



IS THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST BEING INFLUENCED BY THE SOCIAL NETWORK?

Abril Cáceres

Is *The Eurovision Song Contest* being influenced by the social network?

Since the origins of this contest, it has always been possible to observe that there is a clear political influence both when selecting the song that each country will present in the contest, and when granting points to each country. This fact has been clearly demonstrated in the last edition of the contest, when Ukraine won despite not having been the best song of that edition. This situation, explained above, has occurred in all editions, since in some way this event is used to analyze the transformation of European society, since it reflects, and on many occasions anticipates, the state of international relations. If we analyze all these cases, we realize that we are influenced by opinion leaders, who previously have also been influenced by the media.

It is commonly said that the media affect us in our day to day, and a clear example of this is the influence that the media have on *The Eurovision Song Contest*, which is one of the most popular music contests of the world. As time has gone by, *Eurovision* has changed and has adapted to the changes that the field of communication has undergone.

In the contest, we can observe how the media has a limited direct impact on the opinion and behavior of people, and that other factors also play an important role in the formation of these opinions and behaviors, therefore this is manifested in the audience and in the participants themselves. On the one hand, the media broadcast the performances of the participating artists, and although these performances may influence the preferences and opinions of the audience to some extent, the direct effect is limited. This is because individual musical preferences, personal experiences, and other factors can affect each viewer's interpretation of performances. Moreover, it has been verified that although the votes of the countries can have an impact on the final results and on the victory of a participant, it is recognized that there are other factors beyond the performances themselves that influence voting decisions. These may include political factors, historical alliances, cultural preferences, and other elements that affect the decisions of jurors and the public in casting their votes. In short, all these aspects mentioned above can be observed in the Eurovision contest through the understanding that the performances and votes have an impact, but not a determining one, on the opinion and behavior of the audience, since other factors and circumstances also influence how contest performances and results are received, interpreted and evaluated. In addition to this, social media has also influenced the way countries select their entries for the contest. Some countries use social media to gather feedback from their fans and to test out potential songs and performers. This has led to a more democratic and inclusive approach to selecting entries, as fans have a greater say in the process. For example, in 2018, the United Kingdom used social media to select its entry for the contest. The public was invited to submit songs and vote for their favorite, with the winning song ultimately representing the country in the competition. Social media has also had an impact on the way the contest is marketed and promoted. The official Eurovision Song Contest accounts on social media platforms have a significant following, and they use these platforms to promote the contest and engage with fans. The accounts share behind-the-scenes content, interviews with performers, and other exclusive content that fans can't get anywhere else. Nevertheless, media consumers choose and use media based on their specific needs, desires and motivations. In the case of the Eurovision contest, this means that viewers can tune in to the event for different reasons and

with different expectations. Some people can watch Eurovision because of their interest in music and art, while others can watch it for social reasons, like being part of a community or group of friends who watch the event together. There are also spectators who may be interested in the fashion and style of the artists, or in the culture of the different countries represented. This way you can explain why certain songs or performances are more popular or attractive to certain groups of spectators. For example, a song with inspiring and emotional lyrics can resonate more with viewers who are looking for a positive message or an emotional experience at the event. Therefore we come to the conclusion that Eurovision has different needs and expectations, and that these can be satisfied in different ways by the different songs and performances that are presented.

On the one hand, the increase in the use of social networks has affected *The Eurovision contest* in a certain way. We can see that when the contest approaches, audiovisual content related to the event begins to appear on social networks, over the years this has caused the contest to be more up-to-date. This shows that social networks select the content that is considered most interesting at that moment, and this causes social networks to influence humans.

A clear example of the great influence that social networks have in this contest would be the last edition, in which *Sam Ryder*, a TikTokker with considerable fame and popularity, represented the United Kingdom in the music event. Sam managed to finish in second position, just behind Ukraine. It should be added that Sam was one of the favorites since it was announced that he would participate in the contest. This fact shows that social networks have a great influence on people, to the point of addressing controversial issues and amplifying them so that, in this way, it is impossible not to be informed about this topic and talk to people around us about it. However, in many cases, depending on the way in which information is provided, people can receive and understand the information that has been issued to us, in one way or another. In this way, our opinion about the people involved, or the events that occur, can be conditioned and therefore our opinion on the subject can change. For example, a song that participates in Eurovision goes viral on TikTok, and even if you don't like that song at first, after listening to it so many times you will end up liking it.

On the other hand, As the popularity of social media has increased, so has its influence on the way viewers view and interact with the competition. One of the ways social media has influenced the Eurovision Song Contest is through voting. For years, public voting has relied on sending text messages or phone calls, but as social media has become a more popular means of communication, contest organizers have begun to explore the possibility of using social networks for voting. In recent years, organizers have added an online voting option via social media, allowing viewers to vote for their favorite songs via platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. This has added a new dimension to public voting as viewers can now voice their opinions and interact with other pageant fans via social media.

Throughout this contest it has been possible to verify that prolonged and regular exposure to the media can shape a person's perception of reality and their attitudes towards it. In the case of Eurovision, the audience that follows the contest year after year can experience the effects of the cultivation theory. As viewers watch and become immersed in Eurovision broadcasts and coverage over time, they may develop certain perceptions and expectations about the contest, the participating countries and the performances. For example, they may

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preconceived ideas about which styles of music are most successful, which countries are most likely to win, or what is considered an outstanding performance. These insights cultivated through prolonged exposure can influence how Eurovision performances and results are interpreted and evaluated. Viewers may begin to view the contest through a particular prism based on the narratives and stereotypes that have been cultivated by the media over the years. In addition, this may also affect the audience's perception of the importance and relevance of Eurovision in popular culture and the music industry, for example, those people who have been exposed to the contest for a long time through the media may consider it as an event of great importance and prestige, while those with limited exposure may not attach the same importance to it.

In recent years, with the advent of the Internet and mobile communications, the public's ability to produce (our) own information that can challenge the frameworks established by political elites has greatly expanded. In this sense, virtual networks are important because they can enhance the ability of the masses to communicate with each other, transforming individual frames of reference into frames of a collective nature. Nevertheless, within the field of political communication, the frame has to be defined and operationalized on the basis of this social constructivism. The media actively establish the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events.

In conclusion, the impact of mass communication in the Eurovision Song Contest is undeniable. Throughout the years, the contest has been influenced by various forms of media, including traditional media outlets and, more recently, social networks. The media's role in shaping the contest's outcomes and influencing audience opinions cannot be overlooked. The media's influence can be seen in several aspects of the Eurovision Song Contest. Firstly, the media plays a role in the selection process of songs and performers. Social media platforms have provided a more democratic approach to selecting entries, with fans having a greater say in the process. This has made the contest more inclusive and reflective of popular opinion.

Moreover, the media's impact on the contest extends to its marketing and promotion. Official Eurovision Song Contest accounts on social media platforms engage with fans, share exclusive content, and provide behind-the-scenes access. This enhances the overall experience for fans and generates excitement and anticipation leading up to the event. However, it is important to recognize that media consumption is a complex process influenced by individual preferences, motivations, and other external factors. While the media can shape perceptions and influence opinions, personal experiences, cultural preferences, and historical alliances also play a significant role in how performances and voting decisions are received and evaluated.

In recent years, the rise of social media has had a profound impact on the contest. Social networks have provided a platform for fans to engage with the event, express their opinions, and interact with other viewers. Online voting options via social media have also added a new dimension to public voting, allowing viewers to voice their preferences and engage in discussions with fellow fans.

Overall, the Eurovision Song Contest's relationship with mass communication is a dynamic

and multifaceted one. The media, including traditional outlets and social networks, play a significant role in shaping the contest's outcomes, influencing audience opinions, and contributing to the overall experience for fans. Understanding and acknowledging the impact of mass communication is essential in analyzing and appreciating the contest's cultural and societal significance.

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