

**Marita Carballo: presentation of Juan Díez Nicolás
Helen Dinerman Award
Toronto 2019**

Juan Díez-Nicholas's lifetime contribution to public opinion research is truly remarkable. Near the start of his career, he launched survey-based public opinion research in Spain during Franco's rule, where it had been virtually non-existent. He went on to become one of Spain's most well-known sociologists, with an impressive record of publications, and the country's leading survey researcher.

He has made a contribution that is truly exceptional: he demonstrated that public opinion research can play a useful role in promoting democracy. Trained in survey research methods at the University of Michigan which he left in order to launch the new public opinion institute in Spain--, he carried out a series of well-designed surveys from 1963 to 1969 which revealed two crucial findings: first, that a solid majority of the Spanish population did not want a continuation of authoritarian rule, nor were they favorable to communist rule, and second, that almost nobody—including the main opposition group, the Communists—wanted a replay of the Spanish Civil War. Spaniards would accept the results of free elections.

When Franco died in 1975, the new President, Adolfo Suárez, appointed Juan as Director of the Center for Sociological Research. He was given the mandate of conducting surveys that would help facilitate the transition from dictatorship to parliamentary democracy. Under his leadership, the Center predicted accurately the results of two referenda (on the Political Reform and on the new Constitution) and the first two General Elections of 1977 and 1979. It also conducted many other surveys to test reforms that the new democratic government intended to implement. Juan's work is an inspiring example of how Public Opinion research can help transition to democracy.

Juan has also played a leading role in the emergence and flourishing of the World Values Survey, not only as the Principal Investigator for Spain but as a leading member of the executive committee and as a vice president of the organization. In addition, Juan Díez-Nicolás has participated as Principal Investigator for Spain in numerous major social survey research projects, including the International Social Survey Program and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, and he has promoted public and private public opinion research in Spain and in other countries, mainly Muslim-majority countries and more recently China. Finally, he also contributed to the first Public Data Archives in Spain. He has published over 200 articles and more than 30 books and continues to do so extensively. He is a Member of the Real Academy of Moral and Political Sciences of Spain.