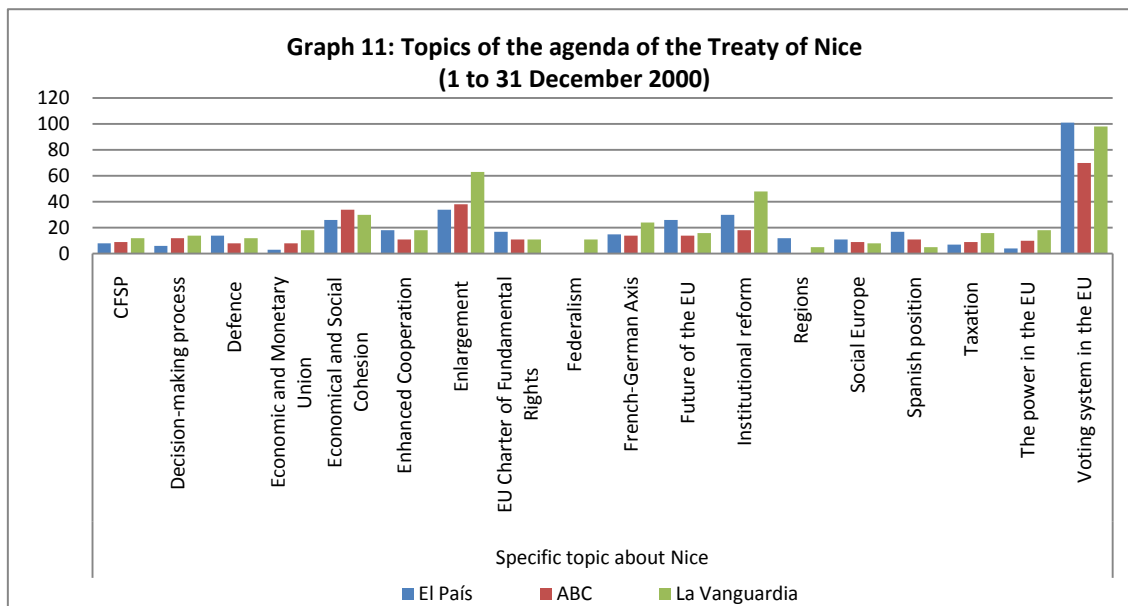
El País, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* primarily dedicated their articles to report on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in a ‘direct’ way, that is, the Treaty or its agenda were the main issues in the articles analysed during this period. This last point brought me to say that the Nice European Council became more relevant than the IGC of February 2000 for the three dailies. It can be explained by the fact that the main agreements concerning the Treaty of Nice were discussed in the Nice Summit.



Own construction

El País published one article about the text of Treaty of Nice in general, *ABC* 24 and *La Vanguardia* 17. The other articles dealt with topics concerning the agenda of the Treaty of Nice. As graph 11 shows, the voting system in the EU was the most frequent issue in the three newspapers. The other important topics were the enlargement, the institutional reform and the economical and social cohesion, in which the Structural and Cohesion Funds were included. The three papers also reported on the following themes: the Common Foreign and Security Police

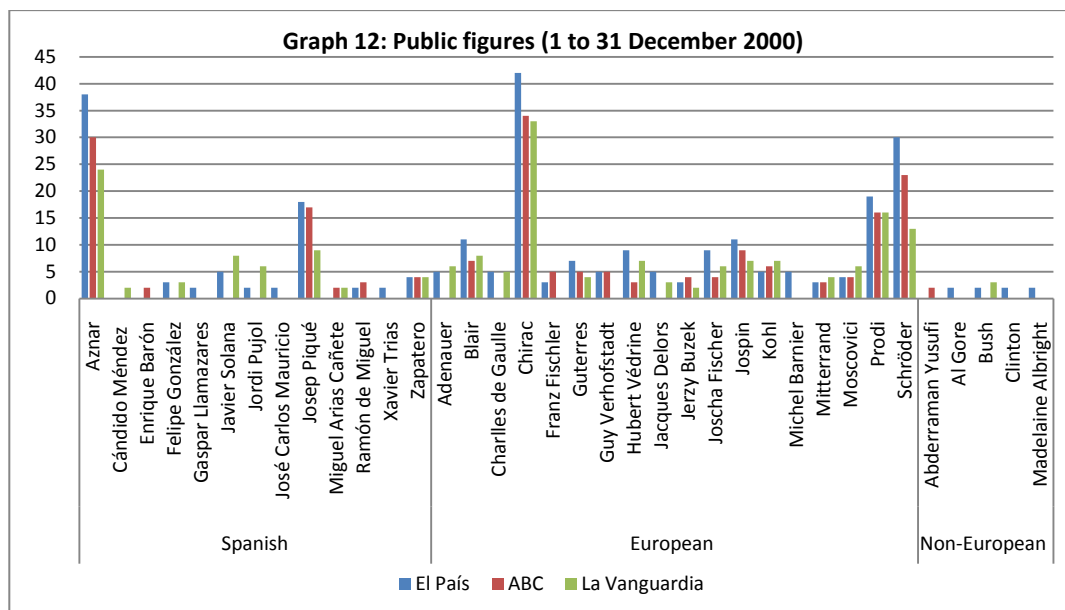
(CFSP), the decision-making process in the EU, defence, Economic and Monetary Union, the enhanced cooperation, the French-German Axis, the future of the EU, the Social EU, taxation and power in the EU. Regions or regionalism was a topic touched upon by *El País* and *La Vanguardia*. Federalism was only considered by the latter. The feature that *ABC* did not pay so much attention to, regionalism or federalism, can, apparently, be explained by the fact that *ABC* is conservative, like the ruling party at that time, the People's Party; this party has tended to favour a discourse avoiding the idea of federal state (Balfour 2005: 131).



Own construction

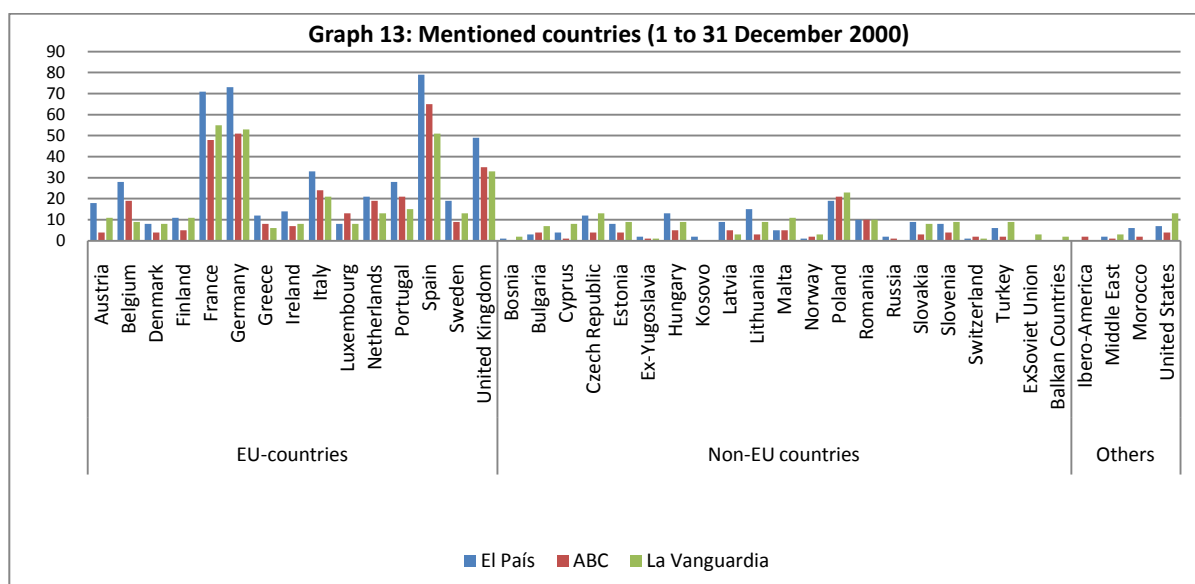
El País, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* mentioned the three categories of public figures: ‘Spanish’, ‘European’ and ‘non-European’ during this target period. Aznar (the Spanish Prime Minister) and Josep Piqué (Foreign Affairs Minister) were the most frequent ‘Spanish’ public figures in all three papers. Chirac, Prodi and Schröder were the most cited in the category of ‘European’. *El País* was the newspaper in which most ‘European’ public figures portrayed. While *El País* and *La Vanguardia* mentioned different Spanish politicians who did not belong to the Spanish government, *ABC* cited only two, Zapatero (the opposition leader) and Enrique Barón Crespo (Member of the European Parliament with the Socialist Group).

Schröder and Chirac were the ‘European’ public figures holding the highest frequencies of occurrence in the three newspapers. This can be explained by the fact that they were politicians of two of the largest countries in the EU and, furthermore, the French-German axis was a frequent topic during this period. In addition to this, Chirac was the President of France and this country held the Presidency of the EU at that time and it organised the Nice European Council.



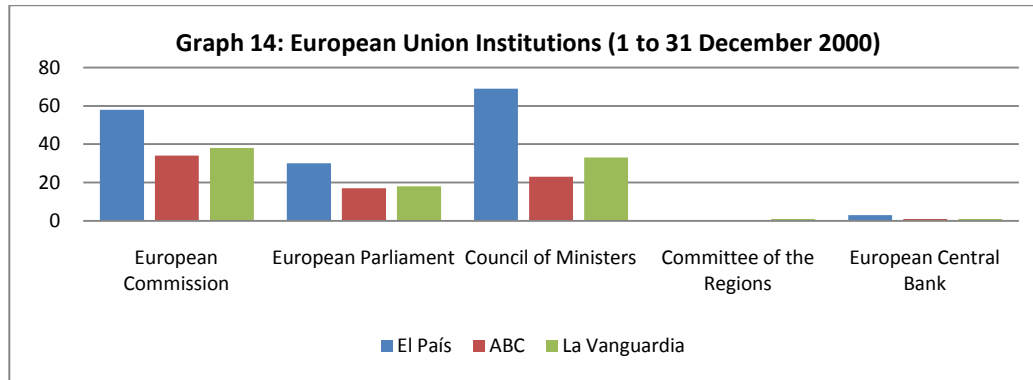
Own construction

The three newspapers concentrated on EU Member States. This is not surprising because politicians of all these countries attended the Nice Summit. The most discussed countries were France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Spain also featured prominently in the items analysed, especially in *El País* and *ABC*. It is not strange that the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) were also discussed, inasmuch as they were the countries of the enlargement and this was one of the most frequently reported topics in December 2000. The three newspapers reported more on Poland than other states. It might be due to the fact that Poland had the same size as Spain and it wanted to reach the same votes in the Council of Ministers and Members in the European Parliament as Spain.



Own construction

The European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers were the institutions holding the highest frequencies of occurrence in the three newspapers, as graph 14 shows. The European Central Bank, in contrast with the previous period, was considered most by the three newspapers from 1 to 31 December 2000. *La Vanguardia* was the only newspaper to cite the Committee of the Regions.



Own construction

It is suggested by the quantitative data dated 1 to 31 December 2000, concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda, that this period became more relevant in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. The newspapers began to show their opinion more explicitly in that they published more opinion articles than in February 2000. Nonetheless, they dedicated little editorial space. In the previous period, no papers dedicated items to editorials.

It is interesting to point out that the three newspapers attached importance to the Spanish position from 1 to 31 December 2000. Indeed they gave special attention to Aznar and Josep Piqué (Foreign Affairs Minister). This could be, perhaps, because the main negotiations of the Treaty of Nice were discussed at the Nice Council. This Summit would decide whether Spain achieved, lost or maintained its player status within the EU.

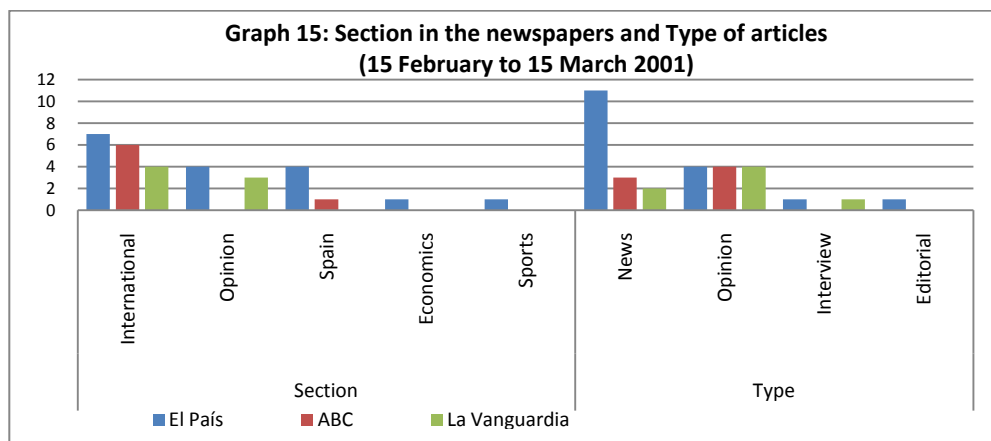
El País, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* also published a large number of articles concerning the Economical and Social Cohesion. I included the Cohesion and Structural Funds in this category. This relevancy can be due to the fact that in the Nice Summit the possibility of extension of the qualified majority voting instead of veto to the Structural and Cohesion Funds would be discussed. Moreover, the Structural and Cohesion Funds have always been appreciated in Spain in that it has received a large amount of subsidies since it joined the EU in 1986.

ABC, *La Vanguardia* and *El País*, which were among the seven newspapers with the highest circulation in Spain at that time, published a vast amount of articles concerning the Treaty of

Nice and its agenda from 1 to 31 December 2000 when the Nice European Council was held. In spite of these facts, according to a survey carried out by Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Spanish Sociological Research Centre) one month after the Nice Summit was held, 49.1% of Spaniards did not know anything about the Nice European Council. Among the people who knew about the Nice Summit, 30.4% affirmed that results for Spain were good and 41.9% of them said that the results reached in Nice for Spain were poor. Brian McNair (1998: 49) contends that “events, which are not reported, have little or no social significance.” At first glance, it seems that the Spaniards were not informed enough about the Nice European Council. The Treaty of Nice was not relevant enough in the policy agenda and as a result, neither was it deemed relevant in the media and public agenda.

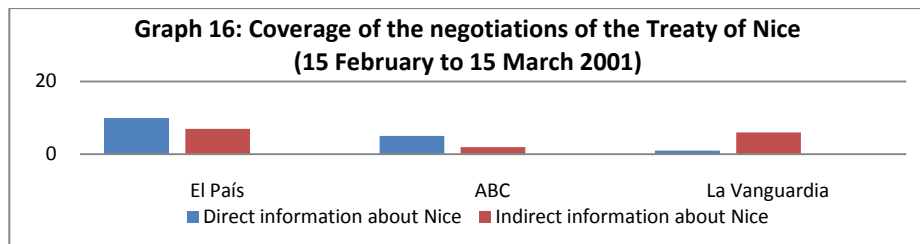
5.1.3 The signing of the Treaty of Nice (15 February to 15 March 2001)

El País published 17 articles and *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* each published 7 articles from 15 February to 15 March 2001. Most of these articles were published in the International section. *El País* tended to present news, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* published almost the same number of news as Opinion articles. Therefore, it can be assumed that, in terms of quantitative data, these two papers showed a less descriptive view than *El País* concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.



Own construction

Most of the articles selected from 15 February to 15 March 2001 from *El País* and *ABC* reported the Treaty of Nice and its agenda in a ‘direct’ way, that is, these topics were the main issues in the articles analysed, as graph 16 shows. However, the Treaty of Nice and its agenda mainly appeared as part of the context in the articles of *La Vanguardia*.

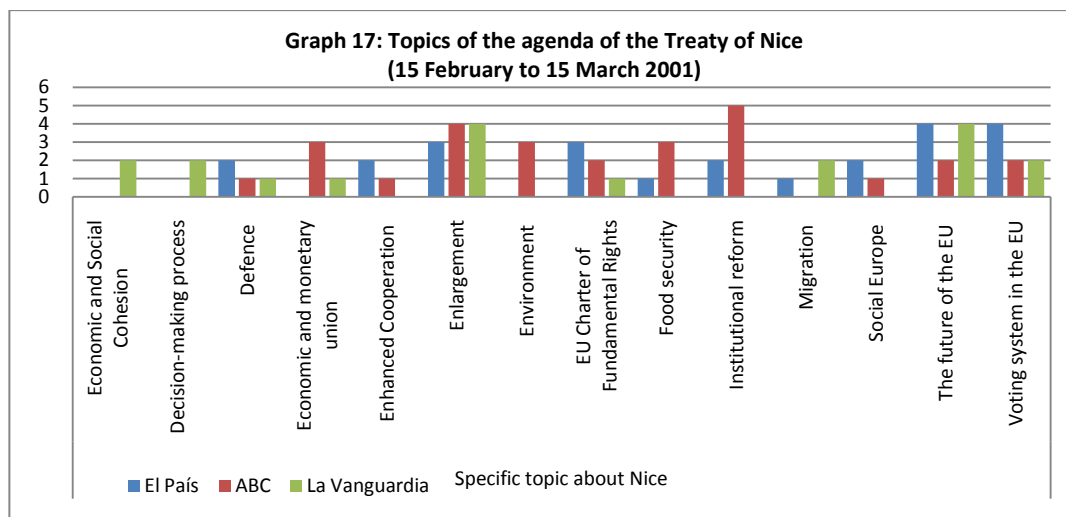


Own construction

El País published 15 articles about the text of Treaty of Nice in general, *ABC* 6 and *La Vanguardia*, 4. The signing of the Treaty of Nice could, apparently, explain the fact that the text of the Treaty of Nice was given more importance than in the other two periods. The other articles dealt with topics concerning the agenda of the Treaty of Nice. Among all these themes underlined the enlargement, the future of the EU and the voting system in the EU. From 15 February to 15 March 2001 *La Vanguardia* did not mention the institutional reform, which was broadly covered by all three newspapers in the previous period analysed.

Other topics portrayed in the three newspapers were defence and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The other issues that appeared in the papers were the decision-making process (*La Vanguardia*), Economic and Monetary Union (*ABC* and *La Vanguardia*), the enhanced cooperation (*El País* and *ABC*), the environment (*ABC*), food security (*El País* and *ABC*), migration (*El País* and *La Vanguardia*), the social EU (*El País* and *ABC*) and economic and social cohesion (*La Vanguardia*). It is not surprising that *La Vanguardia* reported this latter topic because the regions receive funds from the Structural and Cohesion Funds and, as a regional newspaper, it informed about that.

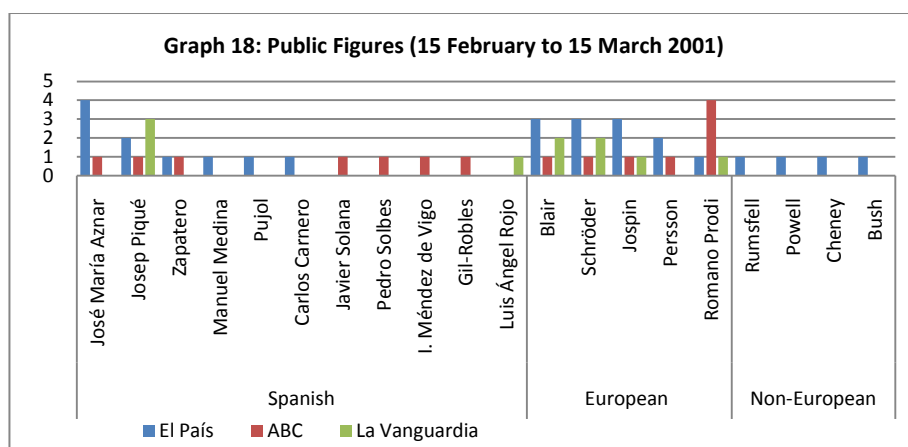
ABC, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* dealt with other topics during this target period. Even though the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was, for example, a frequent topic, political and economic issues were still addressed. The coverage of more different topics could have been due to the fact that the Treaty of Nice would be signed and there was no possibility to amend any more points.



Own construction

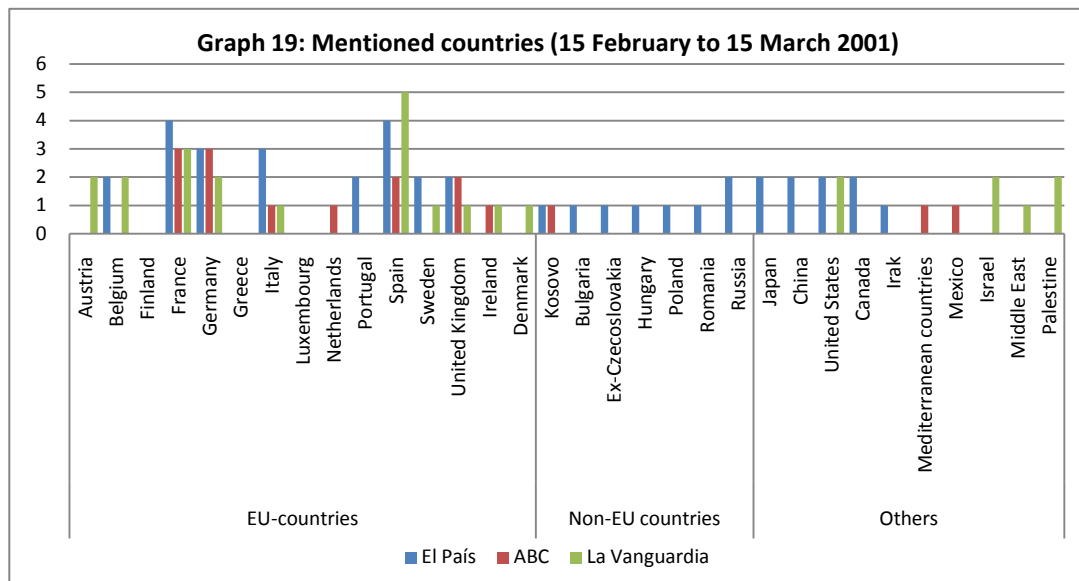
El País, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* mentioned the three categories of public figures: ‘Spanish’, ‘European’ and ‘non-European’ during this period. Prodi was the most mentioned figure in the category of ‘European’ public figures and it was by *ABC*. Prodi was the President of the European Commission at that time. *ABC* was also the paper that most cited this institution from 15 February to 15 March 2001. The other people with high frequencies of occurrence in this category were Blair, Schröder and Jospin, three main politicians from three large countries, United Kingdom, Germany and France. Persson, the Swedish Prime Minister at that time, appeared in some articles because Sweden held the EU Presidency when the Treaty of Nice was signed.

La Vanguardia, *ABC* and *El País* concentrated on ‘European’ public figures, although in the category of ‘Spanish’ public figures there was more variety. The three dailies mentioned Josep Piqué, then Spanish Foreign Minister, during this period of time. The other relevant ‘Spanish’ public figures were Aznar and Zapatero, the opposition leader.



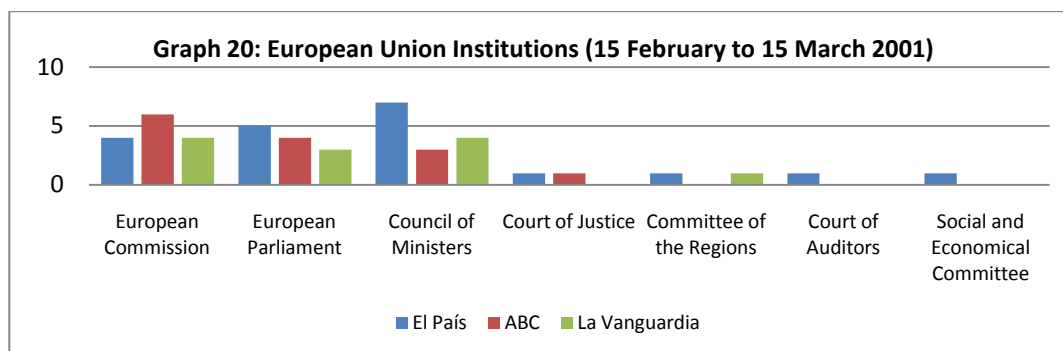
Own construction

The three newspapers focused on EU countries. The most important were the two large and old EU countries, France and Germany. Spain was also mentioned, particularly by *La Vanguardia*. *El País* was the paper that most considered ‘non-EU countries’. Nonetheless, the ‘non-EU countries’ did not appear frequently in the articles of *El País* and *ABC*, although the enlargement was a frequent topic during this period. *La Vanguardia* did not mention any ‘non-EU country’, as shown in graph 19.



Own construction

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers were the most considered institutions from 15 February to 15 March 2001. The European Institutions were more covered during this period than in the others previously mentioned. *ABC* was the only paper that did not deal with the Committee of the Regions. The latter and the fact that *ABC* did not frequently mention the subject of regions can be due to that it is conservative, like the government at that time. Recall that the PP has tended to present a discourse avoiding the idea of a federalist state (Balfour 2005: 131).



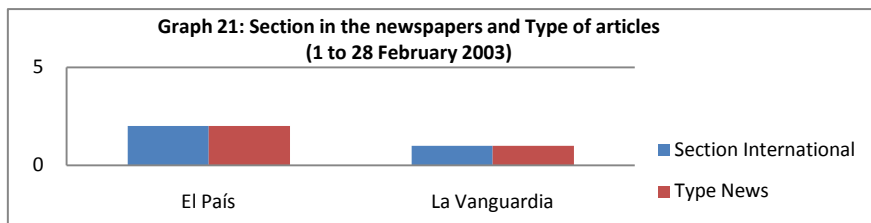
Own construction

The quantitative data collected from 15 February to 15 March, apparently, suggest that the Treaty of Nice and its agenda lost relevancy in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* in comparison with the previous period (December 2000) because fewer articles were published. This difference is especially remarkable in the case of *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* which presented less than half the number of items that *El País* did. Moreover, *La Vanguardia* mostly covered the Treaty of Nice and its agenda indirectly. In addition to this, the newspapers continued to write a small number of editorials.

The Spanish interests, to take an example, were also less reported. This decrease of interest in the Treaty of Nice and its agenda can be explained by the fact that the Treaty would be signed and there was no possibility to introduce any more amendments.

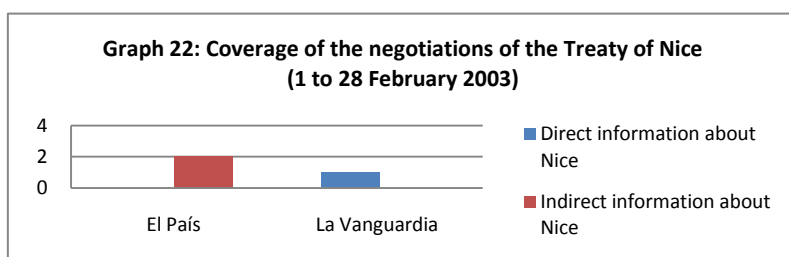
5.1.4 Entry into force of the Treaty of Nice (1 to 28 February 2003)

The Treaty of Nice and its agenda lost relevancy from 1 to 28 February 2003. *ABC* did not dedicate a single article to this topic and *El País* and *La Vanguardia* published only a tiny amount. Moreover, they did not publish editorials regarding the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. All the articles were published in the International section and were news. In terms of quantitative data, it, apparently, seems that the newspapers tended to describe the facts instead of opting for commentary.



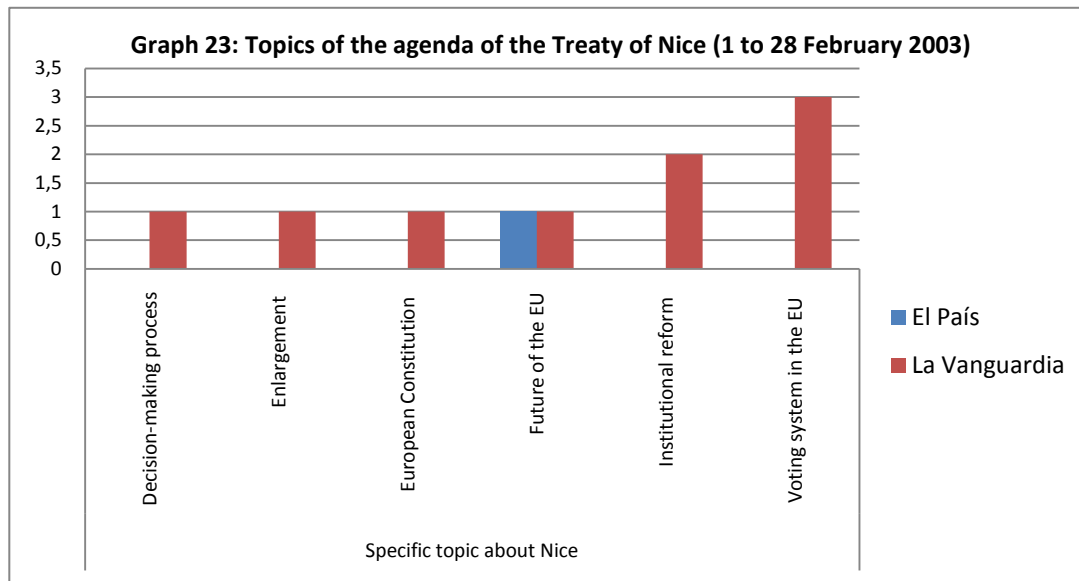
Own construction

La Vanguardia reported directly on the Treaty of Nice in its articles, in contrast to *El País* that touched upon the subject in the context. This also confirms that the Treaty of Nice lost relevancy in *El País* during this period.



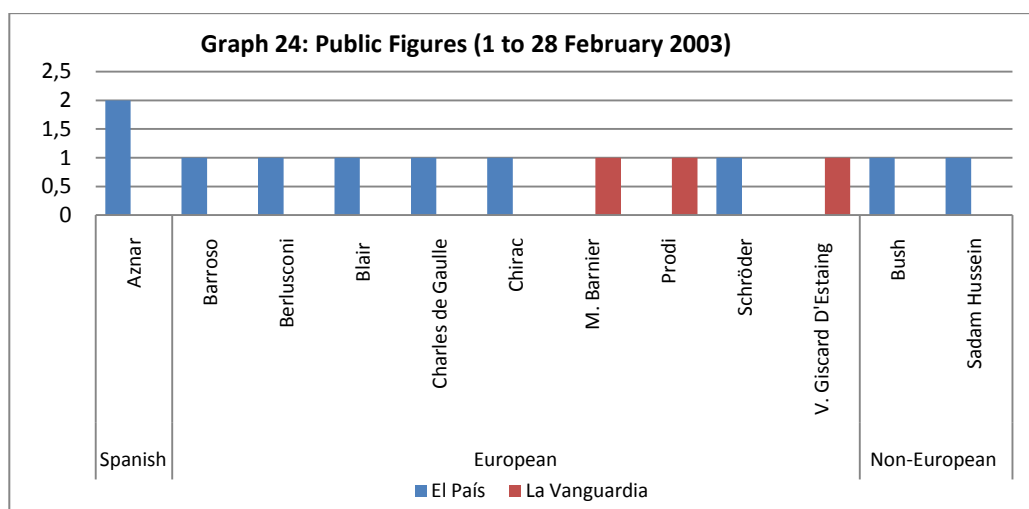
Own construction

The two articles of *El País* mainly concentrated on the future of the EU. Several topics were addressed in the article of *La Vanguardia*, the most important one being the voting system in the EU. Both papers also dealt with the entry into force of the Treaty of Nice.



Own construction

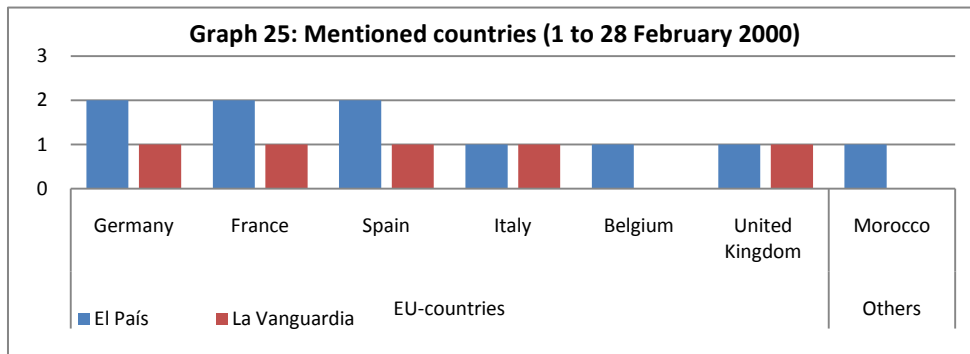
Aznar was the person most frequently mentioned in *El País*. *La Vanguardia* did not mention any 'Spanish' or 'non-European' public figures. *El País* mentioned public figures of the categories 'European' and 'non-European' with the same frequencies of occurrence. The 'European' ones were some well-known politicians: Barroso, Berlusconi, Blair, Chirac, M. Barnier, Prodi, Schröder and Valérie Giscard D'Estaing.



Own construction

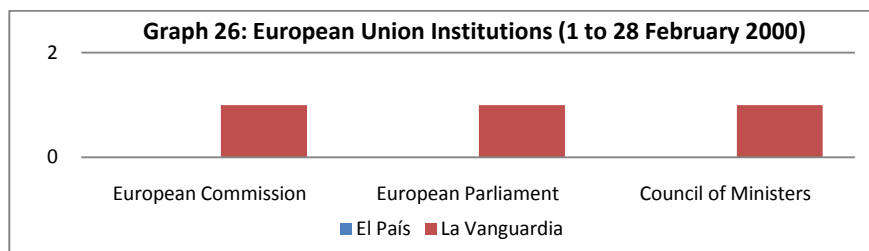
No paper referred to countries of the category 'non-EU countries', as graph 25 shows; both papers focused on EU countries, especially large states. Germany, France and Spain were the

most portrayed by *El País*. *La Vanguardia* mentioned countries where some of the above mentioned politicians come from – Germany, France, Spain, Italy and United Kingdom – with the same frequency.



Own construction

El País did not mention any institution in this period. It is not surprising because the Treaty of Nice was indirectly reported on in this paper. Moreover, the main topic of its two articles was the future of the European Union. *La Vanguardia* dealt with the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.



Own construction

I proceed with the assumption that quantitatively the Treaty of Nice and its agenda had the least coverage in the period 1 to 28 February 2003. The Spanish position also received little attention. Hence, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* focused on mentioning public figures of the category of ‘European’. This can be, apparently, explained by the fact that there was not the possibility to introduce any amendment in the treaty at that time inasmuch as the Treaty of Nice would come into force the 1st of February. Spain could not aim to achieve a major status within the EU. Moreover, the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice began in 2000 and it came into force in 2003. This is a long period of time. At first glance, for these reasons, the relevancy of the Treaty of Nice decreased in this period. Nonetheless, the section concerning the qualitative analysis will show more facts.

Now I will present some conclusions drawn from the data discussed according to the four periods analysed.

El País had the most extensive coverage about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda from 2000 to 2003. It dedicated 170 articles to this subject. *La Vanguardia* contributed 120 items and *ABC*, 114. Most of the articles published in *El País* and *ABC* during the four periods were news, while *La Vanguardia* published practically the same number of news as opinion articles. Using this data, it apparently seems that *ABC* and *El País* reported on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda employing a more descriptive discourse than *La Vanguardia*. The fact that *La Vanguardia*, a regional paper, showed similarities in the coverage of the Treaty of Nice in terms of quantitative data does not confirm one of the conclusions of the AIM-project. Recall that this highlights that the national press had a more extensive coverage of the EU than the regional press. This could be due to the fact that *La Vanguardia* is a newspaper with long tradition because it was founded in 1881 (Contreras García 1995: 44) and has a high circulation.

Newspapers, in terms of quantitative data, showed similarity when reporting the Treaty of Nice and its agenda according to the four periods examined. They concentrated their articles on the second period, that concerning the Nice European Summit, in contrast to the last period when the newspapers hardly wrote about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. It seems that the Nice European Council was the most relevant event in the agenda of the treaty for the newspapers. This could be due to the fact that the main agreements of the Treaty of Nice were reached in the above-mentioned Summit. On the other hand, the little interest in the entry into force of the treaty could be due, in part, to the long period of time which passed between the beginning of the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice (2000) and the entry into force (2003). This fact agrees with one of the conclusions of the AIM-project 2007, in which “the length and complexity of decision-making within the European Union” is one of the causes of the communication deficit of the EU.

Most of the articles reported on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda directly. ‘Directly’ in this case is taken to mean that either the Treaty of Nice or its agenda or both were the main topic of the articles in *ABC*, *La Vanguardia* and *El País*. It is important to point out here that when the most articles were published, more items portraying the Treaty of Nice and its agenda ‘directly’ were found. Hence, newspapers contributed more articles dealing with the topic ‘directly’ during the periods concerning the Nice European Council and the signing of the treaty than in the periods regarding the Intergovernmental Conference and the entry into force of the Treaty, that is, the beginning of the negotiations and the final of the procedure.

The newspapers paid primarily attention to ‘European public figures’ and president Chirac was the most cited in this category. This manifest interest in the President of France can be explained by the fact that France held the EU Presidency at that time. Among the ‘Spanish public figures’ the newspapers coincided on reporting on Aznar (the Spanish Prime Minister at that time) and Piqué (Foreign Minister) as the two most frequently mentioned ‘Spanish figures’ in their articles. *El País* is a liberal paper and it discussed in detail two Spanish politicians of a conservative party. This was due to the fact that the People’s Party was in power.

The newspapers concentrated on reporting Member States of the EU. The small-sized received less attention in contrast to large ones. Among the EU countries, apart from Spain, the three newspapers coincided on reporting, in depth, on three large countries – France, Germany and the United Kingdom – with which Spain sought to be on the same level, i.e., Spanish government in the Nice European Council was, for Spain, to gain importance in the EU. This could explain the extensive coverage of these countries and the relevant frequencies of coverage of politicians from large states of the European Union. Among the European countries that did not belong to the EU, Poland, which is the same size as Spain and could be perceived as a rival, was the most discussed by the three newspapers.

5.1.5 Public figures mentioned in the press: other considerations

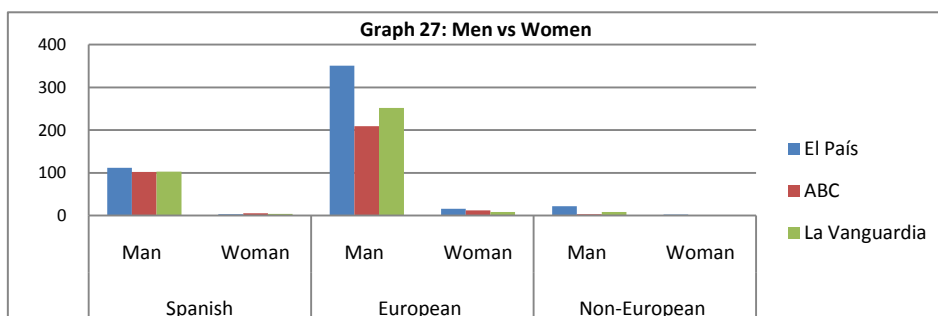
In the previous part of this chapter, the public figures portrayed by the three newspapers according to the four periods were presented. They were categorised into three groups on the basis of their nationality: ‘Spanish’, ‘European’ and ‘non-European’. I will now look at two other subcategories. First of all, the difference between men and women discussed in the press will be considered. Secondly, politicians and other individuals will be presented.

Graph 27 shows that *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* concentrated on reporting on men rather than women. *El País* mentioned more women than the other newspapers, although the difference between the papers’ reporting was not significant. ‘European’ men held the highest frequency of occurrence. Even though it has been seen that all three newspapers covered the Spanish interests, these tended to report more on ‘European’ public figures rather than ‘Spanish’.

The fact that the press focused on men rather than women could be explained by the low female representation in Spanish politics at that time. According to a report presented by the Council of Europe in 2002, women represented 21% of ministers in Spain and 28% of the

representatives of the Parliament. These numbers were low in comparison with, for example, Norway where women represented 42% of ministers and 37% of Members of the Parliament. Along the same line, a report published by Instituto de la Mujer-Ministerio de Igualdad (Woman Institute-Equality Ministry) reveals that women represented 31.73% of Members of Congreso (Lower Chamber of Spanish Parliament) and 23.15% of Members of Senado (Upper Chamber of Spanish Parliament) from 2000 to 2004.

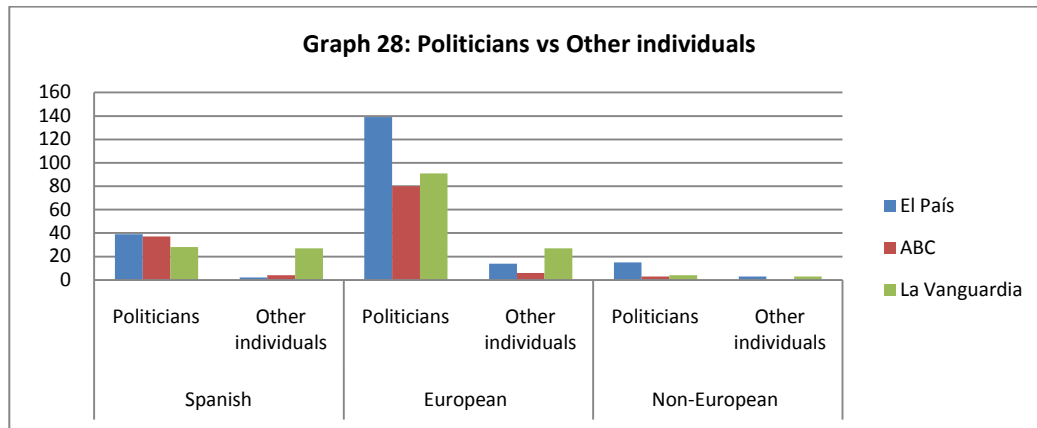
When the news of Treaty of Nice and its agenda was reported by *ABC*, *La Vanguardia* and *El País*, most of the reporters were men. Only 8.3% of *El País*' authors were women, 9.3% in *ABC* and 8.2% in *La Vanguardia*. This indicates that the number of female journalists covering European Union matters was not high. This and the fact that the newspapers focused on men when dealing with the Treaty of Nice and its agenda, highlights how males dominated the Spanish society and how mainly male journalists covered political issues. *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* are two conservative papers, but *El País* was launched with the goal of being an independent, pro-European and liberal newspaper (Contreras García 1995: 33). Therefore, it would be expected to be the most feminist among the three.



Own construction

The press concentrated primarily on politicians rather than other individuals. According to graph 28, 92% of public figures reported by *ABC* were politicians; 91% in *El País* and 68% in *La Vanguardia*. The difference was significant in the case of the European figures. *El País* focused on economists and philosophers; *ABC*, on businessmen and economists and *La Vanguardia*, on Trade unionists, writers and economists. The last paper had the least number of politicians mentioned and it is interesting to point out that the trade unionists were reported on more often. One of the most frequently mentioned topics in the three newspapers was economic issues. Therefore, it is not surprising that individuals linked to economic matters were, in general, the most reported on. Other topics like culture, social matters or environment received little attention. Perhaps, for that reason, *ABC*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* hardly reported on them at all. This

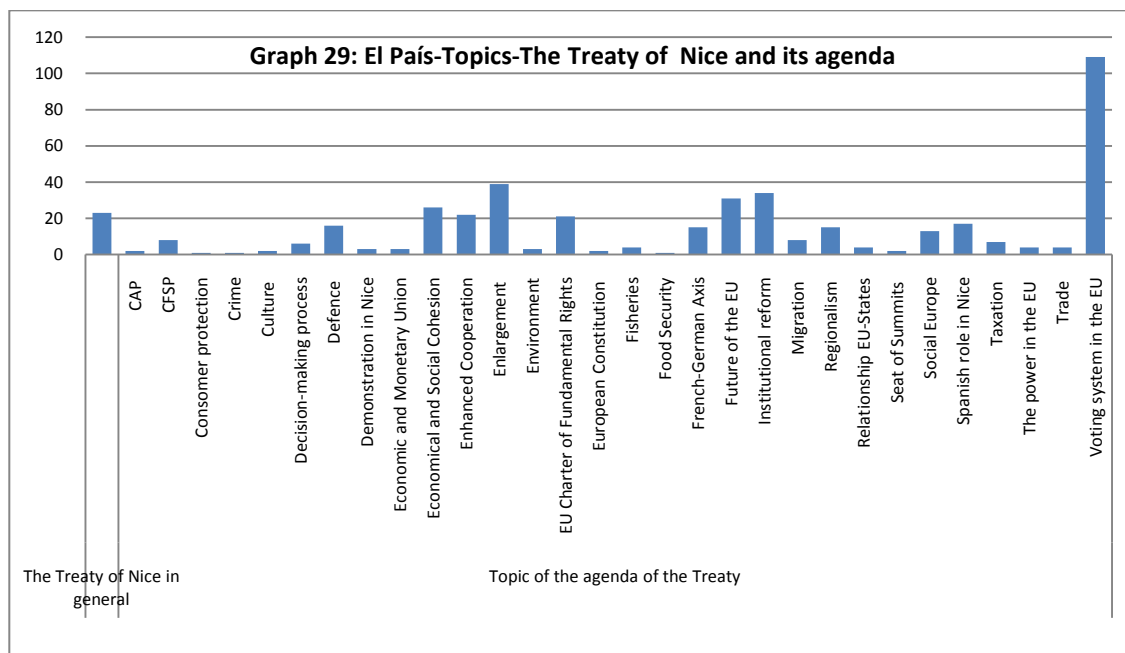
confirms the relationship between media and politics in Spain, a subject contended by Hallin and Mancini (2004: 98).



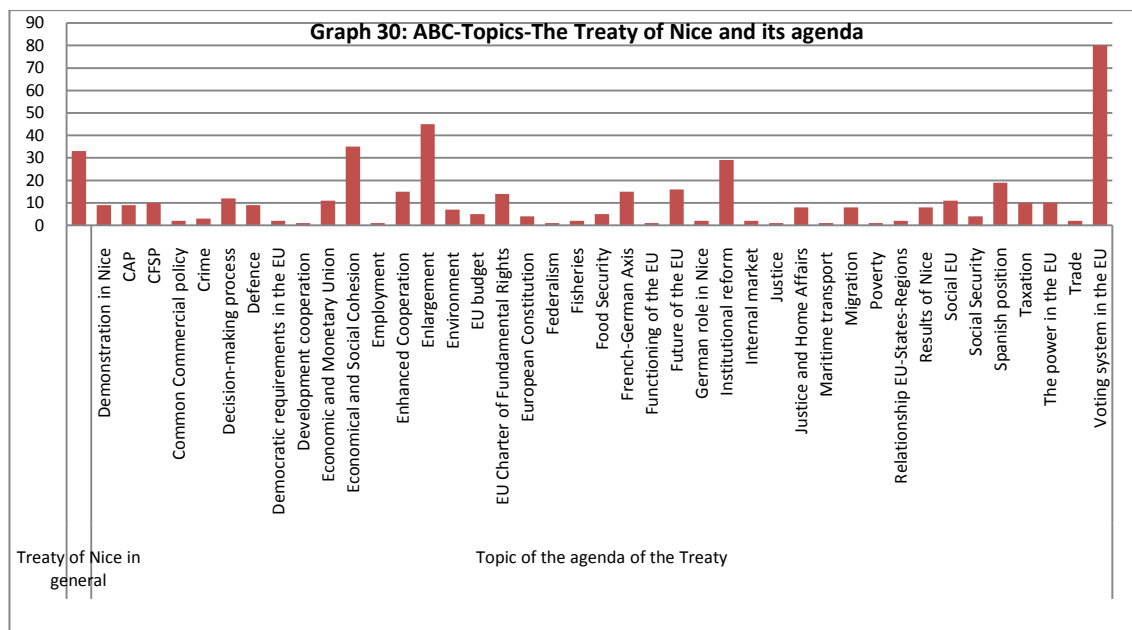
Own construction

5. 1. 6 Analysing the topics covered by the Spanish press

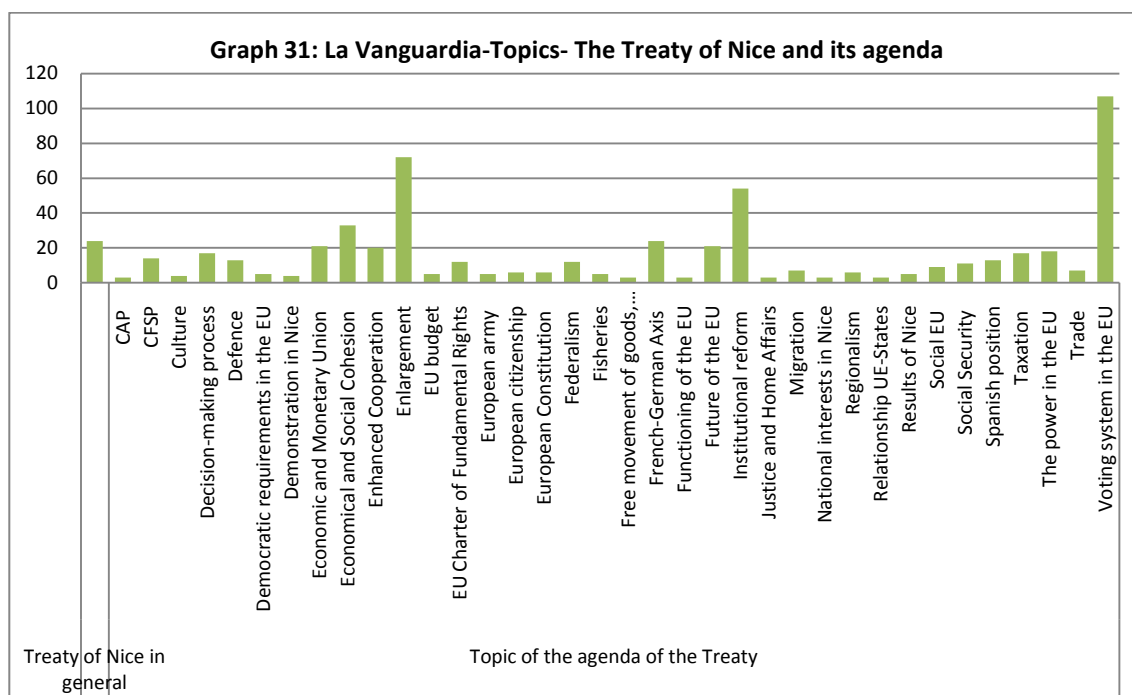
In a previous part of this section I presented the main themes covered by *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* according to four periods: The Intergovernmental Conference (1 to 28 February 2000), Nice European Council (1 to 31 December 2000), the signing of the Treaty of Nice (15 February to 15 March 2001) and the entry into force of the Treaty of Nice (1 to 28 February 2003). These four events were not considered as topics, but the reporting of them in the three newspapers was, because it was thought obvious that these events would be covered in the corresponding articles. Now the topics in general of each newspaper will be discussed. The following graphs, 29, 30 and 31, show the main subjects referred to in the newspapers.



Own construction



Own construction



Own construction

ABC, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* principally reported on the voting system in the EU and the enlargement. The weighting of votes in the Council and the inclusion in this institution of qualified majority voting instead of veto in certain areas of the decision-making process were included in the category of voting system in the EU. The third topic in *El País* and *La Vanguardia* was institutional reform where the reforms of different institutions were included. The third issue in *ABC* was economic and social cohesion. The Structural and Cohesion Funds were included in this category. This subject was also mentioned in *El País* and *La Vanguardia*.

Graphs 29, 30 and 31 show the topics addressed in the three newspapers. Others were also mentioned, but note only the most reported ones are presented here. From the graphs one can see that the three newspapers did not choose the same issues. For example, food security and crime were subjects mentioned in *El País* and *ABC*, but not in *La Vanguardia*. At the same time this newspaper and *ABC* considered topics like federalism, the functioning of the EU and Social Security and *El País* did not. European citizenship, the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital and national interests in Nice neither appeared in *ABC* nor *El País*. Development was only mentioned in *ABC*.

Regions or regionalism is another topic to be taken into account, in spite of the fact that it was not one of the most frequent ones, because one of the newspapers chosen is regional, *La Vanguardia*. *El País* and *La Vanguardia* showed similarities in the frequency of reports, unlike *ABC*, which was different from these two newspapers. The fact that *ABC* – conservative like the ruling party – did not give attention to the issue of regions can be due to the fact that the conservative People's Party does not favour the idea of a federal state. Regions such as Catalonia and the Basque Country pursue this aim and it is supported by the left-wing parties (Balfour 2005: 131).

The Treaty of Nice also included a number of topics not mentioned at all by any of the three newspapers: the utilisation of natural resources in the EU, economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries, the Official Journal of the European Communities, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), anti-social exclusion and discrimination, and the outermost regions and islands. Moreover, the European Investment Bank as a financial body and the Court of First Instance were not mentioned. In connection with the institutions, it is important to point out that *La Vanguardia* was the paper that mentioned the least number of institutions and advisory or financial bodies. It discussed the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the European Central Bank. *ABC* and *El País* reported on the latter and the Court of Auditors, the Court of Justice of the European Communities and the Economic and Social Committee.

The three dailies paid attention to the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. These European Union institutions changed but so did the European Court of Justice, for example. The Treaty of Nice included an entire protocol dealing with its amendments. However, *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* did not pay any attention to this. Apparently, it can be explained by the fact that the weight of Spain within the EU mainly

depended on the reforms in the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Brian Mc Nair (1998: 49), as it has been previously mentioned, when tackling the Agenda-Setting Theory contends that “events, which are not reported, have little or no social significance.” Therefore, absence of topics or themes which received little attention on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda did not have significance in the opinions of the readers of *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC*. One of the applications of the content analysis is “to identify the intentions and other characteristics of communicators” (Berelson 1952: 72). It is not the aim of this thesis to ascertain the intentions of *ABC*, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda, but one can say that the thematic content of the three newspapers when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda is based on political and economic issues.

The general public does not evaluate the relevancy of the events that happen daily in the world. However, the media do just this (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 6-7). An audience perceives an issue as important according to its coverage in the media. In the case of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* regarding the Treaty of Nice and its agenda, these were considered as relevant in the economic and political issues. In addition to this, starting from the fact that media agenda and policy agenda are linked, (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 5), political and economical topics were also the most relevant issues in the policy agenda concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. However, other subjects such environment, culture, education were not in the agenda of the readers of *ABC*, *La Vanguardia* and *El País* inasmuch as these newspapers did not cover these topics in depth.

The fact that *El País* concentrated on political and economic issues can, apparently, make an impression. It was found with the goal of being a liberal and independent newspaper (Contreras García 1995: 37). However, topics such as the environment, education, culture or the social field had the least coverage in the articles analysed concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Social affairs were reported – as well in the other two papers – with reference to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, although with low frequencies of occurrence in comparison to political and economic issues. Nonetheless, considering the fact that the Spanish media are “strongly politicised” (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 98); and that policy and media agenda are linked (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 5), it is not strange that this position was adopted by *El País* because the agenda of the PSOE – the party to which *El País* was sympathetic in the 1980s and 1990s (Magone 2009: 264) – was probably based on political and economic issues. *El País* merely attempted to report on them.

5.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

I now proceed to present the results found in the qualitative analysis of the data. This chapter begins with an introduction and is followed by the major findings related to the frame of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda showed by the press and the news coverage of the Spanish interests.

Discourse analysis has been employed in this stage of the research. In the classical process of communication, “who says what to whom, how, with what effect” (Berelson 1952: 13), the “how” will be taken into account now in that I will present how *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* reported on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Discourse specifically refers to the “content, function, and social significance of language” (Kress 1985: 27). In this case the language content of the articles from *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* was examined.

Van Dijk designs a method in order to analyse the content of the news discourse starting from two main structures, the ‘microstructure’ and the ‘global structure’. Recall that the ‘microstructure’ alludes to the style of the discourse and elements like grammar, cohesion and coherence are included in this part. As far as the ‘global structure’ is concerned, it refers both to the ‘semantic macrostructure’ (topics or themes), i.e. the overall meaning of the discourse, and the ‘formal superstructure’. This organises the themes into different categories so that the reader may read the discourse. These categories are called summary, main event, background and other subcategories (Van Dijk 1985: 92). The articles of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* were not analysed according to the criteria of the ‘microstructure’ presented by van Dijk since I did not consider it applicable for the purpose of this Master’s thesis. However, the articles were examined taking into account the ‘global structure’, especially the ‘semantic macrostructure’ in that the topics covered by the newspapers in their articles were extracted. Moreover the term ‘relevance’ has also been considered. The articles have a relevance structure showing what is important. The headlines show, for example, “the most important topic of the news” (ibid: 70). The headlines have been important when analysing the articles chosen inasmuch as relevant information was extracted from them.

In order to carry out the qualitative analysis of the articles of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*, the tendency of the text has been the guideline of the study. The articles were divided into four categories. In the first category, called ‘in favour’, were all the articles dealing with an issue or issues in a positive way. The second group, ‘against’, consisted of articles

reporting on a topic or topics negatively, i.e., those articles which exposed an opinion against the Treaty of Nice or its agenda. The third group, 'neutral', was based on descriptive articles, that is, articles that manifested neither a direct negative nor a positive standpoint regarding the Treaty of Nice or its agenda. Finally, I defined a category called 'in favour, but critical'. These were all the articles that criticised some aspect whilst also portraying the general topic in a positive way.

I had to generalise or summarise when doing the above-mentioned process so as to extract the keys that showed the tendency of each article. The assignment of topics to a text or its summarisation is a subjective practice in that each person selects what is relevant for him/her and sees the article from his/her own perspective. In addition to this, summarisation is synonymous to generalisation and implies the deletion of some details of the text (Van Dijk 1985: 76).

Investigation shows that half the articles of the three newspapers tended to be descriptive, that is, they were categorised as 'neutral'. In *El País*, 43% of the articles were 'neutral', 24% 'in favour, but critical', 23% 'against' and 10% 'in favour'. In *ABC* 56% of the articles were 'neutral', 19% 'against', 17% 'in favour' and 8% 'in favour, but critical'. 53% of the articles of *La Vanguardia* were 'neutral', 26% against, 17% 'in favour' and 4% 'in favour but critical'. At first glance, it seems that whilst a large number of the articles merely attempted to describe the facts that occurred in the four periods analysed, the rest showed more clearly the standpoint of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

5.2.1 How the Treaty of Nice and its agenda were framed

Framing "deals with the issue of the media telling us how to think about an issue" (Ghanem 1997: 8). In order to present how *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* framed the Treaty of Nice and its agenda, certain topics were selected. First of all, the Treaty of Nice on the whole was taken into account. The next issue was the Nice European Council of 2000. This was chosen because the main agreements in the text of the Treaty were discussed and agreed then. The other issues examined were the voting system in the EU, the enlargement and the institutional reform. These were selected inasmuch as they had the highest frequency of occurrence in the newspapers.

Now I will separately present how *ABC*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* reported on the above-mentioned topics. In the final part of this chapter I will describe how these three newspapers covered the results obtained by Spain with the Treaty of Nice.

5.2.1.1 *El País*

View of the Treaty of Nice. The newspaper *El País* tended to portray the text of the Treaty of Nice negatively. From the point of view of this paper, the amendments introduced in the text of the treaty were inadequate for a European Union with more Member States. However, even though the opinion in general of *El País* was against the Treaty of Nice – it would not be effective in an enlarged European Union – some of the articles reported on this topic with a more positive discourse, arguing that the Treaty of Nice had a positive point: it facilitated the entry of new members.

Some authors point out that some mechanisms can be utilised to frame. Allern (2008) and Tankard (2001: 101) contend that formulating headlines is a tool to identify framing. Now some examples of headlines criticising the Treaty of Nice will be presented.

The national delegations in Brussels complained about the Treaty of Nice in the next headline: “*Un fiasco de texto*” (“The document was a shambles”) (21.12.2000). The subsequent headlines also showed negative points of the Treaty: “*Una chapuza con retranca*” (“A shoddy piece of work”) (23.12.2000) and “*Un mal Tratado para la UE*” (“A bad Treaty for the EU”) (30.12.2000). Another headline, published in an editorial, which stated that the Treaty of Nice was inadequate for an enlarged EU, expressed the following: “*Niza, sin proyecto*” (“Nice, without a project”) (26.02.2000).

I have previously mentioned that some articles reported on the Treaty of Nice with a more positive discourse, arguing that the Treaty of Nice would facilitate the entry of new states to the EU. However, no manifest headlines showing this fact were found. If we begin with the assumption that *El País* supports the PSOE (Magone 2009: 264) and we know that this party “has traditionally been seen as holding the most [in favour] view on the integration process” (Closa & Heywood 2004: 43), successfully finding a positive point of view of the Treaty of Nice is not surprising. In this case, *El País* considered the enlargement a crucial step in the European integration.

Nonetheless, the goal for *El País* was to portray the Treaty of Nice negatively rather than to present arguments in favour of it. Some headlines pointing criticism at the Treaty of Nice blatantly showed it – one of them was even formulated in an editorial. The fact of selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text” is a

characteristic of Framing (Entman, 1993, quoted by McCombs 2004: 87). In this case the paper attempted to focus on the negative aspects of the Treaty of Nice and the fact that the Treaty of Nice facilitated the entry of new members was pushed into the background. Neither is it surprising that the Treaty of Nice was criticised by *El País* because it is a liberal newspaper and the ruling party during negotiations of the Treaty was conservative (People's Party).

View of the Nice Summit. *El País* tended to present the main points of the agenda of the Nice Summit in a merely descriptive way. The paper limited itself to reporting the evolution of the European Council held in Nice. However, this paper published some interpretative articles about the Nice Summit where it did not take a clear position on the final balance of the Summit. Sometimes the results achieved in the Nice Summit were criticised and other times the agreements were reported positively. *El País* stated that the Nice European Council was crucial for the future of the EU. However, in the days before the event, the newspaper contended that the Nice Summit was going to be very complicated. After the Summit, *El País* stated that the agreements reached in the Summit did not solve the main problems that the European Union faced at the time, and that the European Council went practically unnoticed by the citizens.

El País dealt with the results of the Nice Summit in a positive way when reporting on the views of the Spanish government, other European politicians such as Prodi (President of the European Commission at that time) and Chirac (President of France at that time) or other politicians from Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) with regard to the results achieved in the European Council. The final balance was seen positively by the CEEC because their aim was to join the EU and the Treaty of Nice would make it possible. The view of *El País* was based on contending that the Member States of the European Union were only interested in gaining benefits for their own countries and that the general interests of the European Union were not taken into account in the Nice Summit. Prodi and Chirac were respectively President of the European Commission and President of France, France being the country that held the European Presidency at that time. It can be assumed that their aim was for adequate agreements to be made at the Nice European Council.

El País was the paper which presented more different politicians' opinions with regards to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. This daily showed the view of the final balance of the Nice Summit, from politicians' points of view. These politicians represented parties such as Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), United Left (IU), Convergence and Union (CiU), the Canary Islands Nationalist party (Coalición Canaria). The opinions of some members of the Basque

regional government, apart from the People's Party (PP) which was in office at that time, was also reported. Hence, the Treaty of Nice and its agenda also appeared in different sections of the paper (Autonomous regions, Social, etc) apart from International. It can be seen that *El País* presented a pluralist view of the Nice Summit. In these cases, the politicians pointed criticism at the Spanish government. Perhaps these opinions against the Spanish government were reported on in *El País* with the aim of framing a negative image of the Spanish government for the readers. This case appears to confirm that the mass media "directly or indirectly, by statement and omission, in pictures and words, in entertainment and news and advertisement, the mass media produce fields of definition and association, symbol and rhetoric, through which ideology becomes manifest and concrete" (Gitlin 1980: 2), and that the analysis of media discourse is a social product in which "meanings and ideologies are expressed" (Van Dijk 1985: 5). Considering the fact that *El País* is a liberal newspaper that is sympathetic with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Magone 2009: 264), it is not surprising that this daily presented negative aspects about the conservative government at that time.

View of the main topics. The thematic content of *El País* is primarily based on political and economic topics. The voting system in the EU, especially the weighting of votes in the Council, was the most portrayed issue. Hence, *El País* gave special attention to the Council of Ministers. This paper mostly reported on the voting system in the EU in a descriptive way, i.e., explaining the reforms in the weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers without taking a clear stance. Nonetheless, the fact that *El País* published a large amount of articles concerning the weighting of votes in the Council can, apparently, show that what was agreed in this institution was relevant for the paper, inasmuch as the power sharing in the EU depended of the results achieved concerning the weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers. Hence, some articles reported on the power sharing in the EU, especially mentioning France, Germany and Spain. It was normal for Spain to be mentioned because the newspaper is Spanish. The fact that *El País* paid attention to France and Germany could be due to the fact that they are large countries and both have belonged to the EU from its foundation.

El País, apparently, aimed to express in the following headlines how to achieve an agreement on the weighting of votes in the Council but it was not an easy task. "*Los errores del texto de Niza reabren la batalla por el reparto de votos en la UE*" ("The failures of the text of the Treaty of Nice reopens the battle in the voting sharing in the EU") (19.12.2000); "*Guerra de grandes y pequeños en Niza*" ("War of the big and the small in Nice") (10.12.2000) and, finally,

“La larga noche de la rebelión contra los poderosos” (“Long night of the rebellion against the powerful”) (12.12.2000).

The other important topics covered by *El País* were the enlargement and the institutional reform. *El País* primarily reported on the institutional reform in a descriptive way. The newspaper merely attempted to describe the changes in the institutions, especially the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The loss of a Commissioner and some Members in the EU Parliament were not reported in depth by this paper, unlike the weighting of votes in the Council. It could have been due to the fact that the weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers would determine the level of Spain’s importance in the EU.

El País also covered the enlargement in detail. Most of the articles reporting on the enlargement were descriptive and tended to link it to institutional reform. However, some articles adopted an unclear standpoint with regards to the enlargement, and others were more directly in favour. Therefore, *El País* did not defend a clear position in favour of the enlargement. Hence, this newspaper – surprisingly – did not support completely the view of the PSOE, which, according to the words of the Socialist politician, Trinidad Jiménez, (representative of foreign policy at that time) quoted in an article dated 5 December 2000, was completely in favour of the enlargement.

Ideological position and support for or criticism of the government or other political parties. *El País* did not criticise the leftist parties, but it did criticise the conservative party that was in power, i.e. the People’s Party (PP). This is not surprising because the ideological position of *El País* is more left wing than right wing. Even though *El País* is a liberal paper, the opinion of the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party was much more widely reported than the standpoint of United Left (IU), the other leftist party of the opposition, which was smaller and not so significant.

El País did not point criticism at the leftist parties in any of its editorials, but it did criticise the Spanish government. It is not surprising because *El País* supported the PSOE, but the ruling party (the PP) was conservative at that time. Moreover, *El País* adopted a European view in its editorials in that most of them dealt with European Union matters – the Spanish interests in the EU were not included in this category – and not specifically with the Spanish position in Nice. Nevertheless, *El País* dedicated little editorial space, only 3% of all the articles. Hence, it is not

possible to say that a clear standpoint existed with regards to the ideological view of the editorials of *El País* regarding the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

5.2.1.2 ABC

View of the Treaty of Nice. *ABC* tended to portray the text of the Treaty of Nice negatively. Articles stating that the Treaty was not good and that it was going to complicate the functioning of the EU in the future indicated that, in the general sense regarding the Treaty of Nice, its view was negative. However, even though *ABC*'s general view was against the Treaty of Nice because it perceived it as ineffective for an enlarged European Union, some of the articles reported on the Treaty with a more positive discourse, arguing that the Treaty of Nice facilitated the entry of new members and that the Spanish government agreed with the text.

The general view of Treaty of Nice was not positive. However, *ABC* did not publish manifest headlines criticising the treaty, unlike *El País* did. The Treaty of Nice was negotiated when the conservative People's Party was in office. *ABC* is, at the same time, conservative. At first glance, it seems that *ABC* did not show so obviously its criticism of the Treaty of Nice. Framing deals with the fact that a frame can obscure some elements of the reality (Entman, 1993, quoted by Ghanem 1997: 6). In this case *ABC* did not completely obscure the negative points concerning the Treaty of Nice, but it opted for not expressing them in headlines. It even published a headline focusing on positive points of the Treaty. The headline said that, "*El gobierno da por buenos los reajustes del texto del Tratado suscrito en la cumbre de Niza*" ("The government accepts the amendment of the text of the Treaty agreed at the Nice Summit) (23.12.2000).

View of the Nice Summit. *ABC* mostly reported on the negotiations of the Nice European Council in a descriptive way. It attempted to explain the main points of the Summit and its development. *ABC* stated that the Nice European Council was crucial for the future of the EU. However, in the days before the event, the newspaper stated that the Nice Summit was going to be very complicated. After the Summit, *ABC* praised the results agreed on in the Nice European Council with regard to the Spanish interests. As a consequence, *ABC* reported on the Nice Summit in a more interpretative way when the agreements of the Summit referred to Spain. This can be explained by the fact that *ABC* is conservative, like the PP, and this has tended to defend national interests instead of European interests (Closa & Heywood 2004: 47).

ABC also published some articles concerning the balance of the Summit with respect to Spain through some socialist politicians' views such as Zapatero, Rosa Díez or Manuel Marín. At the same time, this paper introduced the opinion of Aleksander Kwaśniewski (Polish Prime Minister at that time) and Ivón Kóstov (Prime Minister of Bulgaria at that time) who praised the good results obtained by Spain in Nice. Nevertheless, the views concerning the negotiations in the Nice Summit were not completely broad in *ABC* since the sole standpoint of the two major parties, PP and PSOE, were referred to; those of other national or regional parties were not mentioned. *ABC* is conservative, like PP. This has tended to defend a discourse focusing on a centralist state and pushing the topic of the idea of a federal state into the background (Núñez Seixas 2005: 131). This can explain why *ABC* did not mention regional parties' politicians. This tool of avoiding some sources is a characteristic of Framing (Allern 2008).

View of the main topics. The thematic content of *ABC* is also based on political and economic topics. The voting system in the EU, which was generally discussed through a descriptive report, was the most frequently reported one. Within this topic, the weighting of votes in the Council was of particular importance. However, the Council was not the most discussed institution, the European Commission was. Nonetheless the fact that *ABC*, in the same line of *El País*, published a large number of articles concerning the weighting of votes in the Council, makes it appear that what was agreed on this institution was relevant for the paper. The power sharing in the EU depended on the results achieved concerning the weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers.

The other important issues covered by *ABC* were the enlargement and institutional reform. *ABC* reported on the institutional reform in a descriptive way, with articles describing the changes in the institutions, particularly in the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The weighting of votes in the Council and the qualified majority voting were to be changed in the Council. The number of Commissioners had to be reduced and the number of seats in the European Parliament had also to be modified. The other institutions received less coverage. Perhaps it was because Spain's level of importance in the EU largely depended on the outcome of the reforms made in the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament. Moreover, Aznar went to the Nice Summit "in order to achieve his goal of winning a larger share of votes" (Closa & Heywood 2004: 130).

ABC also covered the enlargement in detail. Most of the articles reporting on the enlargement were balanced and this newspaper tended to link the enlargement to institutional reform. However, *ABC* dedicated some articles to show an unclear standpoint with regard to the

enlargement. It also published some articles in favour of the enlargement. The next headline, showing the words of Piqué (Spanish Foreign Minister at that time) was an example: “*Tenemos que acelerar la ampliación de la Unión porque conviene a los intereses de España*” (“We have to speed up the enlargement of the Union as it suits Spain’s interests”) (12.12.2000). Hence, *ABC* did not proclaim a clear position in favour of the enlargement.

Ideological position and support for or criticism of the government or other political parties. *ABC* supported the Spanish government, i.e., the People’s Party. This paper also reported on the position of the Socialist Party (PSOE), and usually with criticism of the government. However, *ABC* did not show the view of other national or regional parties. Hence, the Treaty of Nice and its agenda appeared in fewer sections than in *El País*. *ABC* presented a general opinion about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda was less pluralist than that of *El País* in terms of political ideology.

ABC tended to concentrate on the Spanish position in Nice in its editorials. It underlined the good results that the Spanish government obtained in the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice. Thus, *ABC* opted for a national point of view regarding the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. However, *ABC* dedicated little editorial space, only 4% of all articles. Hence, it is not possible to say that a clear standpoint existed with regards to the view of the ideology of the editorials of *ABC* regarding the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

5.2.1.3 *La Vanguardia*

View of the Treaty of Nice. The newspaper *La Vanguardia*, like *El País* and *ABC*, tended to portray the text of the Treaty of Nice negatively. From the point of view of *La Vanguardia*, the amendments introduced in the text of the Treaty of Nice were inadequate for a European Union with more member states. The Treaty of Nice did not solve the questions raised in the Treaty of Amsterdam, that is, the size and composition of the European Commission, the weighting of votes in the Council and the extension of the qualified majority voting (QMV) in the latter institution (Dehousse 2000: 27-28). Moreover, it was a treaty that merely made changes in the institutions that carry out the enlargement. The next two headlines showed how *La Vanguardia* pointed out negative features about the Treaty of Nice: “*Un tratado de mínimos para la gran Europa*” (“A treaty with minimum standards for the big Europe”) (12.12.2000) and “*La ciudad francesa acoge hoy la firma protocolaria de un tratado de la UE en el que pocos creen*” (“The

French city today welcomes the protocol signature of an EU treaty in which only a few believe”) (26.02.2001).

However, although the general opinion of *La Vanguardia* was against the Treaty of Nice, some of the articles reported on this topic with a more positive discourse, arguing that the best side of the Treaty of Nice was that it facilitated the entry of new members.

Nonetheless, *La Vanguardia* focused on the negative points of the Treaty and pushed into the background the above-mentioned fact. *La Vanguardia* is a conservative newspaper like the ruling party that negotiated the Treaty of Nice at that time. However, in spite of these facts, it does not seem that this paper attempted to present positive points concerning the Treaty of Nice, whose negotiations were carried out when the conservative PP was in office in Spain. It can be explained by that fact the People’s Party has defended a discourse concentrating on a centralist state instead of a federal one (Núñez Seixas 2005: 131), and *La Vanguardia* is a regional paper that is sympathetic with the Catalan Nationalist Party (CiU) that defends federalism.

View of the Nice Summit. Almost half of the articles published by *La Vanguardia* about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda were interpretative, i.e., they were opinion articles. Thus, this paper showed more explicitly its view with regard to the Nice European Council than *ABC* and *El País*. *La Vanguardia* reported on the importance of the Nice Summit for the future of the European Union. However, it also dedicated some articles to explain or to say that the Nice Summit would be very complicated and that if an agreement was not reached, the European Union would have serious problems in the future.

La Vanguardia also reported on the Nice Summit through the words of selected politicians, not only those of the government. Zapatero (PSOE), Xavier Trías (CiU), Solana (Ex-Socialist minister, but also the then High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary-General of the Council). Moreover, *La Vanguardia*, even though it is a newspaper from Catalonia where there are several regional parties, it only mentioned one, CiU. It is not impressive because *La Vanguardia* is sympathetic with it (Barrera, 1995, quoted by Hallin & Mancini 2004: 105). Thus, *La Vanguardia*’s coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda was based on the views of PP, PSOE and CiU. Its coverage was more pluralist than that presented by *ABC*, but nowhere near as diverse as that presented by *El País*.

View of the main topics. The thematic content of *La Vanguardia* was based on political and economics topics. The voting system in the EU, which was generally discussed in a descriptive way, was the most reported topic. Within this issue, the weighting of votes in the Council was of particular importance. However, the Council was not the most discussed institution, it was the European Commission. Nonetheless, the fact that *La Vanguardia* published a large number of articles concerning the weighting of votes in the Council, could suggest that what was agreed on this institution was relevant for the paper. The power sharing in the EU depended on the results achieved concerning the weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers.

The other topics covered in detail by *La Vanguardia* were the enlargement and the institutional reform. *La Vanguardia* reported on the latter in a descriptive way, with articles based on describing the changes carried out in the institutions, particularly in the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The fact that *La Vanguardia* reported more on the Committee of the Regions than *ABC* and *El País* can be explained by the fact that the aim of the Committee of the Regions is to represent the interests of the regions and communities in the EU (Lambach & Schieble 2007: 70); and regions such as Catalonia are able to defend their own interests in the European Union arena (Closa & Heywood 2004: 51) through the Committee of the Regions.

La Vanguardia primarily reported on the subject of the enlargement in a descriptive way. However, this paper also published some articles showing an unclear standpoint with regard to the enlargement, as well as articles with a positive view. Thus, *La Vanguardia* did not defend a clear position with regard to the enlargement. Nevertheless, it was the paper that published the highest number of interpretative articles on the subject. The next two headlines showed how *La Vanguardia* underlined some positive points of the enlargement: “*Los Quince afrontan en Niza el compromiso y la responsabilidad de abrir las puertas a los países del Este*” (“In Nice, The Fifteen face a commitment and responsibility to open doors for the countries of Eastern Europe”) (04.12.2000) and “*La ampliación de la Unión Europea es para España una oportunidad y no una amenaza*” (“The enlargement of the European Union is an opportunity for Spain and it does not constitute a threat”) (16.12.2000).

Ideological position and support for or criticism of the government or other political parties. *La Vanguardia* supported the Catalan nationalist party (CiU) when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Most of the articles dealt with the position of the Spanish government. However, *La Vanguardia* also published articles presenting a view on this subject

through the words of politicians of the PSOE and CiU. The other national and Catalan parties were not mentioned. Hence, *La Vanguardia* did not show a view so pluralist in terms of political ideology than that presented by *El País*.

La Vanguardia tended to concentrate on the general European Union matters – the Spanish interests in the EU were not included in this perspective – and not in issues concerning the Spanish position in Nice in its editorials. It reported, for example, on regions and social affairs. Moreover, it did not criticise any political parties, including the government. Nevertheless, *La Vanguardia* dedicated little editorial space, only 4% of all the articles. Thus, it is not possible to say that a clear standpoint existed with regards to the view of the ideology of the editorials of *La Vanguardia* regarding the Treaty of Nice and its agenda.

5.2.2 Spanish position

I will present how *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* dealt with the Spanish position in Nice in the last part of this chapter, in other words, how the Spanish interests or the results obtained by Spain concerning the Treaty of Nice and its agenda were framed by three Spanish ideologically different newspapers from 2000 to 2003.

It has been previously mentioned in a previous chapter that with the Treaty of Nice Spain was granted 27 votes in the Council and 50 seats in the European Parliament. Accordingly, Spain lost 14 Members of the European Parliament and would have no more than one Commissioner from 2005 onwards. As for the Cohesion funds, the veto right in this issue was maintained until 2007 and subsidies would be extended until the year 2014.

5.2.2.1 El País

Broadly speaking, *El País* criticised the Spanish government, stating that Aznar and the Spanish government did not fight hard enough for the Spanish interests in the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice. Nevertheless, some articles praising the good results that Aznar achieved in the negotiations were also found. It is not surprising that *El País* criticised the Spanish government inasmuch as this newspaper is liberal and the People's Party (Conservative party) was in office at that time. What is relevant here is that on one hand, *El País* criticised Aznar for not protecting Spanish interests in the negotiations and, on the other hand, pointed out with criticism the fact that Aznar and other European politicians were only interested in national interests, and not in the general interests of the European Union. Hence, it is relevant to say that PSOE, the party to which *El*

País has been perceived as sympathetic, (Magone 2009: 264), has been identified as remarkably pro-European (Closa & Heywood 2004: 43) whilst PP has defended a “more nationalistic discourse, centred on the defence of Spanish self-interest” (ibid: 47). This could possibly explain the aim of *El País* for criticising the Spanish government.

The main topics reported on in *El País* with reference to the Spanish position were the voting system in the EU and the Structural and Cohesion Funds. *El País* related the Spain’s level of importance within the EU to the weighting of votes in the Council. This mainly depended on the number of votes achieved in the reform of the above-mentioned institution.

The Structural and Cohesion Funds was another important topic, as Spain came close to losing access to European aid through the Treaty of Nice. The point of view stated in the articles was that qualified majority voting instead of veto should decide the Structural and Cohesion Funds. Until then, the veto right, supported by Aznar, had been used in these decisions. *El País* agreed with the PSOE on the extension of qualified majority voting to the Structural and Cohesion Funds through an article published the 5th of January of 2000. In this article the Socialist politician, Trinidad Jiménez, argued that qualified majority voting instead of veto should decide the Cohesion Funds. *El País* also pointed out that Piqué (the Spanish Foreign Minister) did not agree with Aznar with regard to the Cohesion and Structural Funds. Piqué contended that the relevant point was that Spain should not need more from the Cohesion and Structural Funds, which would mean that Spain would be counted among “the rich countries.” At first glance, it seems that *El País* mentioned this so as to show the discrepancies between members of the Spanish government. In addition to this, *El País*, unlike the other two newspapers, did not relate the enlargement to Spain’s loss of Cohesion Funds.

5.2.2.2 ABC

ABC criticised the results obtained by Spain in the Nice Summit using the criticism presented by the PSOE with regards to the Spanish position in Nice. However, when *ABC* dealt with the positive results of Nice for Spain, the paper showed the standpoint of the Spanish government. Indeed, *ABC* mentioned the opinion of other European politicians who praised the good results obtained by Spain in the Nice European Council. Perhaps *ABC* introduced the view of some European politicians to make more credible to its readers the good results that Spain obtained at the Summit, thanks to the negotiations of the Spanish government. This is not surprising, inasmuch as *ABC* and the government at that time were conservative. *ABC* systematically

selected European politicians with a particular viewpoint and avoided the opinions of European politicians criticising the Spanish results. This is a characteristic of Framing (Allern 2008).

ABC especially praised the good results for Spain with regard to the weighting of votes in the Council and the Structural and Cohesion Funds; it pointed out that Spain had managed to gain importance within the EU and to maintain the veto in Cohesion Funds for a few more years. In this case, *ABC* attempted to frame a good image of the Spanish government in the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice.

ABC published a significant number of headlines underlining the good results achieved by Spain in Nice. The following are some examples: “*España y Reino Unido, máximos ganadores en Niza, según el segundo de Prodi*” (“Spain and United Kingdom, the greatest winners in Nice, according to Prodi’s Secretary”) (15.12.2000); “*España mantiene en Niza su poder en la UE y protege hasta 2007 el fondo de cohesión*” (“In Nice, Spain maintains its power in the EU and protects the Cohesion Funds until 2007”) (12.12.2000); “*España considera logrados sus objetivos de estar en el grupo de cabeza de la UE*” (“Spain considers its aims achieved of being in the core group of the EU (11.12.2000) and, finally, “*Niza ha sido la negación de Yalta y ha situado a España entre los grandes*” (“Nice was the antithesis of Yalta and it placed Spain among the large countries”) (14.12.2000).

The views about the Spanish results in Nice were different in *ABC* and *El País*. Therefore, one can say that a discourse is, “the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view” (Fairclough 1995: 56).

5.2.2.3 La Vanguardia

La Vanguardia did not show a clear standpoint regarding the results obtained by Spain through the negotiations in the Treaty of Nice. On one hand, it criticised the results and the handling of the negotiations by the Spanish government in the Nice European Council. On the other hand, the paper praised both the Spanish government and the final balance of the Summit for Spain, in particular Spain’s gain in importance in the EU, a result of the negotiations of the Spanish government.

Nonetheless, *La Vanguardia* underlined the good results of Spain in Nice through some headlines. The subsequent were some examples: “*Aznar considera que España ‘ha logrado estar exactamente donde quería estar’*” (“Aznar thinks that Spain ‘has managed to find itself exactly

where it wanted to be' ”) (12.12.2000); “*El Gobierno acepta el último reajuste de Niza y minimiza la posibilidad de perder poder*” (“The government agreed on the last amendment of the Nice Treaty and it plays down the possibility of losing importance”) (23.12.2000) and, finally, “*El presidente del Gobierno cree que se ha cumplido el objetivo de mayor peso político*” (“The Prime Minister thinks that one has achieved the increase of political importance”) (12.12.2000). These headlines suggest that *La Vanguardia* – conservative like the ruling party – did not level criticism at the Spanish government’s negotiations in Nice.

When dealing with Spain’s position, *La Vanguardia* also reported in depth on the subject of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. It principally stated that one of the aims of the Spanish government in the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice was to maintain the veto in the Structural and Cohesion Funds. The paper praised the government for having achieved this goal. The Cohesion Funds are instruments of the EU’s regional policy (Lambach & Schieble 2007: 117). Catalonia, as a region, benefits from this European aid (Closa & Heywood 2004: 98). Hence, *La Vanguardia* – as a regional paper – through its reporting on the Structural and Cohesion Funds publicised the position of the regional parties with regard to the European Union. The position of these parties is characterised by the securing of benefits for the regions in the EU (ibid: 52).

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapter, I have presented the data extracted from the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The purpose of this chapter is to expand upon the main findings that were discussed in chapter 5 in an effort to provide a further understanding of the ideological positions of the Spanish press when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda; the tendency of the articles when dealing with this topic; the coverage of the results obtained by Spain with the Treaty of Nice; the topics addressed in the press; and the public figures and European Union institutions discussed. Next, I will present suggestions for further research on the basis of this Master's thesis and, finally, I will offer a statement to capture the substance and scope of what has been attempted in this research.

The purpose of this Master's thesis was to look more deeply at the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda by examining three ideologically different Spanish newspapers, *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* between February 2000 and February 2003. In order to accomplish this task, I opted for following these research questions:

- To what extent did *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* reflect their ideological tendencies when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda?
- How were the Spanish results obtained in Nice covered by the Spanish press?
- Which topics related to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda were reported on in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*?

This study has described some theoretical approaches such as the agenda setting and framing, as well as background information to the Treaty of Nice, the Spanish integration in the European Union and the relationship between journalism and politics in Spain. This project has also presented an overview of content and discourse analysis in that these were the two methods employed to carry out the research. Therefore, I will now discuss the main conclusions drawn from the quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Newspapers reflected their ideological positions. *El País* supported the view of the centre-left Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, i.e. the PSOE, about the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. This fact shows that *El País* had at this time the same political attitude that it had in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Magone (2009: 264), this newspaper was close to the PSOE's policies

during these two decades. However, the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda does not seem corroborate the idea of an independent newspaper that *El País* attempted to pursue when it was launched (Contreras García 1995: 37). The findings also confirm that this newspaper is pro-European (ibid). *El País* had the least coverage on the Spanish interests in Nice and, conversely, the most extensive coverage on European Union affairs. The general sense of its articles showed agreement with the European view of the PSOE. Recall that this party has tended to defend the most pro-European integration view of all the Spanish parties (Closa & Heywood 2004: 43). *El País* only distanced itself from the view of the PSOE concerning the enlargement of the EU. PSOE supported the enlargement. However, even though the articles analysed in *El País* did not show a position against the enlargement, neither did they present a clear view in favour.

El País had the most extensive coverage on the views of other political parties, both national and regional ones, especially from Catalonia and the Basque Country. This is not surprising since these two regions are very developed in comparison to other Spanish Autonomous Regions. For example, Catalonia is considered one of the richest regions within the EU (Dowling 2005: 107). Moreover, Catalonia and the Basque Country are two regions where nationalism is a major issue. This topic is frequently discussed in television, radio and newspapers agenda. The idea of federal state, pursued by these regions, is supported by the left-wing parties, but not by the centre-right People's Party, which contends that one cannot make concessions to the above-mentioned nationalisms (Núñez Seixas 2005: 131).

ABC supported the Spanish government when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. This paper selected certain sources and avoided others since it only referred to the views of the government and the PSOE. Therefore, the selection of articles that *ABC* offered to its readers with respect to the Treaty of Nice and its agenda was not as ideologically diverse as that presented by *El País*. This difference can be attributed to the fact that *ABC* is a conservative paper (Magone 2009: 264) closer to the People's Party's policies – the ruling party at that time – rather than being nearer the policies of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party – the main party of the opposition. The PP has tended to defend a discourse with respect to the regions by avoiding the idea of federalism (Núñez Seixas 2005: 131). Hence, the views of politicians of other regions, especially from regions such as the Basque Country and Catalonia, where the concept of state is desired, was pushed into the background in *ABC*.

La Vanguardia expressed its agreement with the view of the Catalan Nationalist party, i.e. CiU (Convergence and Union), when reporting on topics specially related to Catalonia:

regionalism within the European Union and the Structural and Cohesion Funds. The rest of the articles did not show a manifest view of this regional party, but the view of the government and the PSOE. Concerning the government, on the one hand, there were items criticising the negotiations by the Spanish government in Nice and, on the other hand, *La Vanguardia* published articles praising the results that the Spanish executive achieved in Nice. These differences could be due to two facts. The first one is related to the ideology of the newspaper. *La Vanguardia*, in spite of being a conservative newspaper, it is often attributed to having some characteristics of a left-wing paper (Contreras García 1995: 44). This feature probably brought the paper to criticise the negotiations of the conservative Spanish government in Nice. The second reason refers to the relationship between the newspaper and the Catalan Nationalist Party CiU. *La Vanguardia* is a regional paper and it is close to CiU (Barrera, 1995, quoted by Hallin & Mancini 2004: 105). According to Dowling (2005: 106) this party, “has become the most successful representative of stateless nationalism in western Europe.” Moreover, the EU has become for CiU “an arena for political action” (Closa & Heywood 2004: 52). This regional party tends to defend the interests of Catalonia in the European Union. Hence, *La Vanguardia* manifested the view of CiU when reporting on regionalism or the Structural and Cohesion Funds. These funds belong to the EU regional policy (Lambach & Schieble 2007: 116). Hence, it is not surprising that, CiU, as the ruling party in Catalonia during the period analysed, was interested in them; and *La Vanguardia*, as a paper that sympathises with this party, reported on in them.

Description when dealing with European Union affairs and commentary when reporting on the Treaty of Nice and the Spanish interests. The newspapers, on the one hand, tended to be descriptive, that is, they covered the agenda of the treaty merely by describing the ‘facts’ in more than half of the articles examined. These articles primarily reported on European Union affairs without dealing with the Spanish interests. On the other hand, the daily newspapers showed more clearly their standpoints in the rest of the items. They mainly covered the results that Spain obtained in Nice and the Treaty of Nice itself exposing their stances, i.e. critical or in favour.

The newspapers constructed a negative frame concerning the Treaty of Nice. These papers mainly portrayed it negatively arguing that the amendments introduced in the text of the treaty were inadequate for an enlarged European Union. *El País* was the newspaper that most manifested its negative view of the Treaty. This was due to the fact that the government during the negotiations was conservative and this newspaper is perceived as more liberal. In contrast,

ABC and *La Vanguardia*, more conservative than *El País*, opted for not criticising the government so obviously.

El País was also the paper that most criticised the negotiations of the Spanish government in Nice, in contrast to *ABC* that tended to praise the achievements of the conservative People's Party. The differences can be attributed to their ideological positions. The main aim of *El País* seemed to be criticising the Spanish government, and not directly the European integration; since this paper, supporting the view of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Closa & Heywood 2004: 43; Magone 2009: 335), tended to favour European integration.

Different discourses when reporting on the Spanish results in Nice. The newspapers did not prioritise the subject of the Spanish position among all the topics they reported on, since the newspapers dedicated less than half of their articles to the Spanish interests. *ABC* had the most extensive coverage of the Spanish results in Nice. This is not very surprising because, it is a conservative newspaper like the ruling party at that time, which has tended to defend a nationalist discourse concerning European integration (Closa & Heywood 2004: 47; Magone 2009: 335).

The newspapers paid more attention to the European Union affairs than to the national interests. Broadly speaking, this can be due to the features of Spanish politics. There is a consensus among political parties in Spain regarding the support of European integration (Closa & Heywood 2004: 41-42). Consequently, starting with the assumptions that media and policy agendas are linked (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 5); that they are three different ideological newspapers from a country where media are politicised (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 98); and that the European Union is important for Spanish political parties; it is not surprising that the newspapers exclusively dedicated a large number of articles to European affairs concerning the Treaty of Nice without taking into account the Spanish interests. This fact does not confirm, at least in the case of Spain and the Treaty of Nice and its agenda, the statement presented by the Adequate Information Management in Europe, AIM-project 2007, in which journalists tend to report national interests when dealing with the European Union affairs.

The discourse of the newspapers became more interpretative when reporting on the Spanish interests in Nice. The newspapers opted for following their political attitudes when reporting on this topic. This fact can be explained by two main reasons. The first one concerns the preferences of the audience and the second one is related to the features of Spanish politics and the function of media in the distribution of ideology (Gitlin 1980: 2). Each newspaper has its own audience in

line with its political stance, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004: 98). The papers' editors probably knew that their readers were going to be interested in the results that the Spain obtained with the Treaty of Nice. Hence, the readers expected their newspapers to reflect their view of the Spanish interests in Nice. This confirms, in part, what the AIM-project 2007 presented concerning the preference of journalists for reporting on national issues when covering the European Union. The second reason is that Spain polarises politically into two main parties (Balfour 2005: 146). The press tends to report on the political struggle between these two major parties. Covering the results of Spain in Nice is, of course, reporting on the European Union affairs, but it is from a national perspective, in other words, it is reporting on the European Union according to the Spanish interests or the achievements of the Spanish government in the EU arena. Political parties tend to show more clearly their differences when tackling national issues than when dealing with specific European Union affairs because, as has been mentioned, all the Spanish political parties support the European integration in some way or another (Closa & Heywood 2004: 41-42).

Spain's level in importance after the Treaty of Nice was one of the most frequent issues when *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* reported on the Spanish interests. Hence, the newspapers noted the importance of the viewpoints of large EU Member States, such as France, Germany, United Kingdom or Italy. They are the largest countries within the European Union, in other words, they are states with which Spain sought to be on the level. The newspapers tended to link the topic of a country's loss or gain in importance in the EU to the number of votes that this could reach in the reform of the voting system in the Council. *ABC* and *El País* framed this issue very differently, showing their political tendencies clearly. The former paper discussed this issue in detail. However, *El País* tended to avoid it and state that Spain did not reach what it ought to have achieved, and that the Spanish government did not do enough for the Spanish interests.

The Structural and Cohesion Funds was the other frequent topic addressed in the articles with regard to the Spanish position. The enlargement meant that more countries would have to share the Structural and Cohesion Funds available, so the amount paid to Spain might be reduced (Royo & Manuel 2003: 295). *El País* did not mention this as part of the context of the enlargement. It made no link between enlargement and Structural and Cohesion Funds. This did not confirm Closa and Heywood's (2004: 133) assumption inasmuch as they contend that Spain opposed the enlargement when dealing with Structural Funds. The fact that *El País* did not link the enlargement to the Structural and Cohesion Funds and *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* did, could be

due in part, to the fact that these last papers, as conservative, constructed a more nationalist discourse than *El País*.

Political and economic topics on the agenda. Political and economic issues dominated the list of topics found in the articles analysed. The voting system in the European Union, the enlargement and the institutional reform were on the top of the hierarchy of issues concerning the agenda of the Treaty of Nice of *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* from 2000 to 2003. The media agenda shows that the voting system in the EU featured prominently among the items examined. This topic is related to the institutional reform in that one of the institutions reformed was the Council of Ministers, to be more specific, the weighting of votes and the extension of qualified majority voting (QMV) to a major number of topics. This manifest interest in the weighting of votes in the Council seems paradoxical because when ministers of EU Member States meet in the Council of Ministers the consensus is the norm, in other words, they do not use the vote, inasmuch as they tend to agree without voting (Sverdrup, 2009).

As far as the enlargement is concerned, some articles showed evidence of expressing either positive or critical views with regard to enlargement. Whichever view they expressed, the three papers agreed that institutional reform was a necessary step prior to the enlargement. One point to be mentioned here is that none of the three newspapers linked enlargement to migration, in spite of the fact that the Treaty of Nice would open the door to a large number of citizens who could come to Spain to work. Member States of the European Union began to see Spain as country that did not support the fifth enlargement before the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice (Closa & Heywood 2004: 132). The Spanish government realised this fact and it attempted to avoid the bad image of Spain concerning the enlargement. It endeavoured to make the other countries to perceive Spain as a supporter of the enlargement (ibid). These dual conceptions regarding the enlargement and Spain can explain the unclear discourse that some articles showed with regard to this issue.

The newspapers paid little attention to topics that were not political or economic. None of the following were discussed at all by any of the three newspapers: the utilisation of natural resources in the EU, economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries, the Official Journal of the European Communities, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), anti-social exclusion and discrimination, and the outermost regions and islands. This fact can be related to the Spanish policy agenda, the polarisation of party politics in Spain (Balfour 2005: 146) and the political feature of the Spanish media (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 98). Aznar's main

interest in Nice was political: reaching an important number of votes in the Council of Ministers so that Spain would be equal to the large countries. The newspapers reported this fact showing the differences between the major parties, in that, according to Balfour (2005: 146), they seldom agree on anything. It seems that the newspapers were more interested in the political struggle between Spanish parties than the content of the Treaty itself. Hence, people could hardly know the other topics different to political and economic ones concerning the Treaty of Nice since “events, which are not reported, have little or social significance” (McNair 1998: 49).

Focus on politicians and men. The newspapers concentrated on politicians, especially *El País* and *ABC*. This result seems to verify that the press tends to portray foreign news concentrating on elite topics such as politics and important countries and public figures (Van Dijk 1988: 63). Those who were not politicians were mainly economists, philosophers, businessmen, trade unionists and writers. It is not surprising that the attention of the three newspapers on politicians because political issues dominated the list of topics found in the articles. This trend confirms once more the close relationship between media and politics in Spain.

The newspapers also focused mainly on men rather than women. According to a report presented by the Council of Europe in 2002, women’s representation in Spanish politics was low at that time. The female representation in the Spanish Parliament and the government was not significant. Hence, the fact that most of Spanish women ministers held posts linked to topics that held low frequencies of occurrence – Education, Science and Technology or Health – from 2000 to 2003, can also explain the little attention given to women by the newspapers in the category of ‘Spanish public figures’.

The fact that most of the articles of the three newspapers were also written by men it is also interesting. However, it was not possible to find sources on the number of female journalists in Spain or the women journalists who worked for *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* at that time. However, these facts show how male dominated the Spanish society was then. This result brings me to think that more research on female journalists in relation to the news coverage on the European Union is needed.

Interest in the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Newspapers paid little attention to the other institutions and financial and advisory bodies – the Court of Justice of the European Communities, the Court of Auditors, the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic

and Social Committee. This can be explained by the fact that, according to the newspapers, Spain's level of importance could basically depend on the reforms made in the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the European Commission, especially in the first mentioned. The focus on the Council could have been due to the EU institutional architecture. The European Parliament is mainly arranged by ideology inasmuch as its Members represent political parties; the European Commission is organised by sector and function, in other words, this institution represents sectorised criteria. Moreover it is "the most authentically executive body in the EU polity" (Egeberg 2006: 22-24); and the Council of Ministers is an intergovernmental body and "(probably) the most important EU institution" (Sverdrup, 2009). It is mainly organised by territory, that is, it mainly represents Member States of the EU (Egeberg 2006: 22-24). Hence, the Council was the most discussed, specifically when dealing with the weighting of votes.

6. 1 Recommendations and final conclusion

At this point, I would like to present some recommendations for further research. The aim of this study was to look more deeply at the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda. Data was collected to test three research questions relating to this goal. The information was studied and many significant findings resulted from the examination of the data. The findings, although significant, have some limitations. One limitation is that the findings explain only the coverage of the Treaty of Nice in three Spanish newspapers. The Treaty of Nice and its agenda could also be studied from a European perspective, by analysing European newspapers with regard to this topic as there is a significant lack of studies dealing with the Treaty of Nice examined from a journalistic perspective.

Another possibility would be a comparison of the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice with other treaties, especially by examining a period when the People's Party was not in office, because this Master's thesis has analysed the Treaty of Nice during four periods of time when this was the ruling party. The negotiations of the Treaty of Lisbon were carried out with the PSOE in office. These two treaties could be examined in order to study the frame of the EU in Spain over time. This research would be particularly interesting in the case of Spain because politics and media are closely related.

This project has presented the coverage of the Treaty of Nice on the basis of the media agenda; another avenue of research could be to analyse the Spaniards' view of the Treaty of Nice

so as to examine the public agenda and to ascertain to what extent public and media agenda were similar when the press reported on the Treaty of Nice.

As we have seen *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* dealt with the Treaty of Nice and its agenda establishing a hierarchy of topics in which not all the issues presented in the Treaty of Nice were included. This confirms that the frames presented by news media “don’t necessarily mesh with reality” (Ghanem 1997: 10). This Master’s thesis on the news coverage of the Treaty of Nice and its agenda has showed that political and economic issues took precedence in the newspapers, especially the voting system in the European Union, the institutional reform and the enlargement and that the press paid little attention to issues such as culture, environment and social affairs. Furthermore, from 2000 to 2003, concerning the Spanish interests the most discussed subjects in the three papers were the level of Spain’s importance within the EU, and the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

The project has also confirmed that *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* reported on the political struggle of the main Spanish parties mostly when dealing with the Spanish interests. In these cases the newspapers showed more clearly their ideological tendencies. This Master’s thesis has also confirmed that none of the newspapers was against the European Union. All of them supported the European integration, albeit by showing different viewpoints in certain points of the process.

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