

46

QUADERNS DEL CAC

**Participation, citizenship
and communication**



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The issues opens with the invited article, followed by the monographic section that analyzes a subject from different approaches. The section "Articles" consists of original and unpublished articles accepted after their submission to a double-blind peer review process, after an initial assessment of quality by the Editorial board. The journal undertakes to respond the authors of the positive or negative result of the process in less than a month and a half after the submission of the article.

The manuscript submission guidelines for articles and book reviews are at the final pages of every issue.

The opinions expressed in the articles published in *Quaderns del CAC* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflected the journal position.

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Introduction

Issue 46 of *Quaderns del CAC* is all about **Participation, Citizens and the Media**. The growing interest prompted by the participatory paradigm, which has emerged following the changes in the media ecosystem led us to invite the research community to share their insights. The response has been very encouraging, and we would like to stress this in particular because this issue has been produced in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis, which impacted authors and reviewers just like the rest of us. As a result of everybody's efforts, the reader now has several contributions that explore the various aspects of the topic.

Our guest author in this issue is **Marius Dragomir**, Visiting Professor at the Central European University (Budapest), where he leads the Center for Media, Data and Society after more than a decade working for the Open Society Foundations in London as head of the Program on Independent Journalism and the Network Media Program. From his prime vantage point he examines in his paper, *Voting with your wallet: the real meaning of citizen participation in the media*, the dynamics between citizen participation and business models in order to place the sustainability of independent journalism at the forefront of the debate. He looks at the connection between two aspects which are much discussed separately but rarely interrelated: the changing model of journalism funding and citizen participation in the media.

Javier Marzal-Felici, **María Soler-Campillo** and **Carlos López-Olano** address public service media. In their paper entitled *Citizen participation and public media. Results of focus groups on academics, professionals and experts in social dynamization* they confirm the crisis of legitimacy of these media as part of the changes affecting the media ecosystem. They also note the role that citizen participation can play as a tool for legitimising public service and curbing its loss of social relevance. Finally, the article additionally underscores the function of co-creation as a potential framework for citizen participation in public media.

Natalia Quintas-Froufe and **Montserrat Vázquez-Gestal** examine participation from the perspective of audience complaints about public service media. In their paper *The RTVE audience Ombudsman as a mediator in the resolution of complaints about the children's channel Clan (2010-2015)* they describe actions taken by parents of children watching the specialised public channel Clan in which they share their concerns with the Ombudsman about its contents. In addition to presenting the institution and setting out the issues which bring about unease, the paper picks out some benefits arising from this interaction such as the explanation of principles which can enhance the media literacy of families.

Eloi Camps Durban looks at the community radio experience. In his article *Participation in Community Radio: a proposal for analysis based on the concepts of symbolic resistance and media literacy* he reviews examples of participatory content by drawing on case studies chosen from community radio station projects in the Catalan media space. The paper starts from the assumption that participation in these alternative media projects is inseparable from contributing to content creation and suggests the concepts of symbolic resistance and media literacy as a framing for analysis.

José Emilio Pérez Martínez takes us back to one of the most authentic experiences of media participation: free radio. In his article *Madrid's free radio stations: local media and neighbourhood participation in the 1980s*, he studies the synergy between social movements and free radio. He documents the experience of the use of radio by Madrid's neighbourhood movement, which was especially vibrant in the 1980s. The projects analysed show how participation in free radio is another form of activism and a way to shatter the spiral of silence they endure.

In her article *Deficient regulation of community media in Spain: the case of Cuac FM*, **Isabel Lema Blanco** investigates the vicissitudes which even today still impact the community media projects that are the heirs to the initiatives described in the previous paper. Lema examines the barriers the public comes up against when trying to access non-profit media. The research is backed up by a case study of Cuac FM (A Coruña), a community radio station that has won a battle against the government in the courts and is used as a connecting thread to examine the regulation of community media by current legislation.

Ángel García-Castillejo, **Manuel Chaparro-Escudero** and **Lara Espinar-Medina** write about this regulation of the sector. In their article *Amendment of the Andalusian Audiovisual Law by Decree-Law 2/2020 and the privatisation of local public media. Impact and constitutionality analysis* they drill down into the structure of local media in Andalusia

and the impact which rollout of the recast Andalusia Broadcasting Act would have. Although they largely cover the possible outcomes for the local radio industry, they also point to the consequences it might additionally have for local public television stations.

Tiffany Marques, Jorge Ferraz de Abreu and Rita Santos address the issue of interactive television as a fine example of participation. In their article *Unification of audio-visual content over iTV, a trigger to attract younger generations to the big screen: the case of Ultra TV*, they discuss the problem presented by the younger generations' disaffection with the TV screen and examine a strategy to turn this lack of interest around. Based on a case of a unique interface that integrates linear and non-linear content, they demonstrate the potential to attract young users to iTV screens and transform their viewing experiences.

In a quick reaction piece, **Emma Torres-Romay and Silvia García-Mirón** analyse the activity of Instagram influencers in Spain in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. In their article *Influencers and coronavirus. Contents on the COVID-19 pandemic in social network prescriber publications in Spain (2020): the case of Instagram* they explore the contents about the pandemic produced by a group of prominent influencers, how they affected their business activities and the forms and genres chosen to address the issue.

In the articles section, **Clàudia González Deumal's** paper entitled *Analysis of media literacy initiatives by schools and local media in Catalonia* takes a look at media education projects leveraging the synergy between schools and local broadcasting media. The article identifies the activities by ownership of the schools, educational stages and their interrelation with local media.

Emili Prado
Director

Voting with your wallet: the real meaning of citizen participation in the media

MARIUS DRAGOMIR

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Abstract

Changes in the funding of journalism and citizen participation in the media are the focus of this article. The first one is usually analysed from a business point of view or in terms of independence from funding sources, while the second one is examined mainly in terms of the role of citizens as producers. This article focuses on the link between media funding and citizen participation as one of the key elements in the transformation of today's journalism and raises the question of whether a citizen-funded media can be the most suitable model for media companies that aspire to practice more independently.

Keywords

Journalism, citizen participation, funding, media, independence.

Resum

Els canvis en el finançament del periodisme i la participació ciutadana als mitjans de comunicació són els eixos d'aquest article. Normalment el primer s'analitza des d'un punt de vista empresarial o en termes d'independència respecte de les fonts de finançament, mentre que el segon s'estudia sobretot quant al paper de la ciutadania com a productors. Aquest article se centra en el vincle entre el finançament dels mitjans i la participació ciutadana com un dels elements clau de la transformació del periodisme actual, i planteja si un mitjà informatiu finançat per la ciutadania pot ser el model més adient per a les empreses mediàtiques que aspiren a exercir de manera més independent.

Paraules clau

Periodisme, participació ciutadana, finançament, mitjans de comunicació, independència.

Introduction

The rise of new technologies over the past two decades has led to significant changes in how journalism is carried out and financed. The economic crisis that began in 2007 accelerated these changes, forcing most news media to explore business plans with a better fit for the digital economy. During these times of massive changes, the newspaper industry in particular has been substantially affected.

With advertising revenues slashed during the painful economic downturn, audiences migrating in hordes to the Internet for their news diet, and global tech giants growing their dominance in the advertising market, news publishers already in the early 2010s saw the first signs of decline in their industry. In 2008, Robert G. Picard was forecasting that advertising expenditures would plateau and decline, "denying newspapers revenue growth that is critically needed for sustainability" (PICARD 2008).

Badly ravaged by the economic adversities, with publishers bled dry of profits, the industry has since seen massive job losses and dwindling revenue. From 2008 to 2019, total newsroom employment in the United States dived by 23% to about 88,000 jobs, according to data from the Pew Research

Center (GRIECO 2020). In the United Kingdom, national, regional and local newspapers have all faced during the past decade losses of titles, circulation and staff (FRANKLIN 2014). The decline has been felt in many countries across the world, at different paces. In India, for example, only between 2017 and 2018 the total combined circulation of the ten most prominent print titles declined by four million to some 47.1 million copies in spite of growing ad revenue and the steady interest of the population in the news output of the large publishers (PARTHASARATHI & AGARWAL 2020).

On the other hand, the shifts in the news industry triggered by the technological transformation continuously eroded the very foundations of the news media business, forcing them to invest significantly in their digital footprint and constantly experiment with new sources of revenue and business models. A big role in these transformations was played by the global social networks that increasingly act as the mainstream carriers of journalistic content. The problem with this new model of content distribution is the hyper-commercial nature of the social networks, which is designed to promote viral, popular content instead of high-quality journalistic output such as investigative reports or in-depth, long-form journalism.

The business model of these technology platforms including Facebook and Google is something completely alien to journalistic quality, as scholars and journalists argue (BELL & OWEN 2019). At the same time, the infrastructure of the social networks that news media use (or are pushed into using) to reach out to their audiences is built in such a way that it hurts the financial sustainability and viability of news media outlets.

At the same time, this new technological environment has created a multitude of opportunities for journalism, especially for those media interested in innovative production models or for individual journalists, for example those forced by owners to leave their jobs, who can now launch their own journalism platforms much easier than in the pre-internet years. Such initiatives would not have been possible without a widespread internet that offers immense opportunities to raise funds, reach news audiences and publish content. News media that started as a small online shop and grew into a key news operation such as *El Confidencial* in Spain, *Malaysia Kini* in Malaysia, *El Faro* in El Salvador and *Animal Político* in Mexico, are only a few of the pioneering online-only publications that used the power of the internet to build solid journalism portals (RODRÍGUEZ-CASTRO, VALERO-PASTOR & DRAGOMIR 2020).

All these developments have pushed the debate about the future of journalism financing into a totally new perspective. In the past decade, the established media groups have focused their strategies on revamping their content and business models, putting the digital presence at the centre of their operations. Newly emerging news media are growing thanks to newly minted funding models.

But the lesson that probably all of them have learned during these transformational times is that any monetisation model, if it is to work, has to be anchored in the audience. This pecuniary aspect of the relation between citizen and media ultimately provides the solid foundation on which journalism can build.

The success of audience-inclusive funding schemes such as subscriptions, membership-based models and cooperative media speak to that. In a similar manner, those public service media that are financially transparent and manage to justify their public funding are by a wide margin more successful and popular than government-financed media that are perceived as propaganda channels.

These dynamics between citizen participation, business models and the financial sustainability of independent journalism are the focus of this article.

Funding journalism: key changes

Research carried out since 2017 by the CEU Center for Media, Data and Society (CMDS) found several trends in the evolution of funding models of journalism (MEDIA INFLUENCE MATRIX 2017-2020), of which three stand out:

- Growing state funding in the media
- Growing influence of tech companies in the advertising market
- Rise of philanthropic funding

First, governments are increasing their spending in the media at a galloping pace. In 15 countries ranging from Western Europe to Central Asia to Central and Eastern Europe to South Asia canvassed by the Media Influence Matrix, government is by far the largest funder of media. Governments spend disproportionately high amounts of money in the media compared with other sources of financing such as advertisers or donor organisations. The government funding usually goes to large state media that in many cases operate rather as state propaganda bodies than media outlets (NUSSIPOV 2019; HOLDIS 2019).

There are three main forms of state funding schemes created to fund media companies: public funding for state-administered media (such as licence fees or public media funds); state advertising (money spent on marketing projects implemented by state bodies as well as state-owned or state-controlled companies) and state subsidies (direct allocations by government bodies to media outlets either to carry out various editorial projects or as a modality of support for cultural activities) (DRAGOMIR 2017).

Generally, government spending in the media is driven by the government's attempt to influence and control the editorial narrative in the media. State subsidies are a clear form of direct control of the media. State advertising is also a powerful tool to keep the media in line, used both to reward supportive media companies and starve those that do not respond to pressures from authorities (DRAGOMIR 2017).

The licence fee model used to finance public service media is coming under fierce attacks. This model consists of a fee that, with a few exceptions (such as disadvantaged families or the elderly), all the households in a country are obliged to pay. This model, common in Europe (WARNER 2019), was proven to offer public media outlets the highest level of immunity to attacks from political parties and governments simply because it is more difficult, though not impossible, for authorities to manipulate it than, for example, subsidies allocated straight from the state budget.

Second, the fundamental transformation of advertising, which was the predominant source of journalism financing in the pre-internet era, had a considerable impact on most of the commercially-driven media outlets. By far the most lasting impact was the entry of global tech companies in the advertising market, which led to a significant fall in the ad revenues generated by news media companies.

Large tech companies such as Google and Facebook generate most of their revenues from advertising, much of which is taken away from media companies (and other internet portals) that

use their platforms to advertise. In 2016, it was reported that 85 cents of every dollar spent in online advertising was going to Google or Facebook (HERRMAN 2016). Alphabet, Google's parent company, generates nearly 90% of its revenues from advertising (ALPHABET 2017), with the rest being contributed by sales of apps or media content in the Google Play store.

As the dependence of media companies on social networks has increased to the point where these networks have become their backbone distribution infrastructure, publishers have slowly become "commodity suppliers" to social media. Ironically, not only do they offer content that social media are monetising, but many of these publishers have to pay social networks like Facebook or Twitter to make their content more visible and thus more monetisable (INGRAM 2018).

Finally, among the new forms of revenue generation to finance journalism, the non-profit model has gained prominence in recent years. Foundations endowed by wealthy investors and entrepreneurs such as the Open Society Foundations (OSF) bankrolled by the investor George Soros, the Gates Foundation led by the IT entrepreneur Bill Gates and the Luminare grant-making shop financed by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar have increased their spending in funding media outlets across the world.

The financial influence of these funders in the media is, however, limited. According to Media Impact Funders (MIF), foundations made grants worth over US\$ 1.3bn every year to media and journalism initiatives worldwide between 2011 and 2015. However, compared to other sources of funding, philanthropic financing is extremely small, accounting usually for less than 1% of the total media expenditure at the country level (MEDIA INFLUENCE MATRIX 2017-2020).

When citizens vote with their wallets

The trends in journalism funding described above have had a significant impact on the media industry and journalism in general.

First, the sharp rise in government financing has an increasingly negative effect on independent media. Government funding, not necessarily a bad thing in theory, is generally used by the authorities as an instrument to control the media. Governments spend money on media that are either closely controlled propaganda channels or uncritical private media holdings that are willing to promote the government, its policies and leaders. Disbursed through transparent mechanisms that would allow for accountability, government financing would be, in fact, welcomed by an ailing media industry. Such cases are rare though.

Allocated on political grounds through unaccountable, opaque mechanisms, government financing has a debilitating effect on media independence for a variety of reasons. State media that receive disproportionately large amounts of financing from the government have a major advantage in the market compared to

their privately owned competitors, leading to major distortions on the media market (Bátorfy & Urbán 2020). On the other hand, excessive government funding stifles innovation in designing new business models for media. In countries with massive government funding in the media, attempts to launch subscription-based news outlets have failed precisely because of this reason (NUSSIPOV 2019).

Second, the changes in the advertising industry over the course of the past decade or so have dismantled the traditional business model of the media. With the large technology platforms gaining a dominant position in this market, media companies, especially smaller ones, increasingly stopped relying on ad money as their main source of funding, moving their attention to other sources of financing. For large news outlets such as *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*, this new advertising paradigm does not present an existential threat as they have the capacity to generate high amounts of ad revenues. But for a large part of the industry, especially news media companies operating in small language markets or underdeveloped economies, the shifts in the advertising market logic are a threat to the very existence of many media companies (PICKARD 2020).

Some countries have attempted to curb the power of global tech platforms. The EU has been trying for the past few years to introduce legal provisions that would force global tech companies such as Facebook and Google to pay news media companies for every news snippet or link to their articles that appears on their platforms. The provisions, part of an upcoming copyright directive, are welcomed by a series of content creation industries including news media, music and video production. Others, especially internet "luminaries", claim that such legal provisions will turn the internet from an open platform into a fully controlled area (SWEENEY 2018). The copyright directive, yet to be formally endorsed by the European Parliament, led some of the tech companies to consider leaving the EU market (STOLTON 2019).

Finally, due to their limited financial power compared to government or commercial players, philanthropies and donor organisations have little impact, if at all, on changing media systems and markets in the long-term. Nevertheless, donor organisations play a fundamental role in keeping independent media outlets and investigative journalism networks afloat. Most of the independent news media and cross-border investigative organisations in the world owe their survival mostly, or in some cases solely, to donor organisations (MYERS & JUMA 2018).

All these developments indicate that the future of independent media is inseparable from citizen participation. Increasingly, under the pressure of the digital economy, journalism is transforming into a fully citizen-inclusive industry. Already citizens are effective participants in the news-gathering process (NOOR 2020). They produce mountains of content, sharing it at an astounding pace and in a multitude of forms and formats including reviews on news portals or e-commerce platforms, comments on media websites, posts on social media or pictures

and videos shared with news organisations or video-sharing platforms. News media organisations cannot ignore these trends and indeed many of them use this non-mediated access to citizens more than ever before in their reporting.

But citizen participation is crucial also for the future funding model for journalism. Almost all independent media finance themselves through a mix of sources including crowdfunding, memberships, subscriptions, grants, state subsidies and many others. But it is the subscription model that anchors in most cases the sustainability of media operations. In Slovakia, for example, the news portal *DennikN* managed within only two years from its launch in 2015 to become self-sufficient through subscription fees (DRAGOMIR 2018). Such examples abound as subscription has emerged as the most suitable form of funding independent media (MEDIA INFLUENCE MATRIX 2017-2020).

Nevertheless, there are still some problems related to the subscription type of funding. For example, user-generated monetisation models (such as subscriptions, memberships or various forms of paywalls) are increasingly employed by media outlets that seek to circumvent the power of tech companies in the advertising market. However, many of the readers that these media want to reach are already on social networks like Facebook consuming content for free (INGRAM 2018). Also, forms of citizen-based monetisation are mostly embraced by the affluent, technologically well-equipped parts of the society, people who were already connected and well-informed. Less prosperous, more disconnected people are usually less likely to pay for content. Some media outlets tried to address this issue by opening access to some of their content or removing the paywall in times of crisis (CHINNASAMY 2017).

But in spite of all these shortcomings, citizen-fuelled funding models seem to offer the right choice for media companies that aspire to operate independently.

By relying to the largest extent possible on citizens, news media funded by citizens are better insulated from political pressures and threats from businesses, as well as more disconnected from technology-dependent models, simply because they are accountable solely to their community of users. They are thus able to shape their own editorial policies and priorities without any constraints. *The Correspondent*, an ad-free subscription-based journalism platform launched in 2013, found it “truly liberating” to serve the needs of their 43,000 subscribers instead of “the needs of advertisers” (PFAUTH 2016).

Then, a citizen-funded outlet is more likely than others to produce content that is relevant for society. Lack of demand for such content would immediately signal irrelevance and lead to falls in subscriptions and ultimately funding. It is therefore fair to say that citizen-funded models offer journalists the most intimate knowledge about the community and readership they serve, the dynamics of subscription purchasing being a most accurate metric of the readers' priorities.

Finally, some of the citizen-funded models offer various incentives to citizens themselves. Membership models (HANSEN & GOLIGOSKI 2018), where the audience is built around a set

of values and interests, and cooperative enterprises (SIAPER & PAPADOPOULOU 2016) where the audience comes together to collectively establish and fund a media organisations, are effective forms of citizen involvement in media production. In membership-based models, citizens are not only buyers of content, but members of a sort of a club built around a journalism organisation through which they get access to events, discounted products or the possibility to interact with the outlet's journalists. In the case of cooperatives, ownership of the media outlet is shared with their readers, a status that gives them a say in the organisation's affairs (SHEFFIELD 2018).

What is important at the end of the day about all these forms of citizen-funded models is the guaranteed editorial freedom as newsrooms in such media are answerable only to one, well-defined and closely related constituency: the audience that pays for or owns the media (or both).

The debate about the future of journalism funding is also extremely relevant for public service media, particularly those financed through revenues from a licence fee. As people's gadgets are flooded with news content, the licence fee financing model (where all the households in a country have to pay for content produced by one, state-administered media outlet) is becoming obsolete in spite of its merits, one of which being the strongest resilience to political pressures that it guarantees. Scrapping the licence fee, planned by governments in an increasing number of countries, is likely to push the public service media to irrelevance or, in some cases, even extinction. Replacing a licence fee with state funding does not solve the problem because, as experience shows, this practice turns public media into state-controlled propaganda channels (PAUN 2016).

Overall citizen participation in all aspects of public media (regulation, financing and programming) is extremely important for public service media as a form of legitimacy in digital times. When it comes to financing, not only transparency over the public media expenditure is needed but also empowering citizens to participate in deciding how the public resources allocated to the media outlet should be spent. Numerous models are being discussed ranging from subscriptions (WATERSON 2019), where citizens decide whether they want to pay for the public media, a totally impracticable and destructive model that would push public media into “netflixating” its operation (WATERSON 2019), to forms of funding where the citizens are still obliged to pay the licence fee, but are given the power to decide on which type of programming the fee (or part of it) should be spent (BONINI 2017).

Conclusions

Much has been written during the past two decades about two topics: the changing funding journalism model and citizen participation in the media. However, the two issues are rarely connected when, in fact, they should be.

The shifts in funding journalism are usually treated either as a business issue or a media development practice as practitioners are trying to find a stable model of financing independent journalism. When it comes to citizen participation, the debates are very much focused on the role of citizens as “producers”, the contribution that citizens are making in the journalism production process (BIRD 2011).

But it is, in fact, the link between funding and citizen participation that encapsulates the most relevant aspects of the transformation of journalism in our day. State-funded operations are alien to open, inclusive societies, serving only political elites interested in their control of public resources. Private media relying for their finances on commercial income are in hock to a slew of interest groups, rarely engaging or even knowing their audience. Even some of the investigative journalism groups, in spite of their invaluable work, are disconnected from their audiences as they are putting more time into reporting to donor organisations that fund their operations than to the citizens they serve.

Journalistic initiatives, outlets or programmes without any citizen-generated funding resources, like many of those just described, are all faced with low trust (as they are accountable to forces and entities other than citizens) and instability (as they are financially dependent on one key source of funding be it government, commercial advertising or philanthropy).

A generation of journalism-supportive citizens has emerged almost everywhere as people understand more and more the value of accurate, independent and unbiased information. However, as the financial crisis is expected to hit most of the world's economies hard as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the trends in citizen-funded journalism that were underway in 2019 are going to change dramatically.

Although an increasing number of people, faced with a shortage of news or inaccurate information during the darkest days of the pandemic, are likely to appreciate more and pay for quality, public interest journalism, vast swathes of the population will be faced with major economic hurdles.

All these trends are expected to have significant consequences for independent media, especially those that rely financially on small communities of paying readers.

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Citizen participation and public media. Results of focus groups on academics, professionals and experts in social dynamization

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Abstract

In the current context of distrust towards the public media, “citizen participation” is one of the most relevant concerns in the agendas of those responsible for it and among media researchers, as a key to recovering its social relevance. In order to deepen the understanding of the concept of participation, three Focus Groups have been organised, formed respectively by academics, professionals and experts in social dynamization, carried out in Castellón in November 2019. The results are presented and the main recommendations on management of “citizen participation” in the public media are discussed.

Keywords

Citizen participation, public media, co-creation, social media, audiences.

Resum

En l'actual context de desconfiança cap als mitjans de comunicació públics, la “participació ciutadana” constitueix una de les preocupacions més rellevants en l'agenda dels seus responsables i entre els investigadors dels mitjans, com a element clau per recuperar la seva rellevància social. Per tal d'aprofundir en el coneixement del concepte de participació, s'han organitzat tres grups de discussió, formats respectivament per acadèmics, professionals i experts en dinamització social, desenvolupats a Castelló el novembre de 2019. S'hi presenten els resultats i s'hi debaten les principals recomanacions sorgides per gestionar la “participació ciutadana” en els mitjans públics.

Paraules clau

Participació ciutadana, mitjans de comunicació públics, cocreació, mitjans socials, audiències.

1. Introduction

1.1 The media content

In the last decade, the public media (PM) have been strongly questioned by many citizens of a good part of the European continent and, very especially, in Spain. Many experts agree that the causes of the crisis of public broadcasting corporations are multiple, and coincide in time, thus forming a kind of “perfect storm” (BUSTAMANTE 2015; PRADO 2015; ZALLO 2015; LÓPEZ-OLANO 2018; FREEDMAN & GOBLOT 2018).

On the one hand, the economic and financial crisis of 2008 has reduced, in an extremely sensitive way, public media corporation's budgets: for example, in RTVE there were cuts in the financing of up to 48% during the Popular Party government

(LÓPEZ-OLANO 2016). This has affected the quality of RTV's offer and has had very significant consequences on the loss of the audience and the deterioration of the reputation of these entities (BERRY 2019).

Secondly, and as a consequence of digitalization, radio and television offer has multiplied very significantly in the last decades, which has led to a fragmentation of the audience (CAMPOS FREIRE 2013). To this circumstance, we must add the transformation in the ways of consuming audiovisual content, with a significant boom in on-demand and online consumption, as well as the growing expansion of social networks in radio and television media, which has implied new management of human resources.

Finally, public media have been subjected to a strong smear

campaign, within the framework of the discredit of public management promoted by neoliberal thinking. The prestige of the PM has been aggravated by the corruption scandals of recent years, which are the result of the “governmentality” of the media by the political power and the absence of mechanisms to regulate the communication space. Political control of the media and corruption took over the Greek public broadcaster ERT in 2013 (recovered in 2014), and RTVV, the public service of RTV of the Valencian Community (recovered in 2018, under the name *À Punt Mèdia*, a trading company of the Valencian Media Corporation). As we have analyzed in different works (MARZAL-FELICI & SOLER-CAMPILLO 2015; Marzal-Felici 2016; MARZAL-FELICI & SOLER-CAMPILLO 2017; SOLER-CAMPILLO, GALÁN-CUBILLO & MARZAL-FELICI 2019), the closure of the Valencian public radio and television has had devastating consequences for the Valencian territory, both in the economic field, for the development of cultural and creative industries, for the audiovisual sector, for the regional economy as a whole, and in the loss of informative, political and cultural plurality.

The economic crisis has also consolidated a duopoly in Spain, where two private media groups, Atresmedia and Mediaset, are hegemonic and in practice dominate the advertising market in Spain (GARCÍA SANTAMARÍA 2016), while public radio and television stations, from RTVE to the regional broadcasters, have been losing relevance in the face of mistrust of the public media, which can be seen as part of a general trend to question the effectiveness of public management (NEWMAN *et al.* 2019).

In recent years, the RTVE Group and the large regional public radio and television stations (CCMA, EITB, CRTVG, RTVA, and RTVM) have been undertaking far-reaching reforms to adapt to the new digital context, which many professionals in these corporations view negatively (GALÁN-CUBILLO, GIL-SOLDEVILLA, SOLER-CAMPILLO & MARZAL-FELICI 2018). The impossibility of being able to incorporate new generations of professionals and the low budgets that are being managed due to the economic crisis (MIGUEL DE BUSTOS & CASADO DEL RÍO 2015; SOLER & MARZAL 2015) make it difficult for the PM to adapt to the new transmedia environment, in which it is necessary to adopt new workflows and routines, in a context in which radio and television broadcasts have even less relevance than their multimedia platforms or the management of their social networks.

In the last decade, organizations such as the *Media Intelligence Service* (MIS) of the *European Broadcasting Union* (EBU) have been alerting to the need to increase the quality of the radio and television offer, by renewing public service media, which are faced with the challenge of adapting their structures to the new digital scenario, to recover, in particular, the younger public (whose consumption is multiplatform and online) as well as the lost prestige. Roberto Suárez, Director of the MIS, already warned in 2012 about the need to boost citizen participation, beyond online consumption, as a strategy to re-legitimize public media, and to boost their development and leadership (SUÁREZ 2012: 76-79).

1.2 The demand for “citizen participation”

María Lamuedra (2012) reminds us that in liberal-representative democracies, citizen participation has been limited to the exercise of the right to vote, in a context in which, as Habermas (1975), Nino (1997) or Dryzek (2000) have pointed out, a “deficit of social legitimacy” of the current democracy is taking place. And one of the most efficient “antidotes” to protect our democracy is precisely to promote greater social participation, which the public media have a responsibility to promote, in a media environment in which social media are increasingly important. In this way, it can be affirmed, as a framework for debate, that the notion of participation has an intrinsically political nature (DELWICHE 2013). Indeed, the concept of “citizen participation” is essential to the very idea of democracy. But, as with the loss of credibility towards political parties, and towards the public institutions that control governments, under the model of “participatory democracy” in force (FUCHS 2009, 2013), the modes of participation that are often articulated in the media, both public and private, have shortcomings and deficits that require the development of forms of participation beyond the traditional ones.

Thus, we can say that “citizen participation” is one of the most relevant concerns on public media managers’ agendas, but also among media scholars. For Bergillos, the concept of “participation”, like that of “audience” or “television” is very broad and has a clear multi-dimensional reading (BERGILLOS 2015; JENKINS & CARPENTIER 2013). In a way, it is a concept that sinks its roots in the debate on the role of the media for the development of countries (MACBRIDE 1980), and that crystallises in the debate on the nature of the so-called “community media”, “inherited from the experience in community and alternative media, which defends that this participation is real, effective, horizontal and beneficial for all” (BERGILLOS 2015: 64). For Prado, “participation is the maximum guarantee of pluralism and consists essentially in the possibility of intervening in the production, in facilitating the conversion of the social actors in authors of their discourses” (PRADO 1986: 180).

However, when talking about participation and the media, distinctions can be made between real and symbolic participation (PRADO 1986), partial and full participation (PATEMAN 1970), genuine and authentic participation (SERVAES 1999) or real and pseudo-participation (VERBA 1961) and even between participation in the media and through the media (CARPENTIER 2011). From the perspective of critical theory of communication, in the debate on the relevance of participation in the media one cannot ignore that there are an over-utilisation and an abusive use of the term, which has been attributed to dilettantes, manipulators, and demagogues (BOURDIEU 1996). In short, the concept of “citizen participation” must be related to the possibilities that the new media offer to empower users, in order to become *producers* or *prosumers*, who are building the current digital culture (DEUZE 2006; CASTELLS 2009).

Juan Carlos Miguel de Bustos and Miguel Ángel Casado del Río have analysed the forms of “citizen participation” in public RTVs, as well as the evolution of the concept in our days (2012). And once again, the technological change represented by the emergence of new media –especially interactivity– is at the origin of the need to redefine “citizen participation” in public media. Miguel de Bustos and Casado del Río, following Resmann's approach (2009), ask themselves what fundamental characteristic a communication programme or product has in order to be considered “participatory”, concluding that in this type of programme the protagonists are “ordinary people”. However, it is obvious that quality “citizen participation” cannot be identified solely with the typical audience attendance in entertainment programmes, with the role of viewers participating in radio or television competitions, with the sending of photographs or messages via Twitter or Facebook, with interviews with anonymous people, etc. The key lies in the interaction of “ordinary people” (citizens, in short), in the ability to interact and make decisions about the content of the programme, even participating in its pre-production, production and post-production.

In a fashion, some creative practices that are in the wake of the fan phenomenon, and that have to do with the expansion of narratives and contents generated by audiences and spectators, from famous fiction franchises such as *Star Wars*, *Matrix*, *Lost*, *Fringe*, *The Ministry of Time*, etc., could be identified, in our opinion, as expressions of “citizen participation”. The development of fan communities, a phenomenon related to the expansion of transmedia narratives, which has been analysed by scholars such as Jenkins (1992, 2008), Scolari (2013) or Guerrero-Picó (2015), among others, has drawn the attention of the directors of audiovisual media corporations (public and private) and researchers to the status of public RTVs in the current context.

1.3. The case of À Punt Mèdia, the new PM in the Community of Valencia

In the debate on the nature of “citizen participation” in the context of PM, we believe it is necessary to refer to the recent appearance of À Punt Mèdia, a new public service broadcaster in the Valencian Community, which will fill the significant gap left by the closure of RTVV, in 2013, after 24 years of history. The new public media corporation has come into being 4 years later, following a rather unique model of governance and broadcasting company, even at international level. The Corporación Valenciana de Medios de Comunicación (CVMC) – whose Creation Law was approved in July 2016 after an intense debate that included the participation of the universities and the Valencian audiovisual sector– was born from the beginning with the firm will to be transmedia, as confirmed by the existence of a unique editorial office in À Punt Mèdia that supports the multimedia platform, radio and TV broadcasts of the new media corporation. In this sense, it should be noted that the fundamental reason for adopting a transmedia strategy is the

need to adapt the new public RTV to the public's consumption patterns (BUSTAMANTE 2008).

But this change in the model of RTV, in the case of À Punt Mèdia, is also accompanied by assuming a new governance model, which is clearly set out in Law 16/2016 on the Creation of the CVMC. The system of election of the General Direction is through a public contest; the candidacies are proposed by the Audiovisual Council of the Valencian Community (CACV), whose law is already published in the BOE, in the absence of its implementation; the members of the Governing Council of the CVMC (equivalent to the Board of Directors of the RTV) are not only elected by the regional Parliament but also at the proposal of the CACV and other bodies; and the News Council arises as a body of participation of the professionals involved in the production of the news of the corporation.. The creation of the CVMC has also meant the implementation of the Citizenship Council, a body created in April 2018, composed of thirteen members, nine of which are to be proposed by associations and social entities of the Valencian society, by the universities, by associations in defence of the LGTB rights and gender equality, by the Valencian Academy of Language, by the Valencian Council of Culture, by the Youth Council, etc. It is precisely the creation of bodies such as the Audiovisual Council of the Valencian Community or the Citizens' Council that have been set up to reinforce the depoliticization of the public corporation's management bodies, which has been particularly dramatic in this territory during RTVV's 24-year history.

In this context, the Citizenship Council constitutes an advisory body on programming and contents of the CVMC which, as stated in the CVMC Creation Law, is presented as a necessary tool to advance in a governance model of public communication service that can guarantee “the expression of social, ideological, cultural, political and democratic plurality in information through the exercise of the right of access to the media”, as stated in the CVMC Style Paper. This body's objective is to convey to the CVMC the concerns and requests of organisations with a proven track record in the Valencian political life such as Escola Valenciana, the Publishers and Booksellers Guild of the Valencian Community, the Federation of Musical Societies of the Valencian Community, the Federation of Valencian Pelota, the Association of Users of Communication, the Associations of Festivals (Magdalena, Fallas, Fogatas, Moors and Christians, etc.), among others.

In this way, the citizen participation is a fundamental vector for defining the nature of the media corporation's public service. As stated in the Report *Current Situation and Trends in Public Broadcasting in Europe*, coordinated by Francisco Campos Freire for FORTA in 2016, the social networks have led to a transformation of the media, where the new radio and TV must be based on interactivity between the medium and the user, in order to break with the traditional passive role of the viewer. It should be remembered that social networks are a valuable tool for getting to know the audience better, and that the management of social networks in a RTVP should serve to

“encourage conversation” with citizens. As Campos warns in his report, “the obsession with increasing the number of followers on the networks eclipses their true purpose: interactivity” and, in this area, much remains to be done.

1.4. Participation and co-creation: for real, full and genuine participation

The conventional media are thus witnessing an acceleration of cultural change whereby younger audiences are demanding greater interactivity from the media, which they usually channel through social networks. Overcoming this process means that media corporations face a challenge of reorganising and assuming a transformation of their role at three levels: as institutions, in the field of professional practice and with respect to the type of content they have to produce (VAN DIJCK & POELL 2015). Traditional media need to attract attention and find ways to accommodate the audiovisual production of millions of citizens. In this context, the prosumer concept has long been increasing its relevance in complex perspectives (VAN DIJCK 2009) with respect to its different roles in the media context and also progressively increasing the value of its activity.

2. Methodology and objectives

This research is part of the Research Project, “Citizen Participation and Public Media. Analysis of audiovisual co-creation experiences in Spain and Europe (PARCICOM)”, with code RTI2018-093649-B-I00, with which we propose determining know-how that can be useful for the people in charge of the PM, and even for privately owned media corporations and production companies, that will allow for clarifying how citizen participation is articulated in the Spanish and European context, including the elaboration of a catalogue of good practices, recommendations, work routines and tools that will be helpful in expanding and increasing citizen participation in public media. Basically, this is a strategy that aims to re-legitimise the public media, in a context marked by the major crisis that the public media are suffering, on a global scale.

The methodology used in this article is based on use of qualitative research techniques that have been widely tested in the field of sociology, such as that of the Focus Groups, combined with the choice of group members using the tool of semi-standardised or flexible interviews with experts. Focus Groups create opportunities for co-construction of meaning (LUNT & LIVINGSTONE 1993) and have been widely used in research in the fields of marketing (KVALE & BRINKMAN 2009), and also in political science since the 1990s in both the US and the UK (WRING 2007). Using this group tool also favours interaction in response to the questions posed by the researcher leading the group (MORGAN 1993). The data collection took place on 4 November 2019 during the celebration of the “1st Conference on Digital Culture, Citizen Participation and Public Media”, held

in the Menador building in the city of Castellón, headquarters of the Universitat Jaume I in the centre of the city, and was distributed in three simultaneous and parallel sessions in which the different participants were divided into three working groups: academics from the field of university research and teaching, professionals from the fields of communication and audiovisual and experts from the field of social dynamization.

The Audenhove and Donders classification (2019) was taken into account to elect the members of the groups among elite interviewees, who may offer more biased perspectives, and who are or have been responsible in different degrees for departments related to participation in regulatory bodies or various Spanish public media corporations, and on the other hand, professional or university experts dissociated from direct management, who would correspond to more neutral sources of information. The election of experts, which include renowned specialists from the academic world, points to their responsibility as part of the Habermasian public sphere as authoritative voices (VAN DEN BULCK, PUPPIS, DONDEERS & VAN AUDENHOVE 2019).

In the three groups, the same open-ended questionnaire of questions was posed, coordinated in sessions moderated by members of the PARCICOM research group, which were finally aggregated into two blocks:

1. What is meant by participation in the context in relation to public media? Can participation be considered an essential part of public service communication?
2. What space do new platforms and technological giants leave to public media to continue to be relevant? Examples of good practice in projects with citizen participation in the media. Examples of success stories.

The sessions were recorded and later transcribed for processing. Individual beliefs, attitudes and expressions articulated in a group context (LUNT 2019) were considered as basic units of the research and were grouped according to the preconceived order of the initial questions posed.

3. Discussion and results

In the analysis of the transcriptions of the different Focus Groups, numerous coincidences can be observed on some subjects, and dissensions on others. For example, with regard to considering participation as an essential part of public communication service, there is general agreement among the different participants, regardless of their affiliation to one table or another, but with nuances in the development of the idea: at the professionals’ table, with representatives of positions with direct responsibility for participation management within public media corporations, allusions were made to the regulatory framework, and how it has changed in recent times, and specifically referring to the current À Punt, with respect to the previous Radiotelevisió Valenciana (RTVV). Reference was also made to the Citizenship Councils, as bodies considered

Table 1. Members of the focus groups

Focus Group 1. Academics	
Luis A. Albornoz	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad Carlos III.
Emili Prado	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
Juan Carlos Miguel de Bustos	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad del País Vasco.
Maria Lamuedra	Full Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Sevilla.
Ana López Cepeda	Full Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.
Carmen Caffarel	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.
Manuel Ángel Vázquez Medel	Professor of Literary Theory. Universidad de Sevilla.
Francisco Campos Freire	Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Santiago de Compostela
Javier Marzal Felici	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universitat Jaume I. Moderator
Teresa Sorolla Romero	Assistant Professor PhD in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universitat Jaume I. Moderator
Focus Group 2. Professionals	
Albert Arnau (APM)	Head of Innovation at À Punt Mèdia.
Alex Badía	Barret Films Production Company
Juan Miguel Aguado	Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Murcia. Former Director of RTVM
Paloma Mora	Manager of TVOn Producciones
Lontzo Sainz	Director of Digital Transformation at EITB
Juli Esteve	Info TV Manager
Carlos Bazarra	Editor of the EFE Agency in the Valencian Community
Magdalena Rodríguez Fernández	Part-time Professor Doctor of Marketing and Market Research. Universidad de A Coruña. Moderator.
Carlos López Olano	Assistant Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad de Valencia. Moderator
Focus Group 3. Social Dynamization	
Albert Vicent	Head of Social Outreach of À Punt Mèdia.
José Ignacio Pastor	President of the Association for Citizenship and Communication (ACICOM)
Alejandro Perales	Association of Communication Users (ACU)
Julia Sevilla Merino	President of the Consell de la Ciutadania
Ximo Montañés	Director of the Centre for Training, Innovation and Expressive-Artistic Educational Resources of the Valencian Community
Giovanna Ribes	President of the Association of Valencian Audiovisual Producers (PAV)
Fernando Vilar	Member representing the Valencian Universities at the Consell de la Ciutadania
Carles López Cerezuela	President Ciutadania in Xarxa
Clide Rodríguez Vázquez	Assistant Professor of Marketing and Market Research. Universidad de A Coruña. Moderator.
José Martínez Sáez	Collaborating Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad Cardenal Herrera-CEU. Moderator.

Source: Authors.

important in ensuring the implementation and extension of citizen participation, and it was recalled that despite being provided for in various laws in Spain, advisory councils were never set up, which were supposed to ensure participation and the right of access.

In contrast, from the academic perspective, the phenomenon of citizen participation was also framed as essential in the context of public service media, which must be linked to the Habermasian concept that relates it to democratic quality, although its character as a “wild card”, “talisman” or “emerging value” was also highlighted. However, it was made clear that participation only really has a chance of building alternative discourses to those generated by the communication system if citizens are capable of controlling everything from creation to dissemination and, of course, if they manage to connect with the public to transmit their messages *en masse*. Public media corporations must be able to generate a citizenship that feels recognised as such and that feels its voice or voices are recognised. Other participants called for a more holistic conception of the concept, establishing a ladder of participation, including different degrees, and going beyond governance issues. Democratic involvement is important, and goes beyond the so-called representative governance, i.e. the Hearing and Advisory Boards. At this academic table, unlike the professional one, these bodies were described as absolutely bureaucratic, obsolete and unrepresentative. On the other hand, it warned of the risk of participation becoming hyperparticipation, with a neutralising effect on the messages, highlighting the principle of “enantiodromia”, which arises when a reality is transformed into its opposite. In other words, that the phenomenon known and conveniently studied in social networks is repeated, that massification of information can become noise that, in the end, prevents perception of a coherent and balanced message.

Also for the social promoters, pedagogy is intimately related to the exercise of participation, and it was highlighted that the most difficult thing is the how, and not the what. It was criticised that the Spanish educational system does not favour participation, which makes it exceedingly difficult for citizens to become broadcasters and participate normally in the public media. There is a lack of tools for collaborative and cooperative work. This group also expressed concern that participation should be understood simply as giving a voice to groups that have little to do with democratic quality and the public sphere, and asked to leave behind a bucolic image of participation, highlighting the important role as a mediator that the associative world can play, which in Spain is underdeveloped.

3.1 Participation and public media in the platform era

The second block of questions specifically asked about the space that new platforms and technological giants leave to public media to remain relevant. The participation concept was not mentioned in the questions, although it obviously forms part of the context as the Focus Groups take place in academic conferences dedicated to the issue. Thus, all the participating

groups indicated that this is one of the advantages that public corporations must develop in order to continue to be competitive. Among the academics, the false appearance of participation offered by platforms such as *Netflix*, *Amazon Prime Video* or *Disney+* was especially highlighted, in which apparently each one chooses what they want, to make an alternative proposal to programming television, linear television, and instead, what they have done is a practice that has been evolving towards replacing linear television, becoming traditional television macro entities. Also, several researchers agreed that if today a public television were to be made, it would possibly have the form of a platform, rather than a conventional radio and television, which responds to a historical tradition inserted in the European democratic culture. The space left for public television by the platforms was defined as very small but must be vehemently claimed.

At the professionals’ table, some participants said that in the field of fiction production the battle against platforms is lost: “When we move and innovate, the technological giants have already done this a hundred times. What is the way out for us? We can create from closeness, because we are public media.” Proximity, live broadcasts (of cultural and sporting events), debates, etc., were proposed as alternatives, as events that interest the audience and in which the large platforms cannot compete. Concepts such as niche, proximity, identity and closeness were repeated many times.

For several of the social promoters, the most direct solution to the asphyxiation that the public corporations risk suffering is through proximity, broadcasts, debates rooted in the territory and educational content.

3.2 Examples of public participation good practices in the public media

With regard to the second question raised in the block on examples of good practice in audiovisual programmes and content with citizen participation in the media, several success stories were cited, especially the professionals, who used their personal background to identify these cases, which is to be expected given their recognised elite nature, which conditions a biased viewpoint foreseen beforehand to their participation in the Focus Group. For example, the representatives from À Punt cited what they considered to be examples of good use, such as in *La Colla*,¹ the children’s and youth platform, with a lot of participation from the educational community. They also gave the example of *Una habitació propia*,² which they defined as 360 transmedia content since it includes Facebook live when the programme ends. On the other hand, they also acknowledged the failure of other initiatives such as the programme *A tu què t’importa*,³ which, in some chapters, tried to encourage ordinary citizens to ask the different candidates for the 2019 elections questions, through social networks, but which did not get a good response from the audience.

An initiative of EITB, the radio station called *Gaztea*,⁴ was also vindicated. This is a formula radio station aimed at a

young audience that is phenomenally successful in the Basque Country, as it is above traditional stations such as Los 40 Principales. In this brand, specific content is being created for different media (especially for Instagram) with a large part of the content being ludic that works very well with a young audience (with filters, stickers, challenges, etc.).

In the professionals Focus Group some content creators highlighted what they considered to be paradoxes. For example, the initiative *O responsables*,⁵ which began as an innovative and exemplary interactive and multimedia web that claimed justice in the case of the Valencia Metro accident in July 2006, experienced the most powerful moment of citizen participation, when it had the media support of the successful and influential programme *Salvados* by Jordi Évole in *La Sexta*, broadcast on 23 April 2013. From that explosion of information after the linear broadcast of the programme, they highlighted the importance of physical contact, the Friday concentrations in the Plaza de la Virgen in Valencia, which were filled for months and which caused a social phenomenon of participation that also greatly infected the social networks.

In the social promoters group negative examples were given of how sometimes good intentions can fail in the attempt to promote participation: in an experience of creation with a webseries for adolescents in the Casal Jove in Puerto de Sagunto (Valencia), the young people had to take part in all the phases of the creation process, from definition of the characters and the story, writing of the content, performance, editing and socialisation. It was considered an absolute failure, as there was a lack of adequate previous audiovisual literacy among the participants in order to achieve any result.

In the academics' Focus Group, the participatory process of EITB's renewal was highlighted as being exemplary on paper. This renewal was carried out in three phases: the first consisted of a consultation with the Basque citizens, in which quantitative and qualitative studies were carried out; in the second, discussion groups were organised to gather information from professionals, trade union organisations, public institutions such as the Basque Language Academy, civil society associations, etc. Finally, a survey was carried out with the citizens to find out their opinion on different issues related to Basque public RTV, among others, on its financing, raising the issue of the royalty, a matter that even university students of communication are unaware of.

4. Some conclusions

The "citizen participation" concept is a multi-dimensional notion, affecting a wide range of perspectives of approach, including the legal framework, media governance, technology, economy, political framework, media economy, political model, social and cultural development. From the study carried out, we believe it is appropriate to highlight the following aspects:

- Need to claim participation as a core value of public media

(HUTCHINSON 2015; GÓMEZ-DOMÍNGUEZ 2018), to add to the six values that the EBU has so far established, namely universality, independence, excellence, diversity, accountability and innovation. At this stage of the debate, we believe that citizen participation in PM should be considered as another essential value, the complex nature of which has yet to be defined, in all its breadth.

- It is considered necessary to emphasise that participation is a tool that can contribute to promoting authentic audiovisual diversity (SERVAES 1961; ALBORNOZ & GARCÍA LEIVA 2017).
- Need to deepen the study of the citizen participation concept. The Focus Groups have allowed us to detect the existence of important gaps in the definition of this notion in the public media context. There is an urgent need to define issues such as: conditions for talking about citizen participation in PM; definition or establishment of a scale of degrees of participation; etc.
- It is urgent to identify successful experiences of citizen participation in the public media. Future empirical analyses can be extremely useful for recognition of good practices, in short, to distinguish between *empowering* experiences, as opposed to other forms of participation that can be described as "pseudo-participation".
- It will be necessary to define a model for analysing citizen participation experiences in order to determine how they can be qualified as successful, i.e. what requirements these experiences must meet in order to be qualified in this way. In recent years, research has been carried out on case studies, which we consider to be truly relevant (BERGILLOS 2015; VANHAECHT 2019; ANDERSEN & SUNDET 2019).

Public radio and television corporations have the challenge and opportunity to intensify the fulfilment of their social communication objectives through more direct citizen participation. In this scenario the introduction of the concept of co-creation acquires a growing interest. The origin and introduction of this concept is considered from the industry and it is extending to multiple environments in the consultancy, design and cultural fields. Likewise, there is a main thematic division in the intentionality of the initiatives that are protected by this concept, as a way to achieve social objectives, or as an opportunity for companies to converge with the needs of their clients by working with them (SAN CORNELIO & GÓMEZ CRUZ 2014).

The evolution of the co-creation concept has been concentrated precisely in the vision of creation and circulation of media content (BANKS & DEUZE 2009). Thus, co-creation has become one of the references for innovation in the production of audiovisual content linked to an axis of generation of greater commitment to users who become producers. Co-creation of audiovisual content is therefore proposed as an opportunity with great potential for loyalty and creation of more agile formats consistent with the social media scenario (HWANG & HOLTZMAN 2012; RODRÍGUEZ-VÁZQUEZ, LAGO-VÁZQUEZ & DIREITO-

REBOLLAL 2017; WALVAART, VAN DEN BULCK & DHOEST 2017). In this context, it should be taken into account that the consumption of content is carried out in a mobile media environment, which also conditions them (SCOLARI, AGUADO & FEIJOO 2012; SØRENSEN 2016; AGUADO, MARTÍNEZ & CAÑETE 2017).

In line with what different authors have pointed out (FUCHS 2013; CARPENTIER & DAHLGREN 2013; CARPENTIER 2014), real, authentic and full participation is only possible if a communication model is imposed, in the environment of public media, in which there is a determined commitment to empowering citizens, and this inevitably involves education-communication. Literacy, so that the spectators stop being passive, and are no longer just an audience or an audience, but see naturally that they have in their hands the possibility of participating through their own audiovisual creativity. For this to happen, we believe that not only is freedom of expression enough, but more importantly “freedom of thought”, as the professor José Luis Sampedro proclaimed.

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Notes

1. Name of the children’s club of the new public media À Punt. Available at <<https://apuntmedia.es/va/la-colla>> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]
2. Literary divulgation programme that has diffusion in À Punt, with a lot of repercussion in social networks. Available at: <<https://apuntmedia.es/va/a-la-carta/programes/escoltat-en-la-radio/una-habitacio-propia>> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]
3. This is an informative and documentary programme that has travelled around the regions of the Valencian Community to get to know people and life stories in the first person, through questions posed to citizens, and with a transmedia approach. Available at: <<https://apuntmedia.es/va/a-la-carta/programes/exclusiu-en-linia/a-tu-que-t'importa>> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]
4. Available at: <<https://www.eitb.eus/eu/gaztea>> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]

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The RTVE audience Ombudsman as a mediator in the resolution of complaints about the children's channel Clan (2010-2015)

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Abstract

Television is one of the agents in children's informal education. The child audience is one of the most vulnerable targets to the impacts of television, hence the family is key to their protection. Parents intervene in educating their children as television viewers and therefore exercise their right to complain to the media Ombudsman. The aim of this article is to analyse the assessments made by RTVE public service's Interactive Media Viewer, Listener and User Ombudsman in response to the complaints lodged about the children's channel Clan.

Keywords

Television; media ombudsman; children's audiences; audiovisual content; children; RTVE.

Resum

La televisió és un dels agents de l'educació informal dels menors d'edat. L'audiència infantil és un dels targets més vulnerables als impactes televisius; per aquest motiu, la família és clau en la seva protecció. Els progenitors intervenen en la formació dels fills i les filles com a teleespectadors i teleespectadores i per això exerceixen el seu dret a reclamar davant el Defensor o la Defensora de l'audiència d'un mitjà. L'objectiu d'aquest article és analitzar les valoracions que el Defensor o Defensora de l'Espectador, de l'Oient, de l'Usuari de Mitjans Interactius del servei públic RTVE realitza davant les reclamacions presentades sobre el canal infantil Clan.

Paraules clau

Televisió, Defensor/a de l'audiència, audiències infantils, continguts audiovisuals, menors d'edat, RTVE.

1. Introduction

Television is the medium most consumed by the Spanish population as a whole and the one with the highest penetration in Spanish society (AIMC - SPANISH MEDIA RESEARCH ASSOCIATION 2020). In the case of children's audiences, "it continues to be the medium with which children at an early age share the most leisure time" (MARTA-LAZO 2008a) which has led to a significant increase in the total amount of the television offer aimed at children (BUCKINGHAM 2000). 99% of children watch television content and 80% watch it daily (AIMC 2018). Specifically, the latest *Kids TV Report* (2019) states that in Great Britain, Italy, Spain, France and Italy average daily consumption is 1 hour and 39 minutes for children under 15. It should be noted that the children's audience is a very demanding and selective target that seeks interesting content, regardless of the channel that broadcasts it (GÓMEZ-AMIGO 2015), but it is also more vulnerable to the media impacts coming from television, as it is a trainee

and evolving audience whose personality is yet to be shaped (LÓPEZ-SÁNCHEZ *et al.* 2010).

Today, the relevance of television as a representation of cultural products, values and patterns of behaviour adopted by society is undeniable (DE CASAS-MORENO *et al.* 2016) and, above all, in children. However, although scholars of childhood seem to have forgotten the role of the media in the lives of children and adolescents (CASAS *et al.* 2007), there has been a dramatic increase in research on the effects of television on children (DEL RÍO 1997).

Most of this early research came from the Anglo-Saxon world where the relationship between television and children was addressed in depth. In the Spanish and Latin American sphere, the contributions of Gallardo-Camacho *et al.* (2020), Feijoo-Fernández and García-González (2016), Gómez-Amigo (2015), Marta-Lazo *et al.* (2015), Paz-Rebollo and Martínez-Valero (2014), Ortiz *et al.* (2013), Fernández-Gómez (2012), Mateos-Pérez (2012), Fernández-Martínez and López de

Ayala (2011), Callejo (2008, 2004), García-Galera (2008), Núñez-Ladeveze (2007), Pérez-Ornia and Núñez-Ladeveze (2006), Marta-Lazo (2005, 2007, 2008a, 2008b), García-Matilla *et al.* (2005), Poyatos-Fernández and Tur-Viñes (2005), García-Matilla (2003), Buckingham (2000), Bringué and De los Ángeles (2000), Del Río (1997), Orozco-Gómez (1996, 1993), among many others.

Television, like other media, is an agent children's informal education because it influences what children learn and how they learn (Licerias 2014). Children and young people are one of the most sensitive and vulnerable audiences to the influence of television content and therefore need tools that increase their critical capacity when dealing with such media messages. Critical thinking should be encouraged in these first stages of learning, since children are not passive receivers, but the stage of activity they show is related to their degree of 'audiovisual competence' or the learning they have received to know the languages of the medium, the essential meanings of the messages, the values and counter-values they hide and the real purpose they intend to achieve (MARTA-LAZO 2008b).

In this context, the family is the natural group to watch television (OROZCO-GÓMEZ 1996) and "becomes recognised as one of the main institutions of mediation in the action of children's television consumption" (BRINGUÉ & DE LOS ÁNGELES 2000: 42). Apart from other members of the family environment, parents will have a privileged place in the context of children's television reception. The parent-child-television relationship, as well as the modes of mediation (patterns of interrelation between parents and children on television) have been analysed in depth in previous studies (LLOPIS 2004; TORRECILLAS-LACAVE 2013, 2012).

Regarding the role that parents should play, Ferrés (2005) considers that they should take responsibility and assume the role they should play in training their children as television viewers and, to this end, they should denounce and demand those who hold and exercise authority. Therefore, this research is directed towards studying how parents exercise their right to complain to the media ombudsman, one of the mechanisms that, through their actions, contributes to making audiences literate (HERRERA 2005, 2008; MACÍA-BARBER 2006).

2. The figure of the media ombudsman

Media ombudsmen intervene in the critical formation of the media by explaining the ethical obligations of the media, the rights of the audience and by exposing the media's performance on issues that may conflict with some of their ethical duties (Villanueva 2011).

The background to the figure of the ombudsman can be found in the Swedish word, a term which referred to a representative, mediator or public prosecutor and which is now used internationally. The birth of the figure of media ombudsmen, in the current sense, is linked to the written media, specifically the

American press (*The Courier Journal* and *The Louisville Times*) and the Japanese press (*Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*) (Villanueva 2011; Herrera 2005; Dvorkin 2005).

In Spain, it was the newspaper *El País* that appointed the first reader's ombudsman in 1985 (González-Esteban *et al.* 2011). Worth mentioning is the initiative of the appointment of a viewer's ombudsman by Canal Sur Televisión in 1995, as it was the first and only European initiative of self-regulation of a television channel that existed up to that moment (SÁNCHEZ-APPELLÁNIZ 1996).

In general, the ombudsman's main function is to ensure the correct deontological functioning of the activity of a medium in order to serve as an intermediary between receivers and broadcasters (HERRERA 2008). It is a unipersonal self-regulation mechanism of the media.

The ombudsman also has a twofold training task: on the one hand, he or she must educate the audience on critical media consumption and, on the other, he or she must also contribute to the training of journalists, so that their products are of increasingly higher quality (HERRERA 2008). In this way, it establishes a two-way dialogue, with the audience and with the media itself, facilitating feedback between the two. In the exercise of his or her function, he or she allows the public to know the point of view of his or her receivers and to improve communication practices and processes developed daily (VELÁSQUEZ-OSSA & CADAVIZ-ÁLVAREZ 2002).

Although each media ombudsman establishes his or her own working dynamics depending on the medium, they all agree that their fundamental tasks are to receive complaints and to be a channel for dialogue (AZNAR 1999). The duration of the position, the origin, the assignment system, the dedication, the way of working, the activity record and the proximity to the rest of the journalists vary (HERRERA & ZETA 2005).

In the Spanish environment, which we are dealing with here, scientific literature has analysed the creation of this figure (SÁNCHEZ-APPELLÁNIZ 1996; HERRERA 2008) and the requirements that he or she should fulfil (MACÍA-BARBER 2006). Research has also been carried out on the performance of the ombudsmen in the international environment (HERRERA 2005), the case of Latin America (HERRERA & ZETA 2005) or countries such as Portugal (OLIVEIRA 2005, 2017), Peru (ZETA 2005), Brazil (BERABA 2005); comparative studies: Portugal and Brazil (PEREIRA *et al.* 2016; OLIVEIRA & OLIVEIRA 2014) or among the public broadcasting services of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Austria, Ireland, Switzerland and Italy (PALAU-SAMPÍO 2017); and in the experiences of specific channels such as the cases of the Caracol channel (PÉREZ 2005) or the RCN channel (CEPEDA 2005) in Colombia.

3. Research objectives and methodology

This article is aimed at analysing the assessments made by RTVE's Interactive Media Viewer, Listener and User Ombudsman

in response to the complaints and claims made by the parents of children regarding the children's channel Clan.

Clan, created in 2005, is the thematic channel for children and young people on Spanish public television with "a wide range of education for pre-school children, reduced for schoolchildren and lacking for adolescents" (FERNÁNDEZ-GÓMEZ 2012). It was the first thematic channel exclusively for children that emerged on the Spanish television scene as a free children's channel (MORENO-RODRÍGUEZ 2009). Among its television programming, entertainment stands out (it broadcasts 63.33% cartoons and 20% fiction series) (MELGAREJO & RODRÍGUEZ 2011). The choice of the Clan channel was determined by the fact that it was the children's thematic channel with the highest screen share in Spain during the period studied, as can be seen in Table 1.

We selected the Corporación RTVE because it is where the most research initiatives have emerged for the construction of television discourses, in favour of children, which allow for establishing action guidelines for child television consumption, detecting screen risks for children and constructing a positive discourse on childhood (ORTIZ *et al.* 2013). These initiatives were reflected in the organisation of various forums (National Forum "Family Environment, Children, Education and Television" 2004; National Forum "Children, Television and Education" 2005, among others) and various publications (Children's Television Programming: Priority Orientations and Contents or Educating the Look, published by the Official Institute of Radio and Television and Grupo Comunicar). On the other hand, on 21 July 2010 the Board of Directors of RTVE approved the 'Code of self-regulation for the defence of the rights of children in audiovisual, related, interactive and online information contents of the RTVE Corporation', in line with the 'Code of self-regulation of television contents and children', approved by TVE and other commercial channels (Antena 3 TV, Telecinco and Canal Plus) on 9 December 2004 and signed in collaboration with the Government. The aim was to reflect a greater commitment on the part of television channels to comply with current regulations and to promote an audiovisual offer that is suitable for children (GARCÍA-GALERA 2008).¹ The

Ombudsman's office is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Code.

In this research, of a descriptive-exploratory nature, a quantitative and qualitative analysis will be made of the resolution of the complaints and suggestions presented in this office during the period 2010-2015, based on the quarterly reports published by RTVE on its website. This article is the beginning of a research with a longer timespan that covers up to the present time. The period 2010-2015 was analysed in this first phase, while in a second phase, still in progress, the period 2016-2020 is dealt with. 2010 was selected because it was the date when the analogue switch-off took place and with it multiplication of channels and fragmentation of the audience, derived from the first year of digital television in Spain and because, as a consequence of DTT, the children's audience was again an interesting target (MARTA-LAZO *et al.* 2015). The consolidation of DTT in 2010 meant a shift in children's content to thematic channels although, as Feijoo and Garcia (2016) point out after analysing forty years (1970-2010) of children's television² in Spain, children's programming already had a declining presence in the programming grids of generalist channels, with series and cartoons (mainly foreign production), the main products programmed. Consequently, the main contents of children's media consumption are television fiction (cartoons, series and films) and, more specifically, cartoons (AIERBE-BARANDIARAN & OREGUI-GONZÁLEZ 2016).

The time frame of the first phase is triggered by the arrival of Netflix in Spain. This produced a new break in how we understand and consume television, since it "cancels out one of the premises of traditional television, which consists of the seriality of content, to encourage audience loyalty and thus obtain stability in advertising or subscription income" (IZQUIERDO-CASTILLO 2015: 822). In addition, the possibility of consuming without scheduled times and in a safe environment, due to parental control, is one of the great demands for family consumption of audiovisual content.

From a quantitative perspective, all the complaints filed in the office were recorded, selecting only those linked to the contents of

Table 1. Screen share of the main children's thematic channels in Spain during the period 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Boing (Mediaset España)	0,2%	1,1%	1,7%	1,7%	1,7%	1,6%
Clan (RTVE)	3,2%	3,2%	2,5%	2,4%	2,3%	2,4%
Disney Channel (Net TV)	2,1%	1,7%	1,6%	1,5%	1,5%	1,4%

Source: Barlovento Comunicación. In-house document.

the Clan channel, while from the qualitative dimension the facts claimed were identified and categorised thematically according to the main fields of action of the ombudsman. The categories were created based on the previous theoretical research framework from the previous studies, the Self-Regulation Code itself and also based on the thematic similarities of the claims presented.

The main material for this research was, first, the quarterly reports published by the ombudsman's office on compliance with the Code for the Protection of Children and Young People and, secondly, the Corporation's annual reports on fulfilment of its function as a public service, which are available on the RTVE website. An analysis table was created to process the data, which included the category, the event claimed, the date of the claim, the ombudsman's response and the corrective measures (if any).

4. The creation of the figure of the media ombudsman in RTVE

On 2 February 2006, the Television Viewer and Radio Listener Ombudsman office was created³ by resolution of the General Directorate, under the direction of Carmen Caffarel. The implementation of this figure, as stated by Macía-Barber (2006: 48), had a twofold objective: "on the one hand, to contribute to achieving the public service goals that the Group has been entrusted with and, on the other, to serve the citizen, as a television viewer or radio listener, with greater levels of attention, transparency and efficiency". On 10 February, the office began operating and in the first week received 200 complaints (GONZÁLEZ & TENREIRO 2006). The journalist and professor, Manuel Alonso Erasquin, held the position during the first two years.

The following year, on 29 November 2007, the Board of Directors of Corporación RTVE agreed to create the institution of RTVE's Interactive Media Viewer, Listener and User Ombudsman and to approve its statute. This statute states that its function "consists of defending the right of citizens to truthful, independent and plural information and to dignified and participative entertainment, in accordance with the public service function that Law 17/2006 of 5 June entrusts to RTVE" (RTVE 2007). Among its main objectives was to promote awareness of the rights of citizens as users of the media and to stimulate a critical attitude towards them. The statute explains that the appointment of the ombudsman is made by the President of RTVE, from among professionals of the public corporation, for a period of three years, renewable for one more term. The ombudsman organically reports to the President of the corporation, although the statute states that he does not receive any internal or external guidelines on his or her work.

The job of media ombudsman of a public service⁴ such as RTVE makes the creation of its figure more relevant by contributing to one of the two main purposes of any public television service, as stated by Ortiz *et al.* (2013): education and training of critical citizenship.

4.1. Way of working and channels of participation

As stated in its statute, the ombudsman's main job is to receive complaints, claims or suggestions from television viewers, radio listeners and users of interactive media for processing by the responsible departments or areas and to provide a response within a maximum of thirty days. This activity is carried out at the request of such complaints, although the ombudsman may also intervene *ex officio* if he or she deems it appropriate.

Any citizen, indicating his or her name, surname(s), ID card number and address or telephone number, may make claims, complaints and suggestions (via e-mail, ordinary mail, fax or the form on the *rtve.es* website itself) within one month of the

Table 2. Names of RTVE media ombudsmen from the creation of the office to the present

Name	Mandate	Name of the figure	Director of the Public Entity/ President of the Corporation
Manuel Alonso Erasquin	February 2006- March 2008	Television Viewer and Radio Listener Ombudsman	Carmen Caffarel
Elena Sánchez Caballero	March 2008- April 2014	RTVE's Interactive Media Viewer, Listener and User Ombudsman	Luis Fernández Fernández Alberto Oliart Saussol Leopoldo González-Echenique
Carmen Sastre Bellas	April 2014- November 2014		Leopoldo González-Echenique José Antonio Sánchez Domínguez
Ángel Nodal	November 2014- Now		José Antonio Sánchez Domínguez Rosa María Mateo

Source: RTVE. In-house document.

issue of the programme that is the subject of the claim. All complaints and suggestions are acknowledged, but only those that fall within the competence of the viewer’s ombudsman are processed.

The ombudsman also has his or her own monthly slot, lasting thirty minutes, broadcast on channel La 2 on the last Sunday of each month and available on the RTVE website. In the programme RTVE *responde* the ombudsman tries to respond to some of the audience’s concerns and questions, resolves some complaints and attempts to bring the Corporation closer to the viewers by broadcasting videos about the different divisions of the Corporation. In addition, viewers can also send their video complaints to the programme by recording their own videos with the complaints they consider.

Every three months, the Ombudsman’s office publishes a report on its performance on the Corporation’s website and, on an annual basis, submits a report to the General Directorate. However, not all complaints made by the public are available or accessible, only those included in the report.

The procedure for receiving a complaint or claim is to contact the relevant responsible division or the channel manager to pass on the claim. From this higher level, the content is assessed again and, subsequently, a decision is made on the content that is sent to the ombudsman’s office, which will communicate it to the hearing.

5. Analysis of the results

Table 3 shows all the complaints received on compliance with the Child and Youth Protection Code at the Ombudsman’s office during the period in question. From there, those that referred exclusively to the Clan channel have been selected.

Depending on the number of complaints and the relevance given to some of them by the office, several categories have been established in relation to the main thematic areas of action of the Ombudsman: a) children’s content, b) recommended viewing ages and c) surreptitious advertising, d) time distribution of content and e) social behaviour.

Although they do not affect the Clan channel it is worth noting the increase in complaints experienced in 2012 and 2013 about the same content: the broadcasting of bullfights by channel TVE-1 in the afternoon.

a. The contents

The violent nature of the content broadcast is the main reason for the complaints received during the six years analysed.

In the vast majority of cases, parents rate certain cartoon series as violent (inciting quarrelling or fighting), an assessment that is not shared by the ombudsman’s office. *Marco Antonio, Cachorros, Gormiti* or *Código Lyoko* are some of the audiovisual products that receive the most complaints due to their excessive violence when considered to be in breach of the self-regulation code. However, the ombudsman does not find violent indicators, that is, the set of actions carried out by characters that imply physical or psychological damage and that lead them to be removed from their programming. The office explains that all the products broadcast on this channel are selected for the final viewer (the child) and are endorsed by pedagogues and educational researchers.

These cartoon series are considered to have rhythm, action, adventure and music, but not violence. On many occasions it is argued that parents, by viewing only a fragment of the content and not the entire episode, do not know how to interpret the true meaning or the codes used when preparing such content, hence they may be confused with violent content.

We also note the difficulty of quantifying the elements qualified by the parents as violent, since most of the complaints are too generic to specify particular elements to be assessed by the office. That is why they continually ask for greater specificity in the complaints in order to improve reflection and analysis. This can happen because, as Aran-Ramspott and Rodrigo-Alsina (2012) point out, the study of violence in the media arises from an initial difficulty: the delimitation of the very notion of violence.

The *SpongeBob* series is noteworthy for its relevance to the set of claims and for the relevance given to it by the ombudsmen themselves. Multiple complaints have been received about

Table 3. Complaints about the Child and Youth Protection Code received by the ombudsman’s office (2010-2015)

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	TC	CC	TC	CC	TC	CC	TT	CC	TC	CC	TC	CC
1st Quarter			49	32	72	16	102	NA	42	10	63	28
2nd Quarter	14	8	36	25	240	22	436	NA	54	11	48	N.D.
3rd Quarter			29	23	1.340	12	55	NA	223	15	N.D.	N.D.
4th Quarter	36	22	37	18	29	6	64	NA	118	13	N.D.	3

TC: total claims eclamaciones totales; CC:Clan-related claims; NA: not available)

Source: RTVE. In-house document.

this series because of the shouting of the characters and the violence that emanates from the series. For example, in 2011, a viewer asked for the series to be withdrawn for reasons against public health outlined in an investigative article. The article he mentioned, signed by Lillard & Peterson, was entitled “The Immediate Impact of Different Types of Television on Young Children’s Executive Function” and was published in *Pediatrics*, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In this article, a comparative experiment was carried out on how three activities (1) viewing *SpongeBob* as an example of content with movement; (2) viewing the *Caillou* series as slower content; (3) drawing, influenced the executive functions (self-regulation or memory) of four-year-olds. The experiment was conducted with a group of 60 children, divided into three groups, who were assigned one of the three activities. The findings showed that children who watched the fast-paced cartoons performed significantly worse on executive function tasks than children in the other two groups. It was concluded that nine minutes of watching this content had an immediate negative effect on the executive function of the four-year-olds.

The ombudsman, at the time Elena Sánchez, considered that *SpongeBob* had been used “as an example of dynamic and fast content (like many other cartoons), as it is well known for its great international diffusion, to compare the effects produced by the exhibition in some functions such as self-regulation and memory, with respect to slower content such as *Caillou* or the activity of drawing” (RTVE 2011). According to the ombudsman, the aim of the experiment was not to carry out an analysis of the potential effects of *SpongeBob*, but of a dynamic content versus a calmer one. She also pointed out that the size of the sample made it impossible to extrapolate the data or make generalisations. In any case, the ombudsman said that the series was viewed again and no harmful elements were found, but only ‘friendship, action, rhythm, music and a lot of humour’ (RTVE 2011).

Another concern that emerges from the complaints submitted by parents shows a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, some complaints call for more informative content, and on the other hand, the lack of educational content in the channel is pointed out. In order to respond to both demands, the office requested the assessment of the Clan Director, who explained that the main objective of the channel was that “children have fun and at the same time learn social behaviour, values and habits with their favourite characters” (RTVE 2010), and therefore chose to programme educational and entertainment content. *Los Lunnis* and *Pocoyó* were mentioned as products that entertained children in the pre-school stage but also educated them by transmitting values of respect, equality or justice; *Caillou* or *Enermanos* as products that promoted care for the environment or *El mundo de Pocoyó* with its section *Let’s go Pocoyó* or *Dora la Exploradora* to promote learning English.

b. Recommended viewing ages

Corporación RTVE’s⁵ age classification of content is based on analysing the following four parameters: 1) social behaviour, 2) violence, 3) conflict and 4) sex. To which two more variables are added (social portrait and artistic integration and expression) for the classification of contents as especially recommended for children and for all audiences.

Some complaints requested a change in the classification of the contents according to the recommended ages.

Clan is a children’s channel with content aimed at different age groups (children and adolescents), which is why there are complaints about the broadcasting of content that is inappropriate for certain ages. Several complaints suggested the possibility of creating a new channel, so that one channel would be dedicated to children up to seven and another from seven onwards, imitating the BBC model with two channels: one for children under six (Cbeebies) and another for children from six to twelve (Cbbc). The office acknowledged that the BBC was a reference and that the channel aimed only at pre-school audience broadcast some series such as *Todo es Rosi*, *Peppa Pig* or *Pat the Postman*. However, the people in charge of the channel indicated that the multiplexes granted by the Ministry of Industry did not have space to offer two channels dedicated to children. This scenario is one of the reasons for offering programming aimed at all ages. For this reason, some parents proposed that all the channel’s content should be accompanied by a label indicating the age rating to prevent children from viewing content that is inappropriate for their age.⁶

Furthermore, many complaints insisted on pointing out the continuous repetition of the channel’s contents and the absence of new products. From the office it was highlighted that Clan is a thematic channel that continuously repeats content because it does not have enough television slots to cover all the hours of programming. The programming grid is configured according to the channel’s programming strategies but, usually, releases are scheduled for the afternoon and then repeated continuously.

c. Stealth advertising

Several complaints insisted that certain self-promotions (e.g. the *Gormiti* series of self-promotions with real images of toys) could be classified as stealth advertising. As recognised by the Ombudsman’s office, viewers “are not and do not have to be experts in advertising, so the presence of toys on the screen is automatically associated with conventional advertising insertion” (RTVE 2011). Despite eliminating broadcasting of commercial advertising derived from Law 8/2009, dated 28 August, on the financing of the Spanish Radio and Television Corporation, self-promotions of series and products derived from it are allowed, but it is recognized that they can generate confusion, especially in a particularly sensitive audience such as children.

The recommendation made by the channel is that the messages “should be clearly differentiated, either through image or through storytelling, from advertising to the use of commercial media, so that no confusion can arise in the viewer” (RTVE 2011).

d. Hourly distribution of contents

Some of the complaints filed showed disagreement with the time schedule of the contents, either because they were broadcast at a late hour or inappropriate for children. However, the office indicated that the people in charge of programming were those in charge of preparing the programming grids, to which the complaints submitted were referred. It is explained that they distribute the contents according to the audience and acceptance rates together with the uses of time of the Spanish population in order to satisfy the great majority.

e. Social behaviour

Several claims focused on the social behaviours of the characters in the *Winx Club* series. According to the claimants in this series they showed stereotypical female characters, misogynist behaviours, as well as the macho roles of some characters. The aesthetics and physiques of the protagonists were also considered “a model that can lead to anorexia” (RTVE 2011). The ombudsman’s response indicated that, on the one hand, positive elements (effort, friendship, achievement of collective objectives, etc.) were more important in this series than the presence of stereotypes. On the other hand, in relation to the physicality of the protagonists, it was stated that they are very stylised but that “the story makes it clear that it is a fantasy not a reality” (RTVE 2011).

The complaints also include concern about the language used by certain characters, which is inappropriate for children.

6. Discussion and conclusions

After analysing the complaints submitted to the RTVE’s interactive media viewer, listener and user ombudsman’s office, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Firstly, worthy of mention is parents’ constant concern about the violence observed in the audiovisual content consumed by their children. The potential negative uses of the viewing of television content considered as violent is the main reason for complaint, far beyond complaints about the inadequate vocabulary or the sexist roles adopted by some of the characters in the cartoon series.

Secondly, both parents and the office itself continually point to the BBC as a model for selecting and programming content for children. The division of children’s programming into two channels is highly rated by parents to ensure that children see content appropriate to their age. In this regard, and with a view to future research, it would be interesting to analyse the role

that the BBC, together with the regulator Ofcom, plays in the literacy of British children’s audiences.

Thirdly, the set of complaints received allows, from the figure of the ombudsman, to reflect on their content, attempting to make a criticism and internal dialogue. Furthermore, the presence of this figure allows the audience to become aware of some of the decisions taken regarding certain contents. This can contribute to improving the Corporation’s credibility and prestige.

Fourthly, the reports handled do not state that the ombudsman has acted *ex officio* in relation to the *Clan* channel,⁷ but rather that his or her actions derived from the parents’ complaints. During the period analysed, the main activity has been to respond to complaints and suggestions from children’s parents.

In short, the social function carried out by the ombudsman can be extracted analysing these reports, along with the risks children are exposed to. The parents pass on the complaints and suggestions to the office about the aspects that may be potentially harmful to the children. At home, it is also the parents or adults who are responsible for establishing criteria and/or filters for responsible media consumption. It would be necessary to know, therefore, the level of media literacy that they have in order to assess their function. As pointed out by Torrecillas-Lacabe (2012: 140) “the lack of protection of children at home in front of the television begins with the lack of adequate media literacy for parents (...)”. Hence, parents’ media literacy considerably determines the media education that children receive and their attitude towards the media as consumers of the future.

The current information society, which is multi-screen and hyper-connected, poses great and new challenges for the television system, making the contexts of use multiply, diversify and renew (PÉREZ-TORNERO 2008). In this new environment, media literacy processes take on greater relevance in order to awaken a critical spirit in citizens so that they demand sustainable communication based on the veracity of the messages and the rigour of information (DEL MORAL & VILLALUSTRE 2013). The generations of children, digital natives, will be prosumers who will participate, more than any other previous generation, in the media in an active and continuous way in a highly mediatized environment, hence the need to train them minimally. Establishing responsible consumer habits is a task that lies with various agents of formal and informal education; however, it was observed that, from the ombudsman’s office, no *ex officio* actions were carried out that contributed to this end.

In the second part of the research, currently underway, it will be possible to observe whether the concerns, complaints and suggestions of the parents have been altered or, on the contrary, are similar to those expressed during the years analysed. This will allow us to establish comparative and evolutionary analyses of the ombudsman’s actions in response to the parents’ complaints.

In future research, it will be necessary to determine whether the child and adolescent population is able to assess the

violation of their rights or not, as well as to adopt a critical stance on television content, as was confirmed in the study by Espinosa, Ochaíta and Gutiérrez (2014) in a sample of Spanish adolescents (12-18 years old).

Notes

1. The papers by Fernández-Martínez and López-de-Ayala (2011) or Ruiz-San-Román and Salguero-Montero (2008) on compliance with the code are noteworthy.
2. Another extremely interesting paper is that of Paz-Rebollo and Martínez-Valero (2014) on the formation of the first child and youth audience for television in Spain covering the decade 1958-68.
3. A previous precedent was the establishment of the figure of the Radio Listener's Ombudsman in RNE (1986).
4. It should be mentioned that at present the public television services of Extremadura, Catalonia and Andalusia have the figure of the Media Ombudsman.
5. The age rating is as follows: content for children, content not recommended for children under 7, content not recommended for children under 13 and content not recommended for children under 18.
6. In this regard, it is worth noting Ortiz-Sobrino, Fuente-Cobo and Martínez-Otero's paper (2015) on indicating content on the main Spanish television channels.
7. The ombudsman has acted ex officio as a result of content issued in TVE-1 considered unsuitable for children.

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Participation in Community Radio: a proposal for analysis based on the concepts of *symbolic resistance* and *media literacy*

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Abstract

Participation is one of the core features of community media. The contribution of these media projects is still relevant today as they enable a high level of involvement by their audiences, in particular by groups which have a low profile in the public sphere. This paper presents several case studies of participative content in community radio stations in the Catalan media space and addresses the concepts of symbolic resistance and media literacy as the basis for analysing them.

Keywords

Participation, involvement, community radio, symbolic resistance, media literacy.

Resum

La participació és una de les característiques fonamentals dels mitjans de comunicació ciutadans. L'aportació d'aquests projectes mediàtics continua essent rellevant en l'actualitat, atès que possibiliten un alt nivell d'implicació dels públics, especialment dels col·lectius poc visibles en l'esfera pública. Aquest article exposa diversos casos de continguts participatius en ràdios ciutadanes de l'espai català de comunicació i planteja la idoneïtat d'emmarcar-ne l'estudi a partir dels conceptes de resistència simbòlica i alfabetització mediàtica.

Paraules clau

Participació, implicació, ràdio ciutadana, resistència simbòlica, alfabetització mediàtica.

1. Introduction

The growing relevance of ideas such as *participation*, *engagement* and *community* associated with the media has led to renewed interest in academic research. The internet has extended the rationale of collaborative culture and gradually, and not without difficulties, media enterprises have taken it on board as an action strand, especially since the onset of the recession in 2008 (MASIP *et al.* 2015).

In the media, participation means the intervention of recipients in the production of content and decision-making in a way that alters the vertical and one-sided relationship between company, journalists and audience (PAULUSSEN *et al.* 2007). The spread of digital technologies has enabled an enormous increase in participatory channels as part of networked societies. Nonetheless, a quarter of a century after the first digital newspapers emerged (SALAVERRÍA 2019), researchers note the various kinds of constraints, which still shape participation in the media (BORGER *et al.* 2013; CRUZ-ÁLVAREZ & SUÁREZ-VILLEGAS 2012; MASIP & SUAU 2014).

The key role of participation has called for neologisms in academia to describe how audiences may have an impact. Two

of the most widespread are *prosumer* and *emirec*. Although both concepts were thought up in an era prior to the spread of the internet, they have been widely used in contemporary media research and often as synonyms, despite the fact that they stem from different theoretical approaches (ALONZO 2019) and entail different ways of addressing participation (APARICI & GARCÍA-MARÍN 2018). Likewise, Hamilton (2003) argues that participation in the media can be conceptualised from a one-dimensional perspective, assuming that there are well-defined roles of sender and receiver, or from a multidimensional one which takes into account the complexity of forms of intervention in media processes by an assortment of players who take on different roles; that is, it does not refer to closed categories of author-sender and audience-recipient but rather entails a relationship in which these positions are exchanged.

Alternative or third audiovisual sector are one of the main exponents of media participation (ATTON 2002). Even though over the last two decades there has been growing convergence between mainstream and alternative media in terms of practices and strategies (KENIX 2011), in the contemporary scenario alternative media still present more powerful forms of participation in terms of audience involvement (CARPENTIER,

DAHLGREN & PASQUALI 2014), especially in community media (RODRÍGUEZ 2010).

Research into alternative media began in the 1970s and has attracted growing interest in the media and communication sciences as a whole over the last twenty years (RODRÍGUEZ, FERRON & SHAMAS 2014: 13-14). It focuses on particular aspects of alternative media which have been largely studied from a conceptual, historical and legal standpoint (LEMA-BLANCO, RODRÍGUEZ-GÓMEZ & BARRANQUERO-CARRETERO 2016: 92; LEWIS 2008: 10), an issue of interest given the legislative complexity which has accompanied alternative media since their emergence (GARCÍA, REGUERO & SÁEZ 2011). By contrast, study of the contents of these media, the processes by which they are produced and the ways in which audience participation is moulded have received much less attention (ATTON 2008). Likewise, much academic research into alternative media uses a normative dimension when considering its subject-matter based on the premises that they are independent organisations or opposed to the dominant media, they represent civil society and they are democratically produced to empower the public (FERRON 2012: 136).

This paper points out the need to look beyond the recurrent types of studies on alternative media and address analysis of the contents and production processes that shape them. Based on multidimensional participation, it argues that it would be useful to adopt a study viewpoint that takes into account the specificities of community-driven media instead of observing them through the prism of the mass media paradigm (HAMILTON 2000).

2. Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the study of alternative media in order to further understanding of their contents and the participation of minority or disadvantaged groups. To this end, it had two specific objectives. Firstly, it presents and describes significant cases of community radio programmes in the Catalan media space – the type of alternative media with the greatest impact in this media framework (CLUA 2010; FLEISCHMAN, REGUERO & SÁEZ 2009) – which are made by minority groups and/or ones facing structural inequality. Based on the description and consideration of the features of the case studies in the sample, the common traits emerging in this initial approach are then extracted.

As the second specific objective, the paper points out two concepts which appear in studies on alternative and community media: symbolic resistance (BAILEY, CAMMAERT & CARPENTIER 2007; RODRÍGUEZ 2003) and media literacy (GUTIÉRREZ 2008; LEE 2010). It argues that over and above the theoretical realm, these two concepts should guide empirical research into these media phenomena, specifically studying the contents and participation processes and confirming the extent to which they meet normative assumptions about alternative media.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Citizen media and participation

The main premise of alternative media is social transformation through democratising access to the media by substantially modifying the mass media system (BARRANQUERO 2010; SÁEZ 2008). Alternative media emerge from civil society, where this means the realm of relationships for conscious association, self-organisation and media created by the public through their associations, ties and alliances and differing from public and market structures (RENNIE 2006). They are motivated by “the distortions, silences and failures of mass media” in representing social diversity and providing opportunities for accessing the public sphere (LEWIS & BOOTH 1989: 163). Thus, alternative media entail the alteration of the traditional sender-message-receiver system (PRADO 1980) and seek to activate audiences not only as receivers but also as stakeholders involved in producing and managing these media.

The term *citizen media*, coined by Clemencia Rodríguez, describes a type of alternative medium which seeks to activate citizenship, where this means the political identity coming from daily involvement in building the community in which a person lives due to the participation of disadvantaged groups in managing and drawing up media contents (RODRÍGUEZ 2010: 18). Citizen media place greater emphasis not only on creation but also on the very structure of the media to socialise organisational decision-making, editorial choices and the creation and reception of contents with the whole community (ATTON 2002). López-Vigil sums up their objectives as contributing to development, expanding democracy, defending human rights and protecting cultural and linguistic diversity (LÓPEZ-VIGIL 2005: 334-337).

The approach to participation advocated by citizen media, enabling community self-representation and fostering empowerment and training (JEPPESEN 2016; RODRÍGUEZ 2003), is tied to the concept of the *emirec*. This term coined by Jean Cloutier refers to leveraging the options provided by digital media to promote participation based on a horizontal relationship between producers and audience, freedom and negotiation to agree on new ways of producing media messages, and using collective intelligence to generate knowledge (APARICI & GARCÍA-MARÍN 2018: 75-76). The *emirec* is an “empowered subject that has the potential to introduce critical discourses that question the functioning of the system” (ibid., p. 77). By contrast, in Alvin Toffler’s idea of the *prosumer*, the media system is not substantially modified and remains vertical, which means that contents generated by users, who have little capacity to bring debate and criticism to bear, simply reinforce “the message of the big media players” (APARICI & GARCÍA-MARÍN 2018: 74). This one-dimensional dynamic can be seen, for example, in the way participation in general interest radio programmes is managed in Spain, where interaction is largely determined by the choice of topics and the discursive frameworks of the stations (RIBES, MONCLÚS & GUTIÉRREZ 2015: 69-70).

3.2. Community radio in the Catalan media space

Citizen radio stations have been in the Catalan media space since the democratic transition. They are part of local media systems in which the direct participation of the public, the appropriation of the media and the proximity between senders and receivers are intrinsic features of a media model that is a counterweight to the homogenisation of the contents of the mass media perceived by civil society (Corominas & Llinés: 1992, p. 125). The first examples, the free radio stations which emerged from diverse social groups seeking access to the media, appeared alongside the state and private radio oligopoly in both Spain and France at “moments of heightened global struggle against the system” (Prado 1980: 163). The horizontal and decentralised organisation and collective content production by social groups that at that time had little or no access to the media was something new (*ibid.*, pp. 164-165).

In the 1990s, the stations began to diversify and there was talk of community radio stations in addition to free ones (GARCÍA-GARCÍA 2013). In the early 2000s, citizen media gained renewed impetus in the context of anti-globalisation mobilisations (SÁEZ 2009). At that time, many alternative audiovisual media projects came together to coordinate efforts to achieve legal and political improvements under the concept of the Third Audiovisual Sector, which is a “strategic illustrator” of the various alternative media approaches (MAYUGO 2006). It is against this background of reactivation of social movements and implementation of ICT that the model defined by García-García as inclusive radio was developed, which enhances the educational aspect of the medium and increases the participation of the groups most excluded from the public sphere (GARCÍA-GARCÍA 2017: 37).

4. Methodology

The research presented in this paper is exploratory and qualitative and designed to describe a phenomenon and the processes which shape it (DEL RÍO in VILCHES 2011: 86). The purpose is to identify and describe representative cases of community radio programmes in the Catalan media space which are founded on participation by groups experiencing social inequality or who use the medium as a vehicle for a discourse aimed at social transformation.

It was decided to have a sample that is limited yet allows sufficient depth in the analysis. Hence the sample was constructed on the basis of non-probabilistic convenience sampling (MEJÍA 2000: 169) and taking into account the following criteria: that they were current or recent programmes, broadcast at some point in the period between 2015 and 2020 on community radio stations in the Catalan media space, and the sample should include cases from all over this language and cultural area. Seven cases were chosen for analysis: one station, Rromane Glasura, and two programmes, *Ràdio Nikosia* and *Ràdio Caliu*, from radio stations in Catalonia; one

station, *Ràdio Arrels*, in Northern Catalonia; two programmes, *Más Voces Entiende* and *Vorba Romani*, from the Region of Valencia, and one, *Taula Educativa*, from the Balearic Islands.

Their content was analysed to describe and characterise each case based on the information on the websites of the broadcasters and the programmes to provide a description derived from the content displayed (VELÁZQUEZ in VILCHES 2011: 117). Codification meant this technique could be used to identify persistent topics in the texts (CARLSON & USHER 2016: 567). The documents of analysis were the metajournalistic discourses, texts which define and legitimise a certain media approach or practice (CARLSON 2016) on the websites. Three categories were set to codify the data extracted from the documents of analysis: the sender, the formal and thematic features of the programme and the discursive approach. By relating the data from the cases as a whole, generalisations can be made about this type of content from community radio stations. Each of the programme descriptions was contextualised with specific references.

5. Community radio stations and programmes in the Catalan media space: participation and social and cultural diversity

This section presents the seven cases in the sample, described on the basis of the analysis of the metaperiodistic discourses and the three parameters indicated in the methodology section.

5.1 *Ràdio Arrels* – Catalan language and culture in Northern Catalonia

Ràdio Arrels is a station set up in 1981 by the *Arrels* Association and is the only one to broadcast entirely in Catalan in Northern Catalonia with information and programmes about the local area. The *Survey of Language Uses in Northern Catalonia 2015* found that Catalan is in a very weak position compared to French in all aspects. Most people over the age of 15 say they can understand Catalan (61%), while less than 40% can speak it (35.4%) and read it (39.2%) and only 14.3% can write it (EULCN 2015). Catalan is associated with older people and intergenerational linguistic transmission has practically halted.

Against this background, *Ràdio Arrels* provides a venue for normal use of Catalan, which is rare or non-existent in other media in the region, and legitimises it as a valid language for describing reality. One of the station's programmes is *Memòria*, a talk show in which journalists from the station, which has managed to become partially professional as a result of grants from the French authorities and public bodies and the Catalan Government, talk to North Catalans with a long history in activism, politics, culture and the arts. This gives a voice to people who have promoted one culture and identity, i.e. Catalan, in a setting where another hegemonic identity, i.e. French, predominates. Another outstanding programme on *Ràdio Arrels* is *Ràdio Menuts* produced by students from

the schools run by the Arrels Association who use a Catalan language immersion model. For all these reasons, Ràdio Arrels stands for the community media aspect of promoting diversity and local identities and always with the direct engagement of the communities concerned (FULLER 2007).

5.2 *Taula Educativa* by Ona Mediterrània – The struggle of Balearic Island teachers

The language and education policies which the People's Party regional government sought to implement on the Balearic Islands starting in the 2012-2013 school year rallied the bulk of the island's educational community. The Regional Ministry of Education designed the Integrated Language Treatment (TIL) scheme, enacted by decree in April 2013, which increased the number of teaching hours in Spanish and English and reduced the presence of Catalan in classrooms (BIBILONI 2014). In lockstep to a legal challenge, the teaching community, especially in state education, put together a campaign with the support of parents' associations and a large number of students. The Teachers' Assembly (AdD) was set up to advocate state, secular and quality education in Catalan and called for mass demonstrations on the Islands.

One of the AdD's battlefronts was the media, which until then had barely touched on the educational debate. The community radio station Ona Mediterrània invited teachers to make a programme, and in 2014 weekly magazine show *Taula Educativa* began, coordinated by teachers and which reviewed contemporary educational issues with input from teachers, school employees, families and students. In the three seasons it was broadcast, *Taula Educativa* was "the radio of resistance against the TIL and the People's Party government and also against the subsequent progressive government [which emerged from the May 2015 regional elections] which has also failed to meet the demands of the educational community" (Bonnín 2016). The AdD's mobilisation put education at the heart of the public conversation; in this process, *Taula Educativa* "played a key role in talking about education on the radio" on the Balearic Islands (BONNÍN 2016).

5.3 *Ràdio Nikosia*, by Contrabanda FM – People with mental illness

Ràdio Nikosia has been broadcasting on Contrabanda FM, a free radio station in Ciutat Vella (Barcelona), since 2003. The programme's purpose has been straightforward from the outset: to overcome the stigmas associated with people with mental illness through self-reflection of the people affected as a way of providing an analytical and media space around so-called *madness* (BELLOC *et al.* 2006: 60). Every week, members of the association running *Ràdio Nikosia*, which brings together some seventy people including sick people, healthcare professionals and activists, conduct a thematic programme in which they address a specific aspect of reality based on their experience.

As Wahl (1992) notes, the media is the main source of public knowledge about mental illness. However, the role of the

media in perpetuating or reducing the stigma of mental illness is still a little studied issue (JENNINGS, STOUT & VILLEGAS 2004). Information about mental illness in the media is often based on scientific data and findings, yet when it comes to turning them into news stories, journalists fall back on negative framings and descriptions drawn from the stereotypes about mental illness (JENNINGS, STOUT & VILLEGAS 2004: 556). *Ràdio Nikosia* seeks to turn around and ridicule these preconceived ideas on a weekly basis; to "normalise madness" from a critical and humorous point of view.

5.4 *Ràdio Caliu*, by Ona de Sants-Montjuïc – People with intellectual disabilities

Another group with little media presence is people with intellectual disabilities; the appearance in the media of people with disabilities, whether physical or intellectual, does not match the percentage of the population they account for which stands at 8.5% in Spain (GONZÁLEZ-CORTÉS 2011: 3). There are few programmes where the disabled are the main figures in the story and even fewer in which they take part in producing and realising contents; González-Cortés notes that the few cases in which this does happen are in public media. The consequences of this lack of visibility, which is only interrupted on a very occasional basis, include mixing up people with intellectual disabilities and people with mental illnesses in the news (PONSA 2017: 27). Taking the specific case of Down's syndrome, for example, there is a fairly widespread feeling among the audience that the media does not talk enough about people with this syndrome and they would like to be better informed about it (BELTRÁN *et al.* 2014).

In late 2011, a group of users and educators from the Grup Caliu association, which works with people with intellectual disabilities, kicked off the monthly programme *Ràdio Caliu* on the community radio station Ona de Sants-Montjuïc in Barcelona. In this venue, self-defined as an inclusive radio station, participants talk about the activities they conduct through the association, comment on, and discuss current affairs, such as local news or political events, to have their say about them. The programme leaders stress that *Ràdio Caliu* helps them to learn how to communicate better, find out what is going on in the world and most of all to convey their thoughts to the rest of society and show that prejudices against people with intellectual disabilities are unfounded. It is a question of conveying normality based on the disability standpoint and eschewing the emotional or poignant images which abound in the mainstream media when talking about this social group.

5.5 *Más Voces Entiende*, by Artegalia Radio – LGBTI news

In both news programmes and fiction series, the broadcast media have made a crucial contribution to the spread of heteronormativity as the normative sexuality in our societies (VENTURA 2014). People who do not identify with it and who are usually grouped under the acronym LGTBIQ+ have been

one of the most stigmatised and marginalised groups in the public sphere, and also one of the most active in counteracting discourses which label everything which strays from the heterosexual norm as an anomaly, illness or deviation. Today, and even after decades of awareness-raising campaigns, there is still a sense of taboo when it comes to talking about, for example, homosexual and lesbian relationships or transgender people (CARRATALÁ 2011: 169). The group has seen how its media presence has grown and it has been depathologised. However, the discourse on homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality and transsexuality tends to offer a stereotyped or frivolous image while homophobia persists in more subtle forms (ibid., p. 157).

Más Voces Entiende comes from the group Alicante Entiende, one of the organisations taking part in Radio Artegalia in Alicante. It is a pioneering initiative in setting aside a programme for LGBTBIQ+ community current affairs that seeks to convey the complexity and diversity of this group through the voices of its members. Through different segments, the show addresses all kinds of issues related to homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, and transsexuality from the political, legislative, cultural, and economic standpoints. It focuses on news items, advocacy of rights and prevention in sexual health. Likewise, attacks on and discrimination against LGBTBIQ+ people are reported by Alicante Entiende in its Virtual Observatory against Homophobia and this work is disseminated in the programme.

5.6 Rromane Glasura-Veus Gitanes and *Vorba Romani*, by Ràdio Malva – The Roma

Unlike with other social groups, the media's approach to the Roma has hardly changed. The Roma depicted in the media often reflect more closed and traditionalist Roma mindsets which reinforces the simplistic and folkloric portrait (TORTAJADA 2009). Given the propensity to frame this community in negative stereotypes, Oleaque (2007) calls on Roma associations to get involved in changing its image and invest in recovering their own culture, traditions and language. Over the last few years, two initiatives have been set up in the Catalan media space that draw on mobilised Roma sectors seeking to dismantle archetypes and provide a more complex vision of their situation.

In 2011, several Roma women's associations in the Barcelona area set up Rromane Glasura-Veus Gitanes, "the first Roma radio station in Catalonia". This online station is a venue for representing and publicising the culture of the Roma, especially Roma women who are the driving force behind change in the community. Indeed, Roma women experience threefold exclusion: due to being women, being Roma and often not having any academic qualifications (MACÍAS & REDONDO 2011). The women who take part in Veus Gitanes counteract the stereotypes of the collective mindset around the Roma and take a leading role in the story of their experience. They produce news and interviews about the current Roma situation, far removed from the scenes which only show poverty or crime, and they impact the education of Roma youth and the progress

made by women in the community. The station also runs radio workshops and has produced the documentary *Samudaripen* in which young Catalan Roma women recover the memory of the extermination of the Roma in the Second World War.

Meanwhile, Cabanyal-Canyamelar in Valencia has long been a hotbed of political and social debate between various groups about the future of the neighbourhood in a process which has seen institutional neglect, decay and attempted rehabilitation and gentrification (CUESTA 2011). The Cabanyal Roma community is the target of much criticism, both inside and outside the neighbourhood, which holds it responsible for the decline. The stigma attached to the Roma simplifies the debate and furthers the interests of the most powerful players in the conflict. To turn around their marginalisation in the public sphere, in 2016 several members of the Roma community in Cabanyal started up the programme *Vorba Romani* on Ràdio Malva, the neighbourhood's free radio station which had previously broadcast several interviews with Roma locals. The programme reviews current events, especially in the neighbourhood, from a Roma perspective. It is made by the community and gives voice to its members, who set out the shortcomings they live with on a daily basis and their hopes for the improvement of their environment.

6. Concepts to guide analysis of participation in community media

Following the description of the particular and general features of the case studies in the sample, the concepts of symbolic resistance and media literacy are now introduced based on a number of literature inputs on alternative media. Lewis notes that community radio stations encourage media pluralism by enabling minority and marginalised groups to access the medium and promoting media literacy (LEWIS 2008: 13). These are two different processes which, if interrelated, would work towards the overall objective of community media, which López-Vigil says is "democratising speech to make this society more democratic" (2005, p. 324).

6.1 Symbolic resistance

Alternative media is the space which began to form in the advent of modern societies where "the struggle to be seen and heard by various groups and historically excluded groups" takes place (SÁEZ 2008: 50). Similarly, Bosch argues that community or citizen radio "has the potential to be used for social and economic minorities as a tool for resistance" (BOSCH 2014: 436).

Community media articulate the self-representation of the groups that drive them: the creation of independent, collaborative and participatory media is one of the ways in which people express their discontent and views which diverge from those in the mainstream media (DEUZE 2006: 267). The blurring of the sender-receiver barrier makes local groups and

communities creators of symbols which have the potential to sever the power relations represented in the mainstream media and reappraise what marginalises or degrades them or makes them appear insignificant; this potential is what Rodríguez (2003) calls *symbolic resistance*.

Rodríguez notes that power relations are endorsed and maintained by factors including symbolic legitimisation. Power groups normalise symbols which are weighted in their own interests to describe reality in a given context, and one of the channels for doing this is the media (RODRÍGUEZ 2003: 153). Meanwhile, community media enable subordinate groups in a given context to exercise the power to point out, criticise and subvert the forms which normalise the status quo, the conventional wisdom that mainstream media build and convey (BAILEY, CAMMAERTS & CARPENTIER 2007: 17).

Symbolic resistance involves conveying the opinions and experiences of the groups which are the subject of the two main forms of exclusion in the public sphere: either a biased representation of social and cultural diversity or exclusion from the production of discourse due to major structural inequalities (FERRÁNDEZ & RETIS 2019: 3). Setting up and taking part in community media allows underrepresented social groups to strengthen “their internal identity, manifesting this identity to the outside world, and thus enabling social change and/or development” (CARPENTIER, LIE & SERVAES 2003: 6).

Symbolic resistance adopts specific discursive forms and strategies depending on the person that takes the floor, with the common denominator of being a creative action to generate a dissident culture which is critical of the dominant media discourses (TAMARIT 2012: 43). Analytical and technical skills have to be learned to identify and understand these messages so as to draw up contents later on which dovetail with the reality of social groups and counteract hegemonic representations, and this learning also takes place within community media.

6.2 Media literacy

Breaking down the barrier between the roles of content production and reception involves access to a range of tasks which in the mainstream media are reserved for small groups of qualified professionals, namely journalists. The power to resist symbolically comes with learning these media communication tasks (RODRÍGUEZ 2010: 19). Community radio stations are organisations which deliver media education and training to their participants (Lewis 2008: 20).

Media literacy is a term that was first used in academic research in the mid-1990s (LEE & SO 2014). However, it is based on media education, a discipline which has spread most notably in Latin America due to the work of media educators such as Mario Kaplún with approaches close to the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (BARBAS 2012: 162). Kaplún notes the affinity between the traditional educational model of the “teacher-led class” and the logic of the mass media; he contrasts this vertical, one-directional and individualised approach with education and media seen “as dialogue and

exchange in a space in which instead of speakers and listeners there are interlocutors” (KAPLÚN 1997: 6), an approach which matches the participatory intent of community media.

Drilling down into the analytical side, media literacy prioritises reflective and instrumental teaching along with understanding of the institutional and economic nature of media enterprises and their role in shaping ideologies and knowledge which are widely spread throughout society while not neglecting practical training (GUTIÉRREZ 2008: 452-453). Media literacy in community media fosters the critical application of communication tools to drive social change towards a more equitable society (HIGGINS 1999: 641). These objectives are valid, and indeed more valid than ever in the current digital environment (GUTIÉRREZ & TYNER 2012: 35) as in spite of the multiplication of content supply, the main generators of journalistic information are still the mainstream media (LEVY & NIELSEN 2010). In this scenario, community media have stepped up their educational role over recent years involving fresh synergies with civil society and social movements to foster “critical awareness of the media system” (LEMA-BLANCO, RODRÍGUEZ-GÓMEZ & BARRANQUERO-CARRETERO 2016: 92-93).

7. Conclusions

This paper has suggested the complexity of involvement in community media, which Hamilton (2003) argues should be seen as a multidimensional process in which production and reception are blended in the participation of disadvantaged groups or ones with a low profile in the public sphere. These groups’ leading role in contents, agenda-setting and collective production is tied to the participatory paradigm which is summarised by the *emirec* approach, as opposed to the more vertical *prosumer* (APARICI & GARCÍA-MARÍN 2018).

In the Catalan media space, alternative media have been little studied by the media sciences (CASASÚS 2005) despite their roots and diversity (MAYUGO 2007). Research in Catalonia has focused mainly on the theory, history and legal aspects of alternative media, while analysis of their contents and participation processes –aspects to which alternative media theorisation attributes their differential features with respect to public and private media (BARRANQUERO 2010; JEPPESEN 2016a; SÁEZ 2008)– remains virtually unexplored. This paper is a first step towards noting the diversity of community radio stations and programmes in Catalonia which include the participation of disadvantaged or underrepresented social groups as their main focus.

With respect to the first specific objective, seven contemporary case studies have been described which are representative of the variety of social groups that use community radio as a means of expression. Each is in a different cultural, social and political position, has a particular capacity for public advocacy and is driven by specific objectives. However, analysis of journalistic metadiscourses reveals common features. The senders are in a position of social, cultural or communicative

inequality which in many cases translates into discrimination in their specific context. Hence the main function of the contents they produce on community radio stations is self-representation (RENNIE 2006), which is achieved when they can “name the world on their own terms” (RODRÍGUEZ 2010: 19). As a result, the programmes take on an activist tone in which these groups seek a public significance that they are unable to achieve through the mainstream media and express a yearning for social transformation. Thus based on its own specificities, each of the projects described in the sample would take shape in what alternative media theory has summarised as the concept of democratisation of access and speech (BARRANQUERO 2010; LÓPEZ-VIGIL 2005; SÁEZ 2008) and are in line with the inclusive radio model (GARCÍA-GARCÍA 2017).

This paper's proposal has several limitations. It is exploratory research with the intention of presenting a topic of study and contributing specific case studies while also suggesting a theoretical framework for more in-depth future analysis. Accordingly, the sample of cases is small and the study, which is descriptive, focuses on the displayed content of the metajournalistic discourses (CARLSON 2016) of the radio stations and programmes. However, this initial approach points to more complex questions: how does a media learning process take place in these venues? Which parameters are used to draw up contents and what criteria are used to set the agenda? How do the participants assess their activity in the station or the programme?

These and successive questions need to be addressed empirically in order to go beyond the normative dimension of alternative media theory (FERRON 2012) and to understand how the involvement of social groups in community media, and in alternative media as a whole, takes place in practice. To move forward in this direction of travel, it has been suggested that analysis of the contents and the participatory production of the contents should be based on the notions of symbolic resistance and media literacy as relevant processes theorised in the international literature (BAILEY, CAMMAERT & CARPENTIER 2007; HIGGINS 1999; RODRÍGUEZ 2003 & 2010) to examine how the involvement of the audience-producers in community media projects is structured and point out the distinctive factors with respect to the paradigms of public and private commercial media.

Bosch notes the need for in-depth research into community radio stations' management and participation practices by means of ethnographic observation and quantitative and qualitative study of audiences (BOSCH 2014: 436). Atton also underscores the importance of investigating the operation of alternative media in terms of both production and reception in order to go beyond the “celebratory approach” to alternative media (ATTON 2008: 214). This will make it possible to gain critical knowledge of these media phenomena which validates or refutes the assumptions made based on activism and theory. As Hamilton (2000) maintains, it is a question of studying and understanding alternative media in their specificity.

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Madrid's free radio stations: local media and neighbourhood participation in the 1980s

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Abstract

In the 1980s, two fundamental social movements coexisted in Madrid: the neighbourhood movement and the free radio movement. In this article we will see how both were related and what results their work together produced in terms of communication and visibility of local issues. With a series of examples, we will analyse how participation of the organised neighbourhood network in the free radio stations could have generated beneficial dynamics for both, giving a voice to residents of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods of the capital city and creating a space with different types of social activism.

Keywords

Free radios, neighbourhood movement, participation, alternative communication, local communication.

Resum

A la dècada de 1980 van coexistir a Madrid, entre d'altres, dos moviments socials fonamentals: el veïnal i el de les ràdios lliures. En aquest article veurem de quines maneres s'han relacionat tots dos i quins resultats ha llançat el treball en comú en termes de comunicació i visibilitat de problemàtiques locals. Mitjançant una sèrie d'exemples, analitzarem com la participació del teixit veïnal organitzat en les ràdios lliures va poder generar dinàmiques beneficioses per a tots dos, tot donant veu als veïns dels barris més desfavorits de la capital i creant un espai en què es van trobar diversos activismes socials.

Paraules clau

Ràdios lliures, moviment veïnal, participació, comunicació alternativa, comunicació local.

1. Introduction

The free radio movement appeared in the Spanish ether at the end of the 1970s, inspired by its French and Italian counterparts, and from the very beginning, it proposed a horizontal, open and participatory communication model. These radio stations had-and still have-inserted inside a broader alter-globalization worldview, the objective of breaking with the prevailing vertical communication dynamics. To this end, they guaranteed, by way of practice, right of access and citizen participation, opening their microphones, studios, telephones and assemblies to anyone interested in communicating.

This paper aims to bring us closer to one of the many concrete forms that this participation took: the relationship between Madrid's free radio stations and the neighbourhood movement of their neighbourhoods in the 1980s. The chronological framework selected corresponds, when speaking of free radio stations, to what we might consider the first stage in their history: from the emergence of the first experiences to the tender for licences under the National Technical Plan which accompanied the 1987 Telecommunications Organisation Act. With regard to the neighbourhood movement, we must

take into account that they would be difficult years, in which recomposing and participating in the demands of each area of the capital, such as the conflict around La Vaguada in the Barrio del Pilar, was complemented with intervening in other more general ones, such as mobilisations around the referendum on Spain's permanence in NATO.

We will relate the activity of two social movements, one barely studied and almost forgotten, the free radio, and the other, the neighbourhood, whose importance and memory have been vindicated. Nevertheless, and despite these differences, both share, in our opinion, the characteristic of constituting "movements of movements" (PÉREZ QUINTANA & SÁNCHEZ LEÓN 2008: 15). Based on this situation, we will analyse the different forms in which the resident associations and these stations established bonds, which were the potentialities and consequences of them and we will try to glimpse what dynamics of participation and feedback took place within these relations. Thus confirming, on the one hand, that it is worth continuing to study the neighbourhood associations in greater depth, since they were "privileged observers of the social and political tensions experienced during the late Franco years, the Transition and the first years of democracy" (ORTIZ HERAS 2016:

13); and, on the other, that the study of free radio stations offers new perspectives in which we must continue to delve.

To carry out this analysis we will rely on primary sources gathered over years of research, in which we have attempted to reconstruct the past of these radios. We must bear in mind that we are dealing with an object of study on which it is difficult to find complete series of sources, so we must make a virtue of necessity. On the one hand, we will work with documents from the stations themselves: fanzines, internal documents, manifestos, etc. On the other, some semi-structured interviews with activists of the alternative broadcasting movement of those years will be essential sources, which will allow us to know and fix details not included in other documents. The data from these sources will be completed and clarified with the consultation of both generalist and alternative press, and the pre-existing bibliography.

In this way, this paper is linked to the small number of publications on free radio produced by the Spanish Academy. This contribution is in addition to what can already be considered classic contributions, such as those made by Prado (1981) or Aguilera (1985) and new efforts, such as those made in different senses by the members of the Community, Alternative and Participatory Communication Research Network (GARCÍA GARCÍA 2013; RAMOS MARTÍN, MORAIS & BARRANQUERO CARRETERO 2018). Extraordinarily little attention has been paid to this phenomenon from historiography. General quantitative approaches have come to light in recent years (GARCÍA GIL, GÓMEZ GARCÍA & REGUERO SANZ 2018) and also contributions that have examined its past in specific regions such as Catalonia (CAMPS DURBAN 2019), the Basque Country (PASCUAL 2019) or Madrid (PÉREZ MARTÍNEZ 2018).

The reflections presented here follow the trail of recent work that is analysing the relationship between free radios and different social movements. In this approach, opened by Martín (1998) with his seminal text on free radios, occupation, insubordination and the solidarity economy, we can find some notes on the political role of these stations (GARCÍA GIL 2019) and others, which, from the point of view of ideological production and the construction of counter-hegemony, outline the specific cases of environmentalism, anti-militarism or feminism (PÉREZ MARTÍNEZ 2020, 2019 and 2013, respectively) and serve as a framework for this text.

In a first part, and as a necessary contextualisation, we will approach the development of both movements in those years; in a second part, we will attempt to understand the characteristics and the potentiality of the relationship between the movement for freedom of emission and other social movements. Finally, we will focus on describing, understanding and evaluating what the involvement of the citizens' movement and its neighbourhood associations with the free radio stations meant, through the study of specific cases about which we have been able to recover testimonies or documentation.

2. Neighbourhood associations and free radios: notes on two social movements in the Madrid of the eighties

Before we begin to carry out our work, it is necessary to provide a few lines that introduce these two social movements and their situation in the 1980s, in order to obtain a framework that allows us to understand in what situation this relationship between the neighbourhood movement and the free radio movement is beginning to take place. However, we must start from the assumption that this crossroads was natural, since we are convinced that the Madrid urban social movements of that decade constituted, according to Manuel Castells, "a system of practices resulting from the articulation of a conjuncture of the system of urban agents and of other social practices", so that "its development tends objectively towards the structural transformation of the urban system" (1974: 312), and of society as a whole, we would add. As integral parts of the same system, it seems that both phenomena were destined to be interrelated.

Madrid's neighbourhood movement took root in the 1950s, although it began to operate informally under the protection of the 1964 Associations Act, at which time the first Neighbourhood Associations began to appear in Palomeras Bajas, Pozo del Tío Raimundo, Usera, Orcasitas, Villaverde and other neighbourhoods in the south of the city. In the 1970s it was a key element in the anti-Franco struggle, which eventually spread to the rest of the region. In 1975 the Federation of Neighbourhood Associations of the Province of Madrid was founded, which eventually accumulated an active militancy of more than 220,000 people, posed struggles as important as the "bread war" or negotiation of the Pradolongo Park, constituting a very important school of democracy (ACTIVA ORCASITAS 2005: 19 and 24), as well as being the germ of the current Regional Federation of Neighbourhood Associations of Madrid (FRAVM).

The holding of the first democratic municipal elections after the dictatorship in 1979 marked the beginning of a series of key changes for the neighbourhood movement. One of the most important was the progressive "decapitation" of the movement. Many of its leaders came from, or ended up in, the various left-wing parties, from the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) to the Communist Movement (MC), via the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) or the Workers' Revolutionary Organisation (ORT), so that, in the face of the new political situation, they began to defend the new municipal participatory channels, thus abandoning many of these organisations to their fate.

In this way, the citizens' movement, emptied of content and without material and human resources, faces the challenges posed by the 1980s, that of "disenchantment". According to Carmen Espinar (2015: 12-14), during these years, there were several social and political changes. Firstly, the authorities introduced new rules of participation aimed at, in fact, controlling the neighbourhood associations. Secondly, the new democratic local councils began to cover, in unequal competition, various activities that had been covered by the

associative fabric. The same thing happened with the left-wing parties, which, by integrating into the electoral space and adopting a district organisation chart, began, in many cases, to compete with the neighbourhood associations. Finally, the slow bureaucratization of these associations reduced the dynamism that had characterised them until then, added to the internal division caused by the NATO referendum and an increasing inability to connect with the new generations.

Faced with these new and unflattering conditions, Madrid's neighbourhood associations began, on the one hand, to build alliances with other sectors such as the Parents' Associations or the environmental movement, with which they carried out joint actions and campaigns, and, on the other hand, they also approached a phenomenon that had begun to be established in Madrid at the beginning of the decade: free radio stations.

In fact, Carmen Espinar herself values the appearance of free radio stations as something positive for the 1980's neighbourhood movement, since they formed part of an alternative media that would have made it possible to avoid the ostracism to which the generalist media would have condemned the social movements. In her own words,

“(...) in the face of the media, which for some time now have not given prominence to the neighbourhood movement and which echo the political positions of the big political parties regarding the invisibility of the social movements of the time, free and community radio stations have emerged, with a territorial base in the neighbourhoods and with participation of the residents. Along with this, bulletins, magazines and neighbourhood newspapers are increased and improved as alternative means of communication” (2015: 13).

Indeed, free radios started to be developed in Madrid in the 1980s, although we can find direct antecedents at the end of the previous decade, both in the capital of the State and in Catalonia or the Basque Country. It is a heterogeneous and changing phenomenon, which has made it exceedingly difficult to establish a definition that reflects the diversity of projects that can be found within the movement. However, we can establish as common characteristics practically all the stations being non-profit projects, set up by the citizens, sometimes through cultural or youth associations, with horizontal decision-making mechanisms; being open to participation and independent of political, religious or economic pressure groups (GARCÍA GARCÍA 2017: 34).

In Spain, this phenomenon has also been characterised by its “illegality”. In the years under review, these stations carried out their work without administrative concession, but from the firm conviction that Article 20 of the 1978 Constitution protected them. Thus, they shared, or disputed, the airwaves with legal stations, public and private, national or municipal, and illegal ones, such as pirate radio stations, private, unlicensed and profit-making stations (IBARRA, MAESTU & PORTUONDO 1987: 2).

The first experiences of alternative radio broadcasting, free

proto-radios, in Madrid date back to the end of 1976 with the appearance of Radio La Voz del Pobre, a short-lived station. After a few years of relative emptiness in terms of alternative experiences, in 1982 Radio Acción appeared in the Barrio del Pilar, a precursor of what would be the first wave of free radio stations in the city of Madrid: Onda Verde Vallekana, Radio Fhortaleza, Radio Luna and Onda Sur, projects which began to operate in 1983.

This year is a key moment for development of radio stations in the Autonomous Community of Madrid. In May, the 6th Meeting of the State Coordinator of Free Radio Broadcasters was held at the Ateneo Libertario in Villaverde, sponsored by the newborn Onda Sur and the Asturian Radio QK. This meeting followed the trail of those held previously, mainly in Catalonia and the Basque Country, and became a milestone in the movement's history. From this meeting came the so-called *Manifiesto de Villaverde*, a key document, since it contained a definition of the nature and objectives of free radio stations that, in fact, is still valid for many of them today (COORDINADORA 1983).

Between 1983 and 1987 the number of Madrid radio stations grew gradually, appearing in practically all the districts of the capital and surrounding municipalities. Projects such as Radio Vallekas, Radio Cero, Onda Verde, Antena Vicálvaro, Radio Jabato or Radio Carcoma appeared in these years, covering between them almost the whole of the Autonomous Community.

The work of Madrid's radio stations during this decade was continuous. Thus, they participated in the meetings that were held during these years, such as the one in Albacete in 1985 (GÓMEZ 1985); they mobilized for the “no” vote in the referendum on Spain's permanence in NATO (Casanova 2002: 29). They suffered closures and repressive episodes, such as the arrest of an announcer from La Cadena del Water in the context of the student strikes of 1987 (ECHEVARRÍA 1987); and they ended up facing, divided, the turning point that was the approval of the Law on the Regulation of Telecommunications (LOT) in December 1987. From that year until 1989, their activity was focused on how to deal with the tender for licences foreseen in the National Technical Plan derived from the LOT. The rupture that had been brewing in the Madrid movement speed up then, which led to several free radio projects being submitted to the tender.

As a condition for participating in the tender, the authorities demanded a temporary cessation of broadcasting, so that in March 1989 Madrid's free stations ceased their activity on the airwaves. This generalised halt was one of the most critical moments in the movement's history. The result of the distribution of licences favoured the free stations with two of them in the whole state: one in Valencia, still active, for Radio Klara, and another in Madrid, in Chinchón, for the Federation of Free Radios of the Community of Madrid (FERALICOMA), a project that would disappear in the early 1990s.

After the suspension of broadcasts and the results of the tender for licences, many Madrid free radio stations disappeared from the dial forever, while others returned to their “illegal” activity

over time. During the 1990s, the relationship between the two movements became closer, so that many radio stations gradually joined the FRAVM.

3. Madrid's free radio and social movements

As we pointed out in the introduction, Madrid's free radio was a real "movement of movements" in the 1980s. In other words, it was a space where collectives and individuals from different struggles and social mobilisations converged and found in this type of station a space in which to participate and a tool to propagate their discourses.

These radio stations were born within what, following Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (2014), we have called an "alternative subculture": a social subset made up of members of parties, unions, left-wing collectives, more or less radical, and different social movements, inherited from anti-Francoism and influenced by the ways of doing things in the counterculture.

The open and horizontal character of these stations allowed their guides to be built according to the interests of those who wanted to take part in them. Therefore, and given the relationship of these media with the alternative subculture mentioned above, it was quite common for activists and social groups to approach them to use them as a loudspeaker, not in vain their objective was to give voice to "the voiceless".

We must bear in mind that, although the free radio movement has its own demands, its own agenda and its own coordinating bodies, many of these stations were created by organised collectives that came from other specific social struggles, or that were more or less linked to political parties or unions, sensitive to the struggles of social movements. We find examples such as Onda Sur, in the district of Villaverde, set up by the MUA (Muchos Unidos Alternativos), a group composed, among others, of the Colectivo Ecologista de Villaverde (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2012c), with a clear environmentalist tendency in its programming; Radio Cero was the project of the Anti-NATO Commission of Madrid, with pacifism and anti-militarism as its hallmarks (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2008); Onda Verde Vallekana was born with strong links to the ecological bookstore El Bulevar, so from the beginning there was a very strong connection with this movement (Rodríguez Leal 2002: 121-122); Radio Negra, later Onda Latina, was a project initiated by the Latina district grouping of the PCE (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2014b), or Radio Luna, whose origin has some relation with the CNT Banking Union (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2011b).

For all these reasons, feminism, environmentalism or pacifism were some of the protagonists of hours and hours of broadcasting, turning free radio stations into bodies of ideological production and reproduction within and outside the limits of the alternative subculture in which they were born. In other words, they were spaces in which the different militant and activist discourses were shared, fed back and, through these contacts and the airwaves, expanded their influence

and social depth. The dynamics and operation of free radio stations facilitated this sharing, and their deliberative nature would encourage the different discourses to be shared within the stations, to be discussed and to arrive at unifying syntheses. Proof of this would be programmes such as *A por todas* on Onda Sur (ONDA SUR 1985), which put into circulation the demands of feminism; *La calle de todos* on Radio Luna, then *Libertad condicional* on Radio Cero, which was responsible for communicating the lines of work of the Anti-Repressive Committee of Madrid (PÉREZ MARTÍNEZ 2010); or *La lima*, on Onda Verde Vallekana, very close to the mobilizations that the Coordinating Committee of Prisoners in Struggle (COPEL) had been carrying out (Personal interview 2011c), which would have been in charge of putting all the members of its radio stations in contact with these concrete struggles.

The work of these radios, as *ideological apparatuses* (ALTHUSSER 1974), operated, as we have pointed out, on two levels: one of proximity, which would be the projection of their discourses on the limits of the very alternative sphere within which these stations were inserted, and a second, broader, constituted by the whole of society, Madrid, in this case. At this first level, and as the members of this alternative sphere came from different contexts and activisms, in the free stations they would come into contact with other experiences and would confront, share and debate their points of view. A woman coming from a feminist collective, for example, could come into contact, in a radio station like this, with environmental activists and feedback their repertoires of struggle through sharing and debate. The innate capacity of the radio waves to cross borders would give rise to the second level: either to their closest community or to the whole city, these stations had the capacity to be heard by broad sectors of the citizenry.

The two modalities of ideological circulation that we have just exposed generated in those years a "peripheral public sphere", different from the dominant central public sphere, which for this subculture would end up consolidating in "alternative hegemony" and which was characterised by "a greater pluralism of voices, ideological tendencies and diversity of agenda" (RESINA & SAMPEDRO 2010: 151). We believe that this space came to constitute itself as "counter-hegemonic" and that it forced the dominant culture at specific moments to have to negotiate its positions, as could have happened during the campaign prior to the referendum on Spain's permanence in NATO in 1986. The culture and the practice of the alternative subculture had to be incorporated, at least in part, and freed from its surreptitious components, to the heritage of the dominant groups in order not to lose its dominant position.

It is here that we can discern the potential and importance of the role played by the free radio stations of the moment, more specifically the Madrid ones, since we can say, based on the social impact of these radio stations during the 1980s, that they had this function of ideological instance. The presence of this movement in both generalist and alternative media, supports the hypothesis that it had a certain reach. Its appearances in

publications as disparate as the Sunday newspaper *Blanco y Negro* (CRIADO 1980), the current affairs publication *Diario 16* (ANTONA & REGUEIRO 1984), the libertarian reference magazine *Ajoblanco* (AJOBLANCO 1977) or *Onda 2001*, which was dedicated to amateur radio (LAPEÑA & MEDRANO 1984), reinforce the idea that their messages became part of the media, social and political agenda.

Thus, the free radio stations played a mediating role in the dynamics of negotiation of the social hegemony of those years and thanks to them both content and values, or ways of acting of the alternative subculture, were incorporated into the dominant culture, and struggles and social problems that, at times, would have escaped the interest of the generalist media became known. Advances in the assimilation of the agenda of the feminist movement or the concern for pacifism would not have become part what has been “normalised” if they had not first been part of the “alternative hegemony” that, thanks in part to free radio, spread through important sectors of Spanish society.

After these reflections, what we now need to do is to see what concrete forms this role of free broadcasters took in the relationship between them and the neighbourhood movement: how it was articulated, its potential and its results.

4. Madrid's neighbourhood movement on the waves

When we look at the ways in which Madrid's free radio stations related to the neighbourhood movement, facilitating their access to the media, we see that this reality materialised in two specific ways. As a starting point, we should point out that this rapprochement of the neighbourhood took place mainly in the radio stations that Rosa Franquet identified as “local”, in the neighbourhood stations, being less common in those that were metropolitan and intended to reach the whole capital (1984: 178).

The first form of participation of the Madrid neighbourhood movement in this type of communication is through radio stations set up, or supported, by the city's own neighbourhood associations. The second is the attention given by the “local” stations to the problems of their most direct environment. In both cases, however, it was the residents of each of the neighbourhoods that mainly fed the guides of these stations.

If we look at the census of free radio stations in operation in the Community of Madrid during the 1980s, we see that, out of a total of 45 stations, six were created by the organised neighbourhood movement:

One of the first examples of a free radio station set up by a neighbourhood association was Antena Vicálvaro. This arose from the interest of the youth section of this association and began to take shape at the end of 1983 and started broadcasting in 1984. Ceferino Maestu, president of the neighbourhood association in those years, acknowledged that, in line with what Espinar had said, the creation of the station “responded

to a need for social communication” since the neighbourhood movement's magazines “had a very close circulation, they didn't go any further, that would be very expensive [...]”, while setting up a radio station “first, it was cheaper and second, it was more immediate”, in other words, “it allowed you to access things that happened more quickly” (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2011a).

A media outlet that echoed the demands of an area that, in the 1980s, was immersed in a great many struggles to improve the material conditions of the district, which remained relatively isolated from the rest of the city and faced problems such as the absence of clinics and sports centres, the existence of an illegal market known as “Guarrerías Preciados” or the need to relocate a shanty town of almost 400 families (FRESNEDA 1988).

According to its promoters, the station had some influence on the district thanks to its involvement in the day-to-day running of the district, therefore:

“it did a lot of things, but always aimed at things in the neighbourhood, not at general political objectives, but at getting traffic lights on the streets, at getting schools [...], the subject of the shanties, the subject of the underground, communications, access, Vicálvaro was almost isolated from Madrid at the time, [...] the paving of the streets. Things that were normal, or cultural activities, such as the King's Day parade, or things like that, neighbourhood festivals, very local things” (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2011a).

A second example of this category of stations was Radio Carcoma, created a few years later in Canillejas, following similar dynamics to those of Antena Vicálvaro, as the radio itself recognised:

“the pernicious ideas of a group of young people who landed in the Canillejas Neighbourhood Association, with the idea of perverting the whole neighbourhood in any way, degenerated [*sic*] into giving birth to a radio even if it was as single mothers. [...] In spite of everything, at 1:00 p.m. the next day, with a transmitter borrowed from Radio Mercurio [...], Radio Carcoma's broadcast began, *el terror de la madera* (*the terror of wood*)... and the terror of the technique, because at 1:20 a.m. we had to disconnect due to a suspicious smell of burning from the transmitter [...]” (RADIO CARCOMA 1997: 1).

One project, this one from the station, was valued by the neighbourhood as “a very seductive story from the point of view of participation” that was “super attractive for the youngest people of the Association and that was extremely successful” (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2012a). Radio Carcoma maintained a varied programming, with many musical spaces, but centred around the life of Canillejas, which had been creating big problems since the 1970s, such as heroine (CANTALAPIEDRA 1987). This approach to local issues led the station to consider the need for its own news programme at the end of the decade, which provided another way for the local community to participate

Table 1. Census of active Madrid radio stations in the 1980s

Radio station name	Start date	End date	Collective owner	Location
90'5 Esstereo	1981	Unknown	Own collective	Madrid (unknown neighbourhood)
Antena Colectiva	1986	Unknown	Own collective	Cuatro Caminos
Antena Vicálvaro	1983	1997/1998	Neighbourhood Assoc.	Vicálvaro
Cadena del Water	1984	1989	Young people group (Radio La Voz del Pobre)	Malasaña
Onda Butti	198?	Unknown	Own collective	Getafe
Onda Lateral	1987	Unknown	Own collective	Madrid (unknown neighbourhood)
Onda Latina	1986	Active	Cultural Assoc. Pablo Picasso	Aluche
Onda Merlín Comunitaria	1987	Active	Own collective	Villaverde
Onda Sur	1983	199?	M.U.A.	Villaverde
Onda Verde	1984	Active	ex-Onda Verde Vallekana group	Arganzuela
Onda Verde Vallekana	1983	1984	Bookstore El Bulevar	Vallecas
Radio Acción	1982	1983	Own collective	Barrio del Pilar
Radio Actividad	1984	2005	Cultural Assoc. (Radio Imagen)	Alcalá de Henares
Radio Albatros	1986	Unknown	Own collective	Ventilla
Radio Caribe	1985	Unknown	Neighbourhood Assoc.	Zarzalejo
Radio Carcoma	1988	Active	Neighbourhood Assoc.	Canillejas
Radio Cero	1984	199?	Anti-NATO Commission	San Bernardo
Radio Cigüeña	1986	Active	Cultural Assoc.	Rivas Vaciamadrid
Radio ELO	1986	2008	Neighbourhood Assoc.	Orcasitas
Radio Enlace	1989	Active	Youth Assoc.	Hortaleza
Radio Fhortaleza	1983	199?	Own collective	Hortaleza
Radio Fuga	1985	Active	Own collective	Aranjuez
Radio Hola	1980	Unknown	Own collective	Madrid (unknown neighbourhood)
Radio Imagen	Unknown	1984	Own collective	Alcalá de Henares
Radio Jabato	1984	Active	Youth Assembly of Coslada	Coslada
Radio Keka	1981	1982	Unknown	Madrid (unknown neighbourhood)
Radio La Voz del Pobre	1976	1980	Own collective	Ciudad Lineal
Radio Las Águilas	1983	Active	Neighbourhood Assoc.	Las Águilas
Radio Luna	1983	199?	Own collective ex-CNT	Malasaña
Radio Manzanares	1980	1980	Unknown	Madrid (unknown neighbourhood)
Radio Mercurio	1988	1989	Own collective	Puerta del Sol
Radio Morata	1984	Active	Own collective	Morata de Tajuña
Radio Negra	1984	1986	PCE	Aluche
Radio ORNI	1988	Unknown	Own collective	Vallecas
Radio Paloma	1987	Active	Neighbourhood Assoc.	Vallecas
Radio Piel Roja	1984	Unknown	Own collective	Leganés
Radio Rara	1983	1987/1988	Own collective	Getafe
Radio Ritmo	1985	201?	Own collective	Getafe
Radio Tú	1983	1985	Casa de la Cultura	Parla
Radio Vallekas	1986	Active	Own collective	Vallecas

Source: Own elaboration from the author's personal file, personal interviews and other materials.

in the communication process, since the project was being promoted by *Boletín K*, or at least it was announced in its promotional leaflets, by reporters

“who are where the news is produced or are its’ protagonists. So that it is transmitted and spread as you want, without manipulation, without intermediaries ... directly. You, who lives newsworthy acts or knows things that others don’t, now have the way to communicate it” (RADIO CARCOMA ca. 1989).

An interesting dynamic, as it encouraged neighbourhood participation in the communication process, convincing them that anyone can become a news reporter.

Another noteworthy programme on this station was *Qué malditas son las mujeres*, a space coordinated by the Women’s Commission of the Neighbourhood Association. This is a clear example of the role of these stations as a “movement of movements”, since here the movement for freedom of expression, the feminist movement and the neighbourhood movement are intertwined, facilitating, through participation in the radio, the circulation of the feminist agenda among the inhabitants of Canillejas.

Radio ELO (Emisora Libre de Orcasitas - Orcasitas Free Radio Station) is the last example of a station founded from the neighbourhood movement that we want to cover in this paper. The Orcasitas neighbourhood historically suffered problems and shortfalls that made its neighbourhood movement one of the most dynamic in the capital (Fresneda 1986). Established in 1986, the radio station was important in the neighbourhood, because it articulated its youthful fabric, constituting a “meeting place where sociability was generated among young people”, and this is because in Radio ELO

“there were *heavies*, there were *punks*, there were *rebels* [...], there were environmentalists, there was a little bit of a representation of what the Orcasitas youth world was. Not all the youth world, but maybe, kids with concerns [...] to communicate and so on” (Personal interview 2012b)

Inside the station’s guide, which hosted music, film and cultural magazines, there was a local news programme *El noticiero*, *las noticias de la ELO*, focused, of course, on the neighbourhood’s social, political and cultural news, and a programme dedicated to Orcasitas’ grassroots sport, *El deporte es lo nuestro*. These two spaces are examples of the importance given local issues in alternative communication projects, supported by the neighbourhood movement. In the case of *El noticiero*, the dynamic would be similar to that of Radio Carcoma’s *Boletín K*, giving visibility and putting the problems and realities that are most immediate and closest to the audience itself on the agenda, and in the case of *El deporte es lo nuestro*, the emphasis on grassroots sport, which is normally not covered by the general media, has had an impact on this revaluation of the community.

Before moving on to the second type of relationship between the neighbourhood movement and free radio stations, we should note that these experiences promoted by the neighbourhood associations themselves did not always have a happy ending. The Carcoma Radio group broke away from the neighbourhood association, which took advantage of its studies to found Onda Diamante, and the closure of Radio ELO led to a conflict between the group of the station and the Orcasitas Association, which ended up giving rise to Radio ELA, a station that was active until the start of 2020.

As we pointed out in the introduction to this section, the “local”, neighbourhood radio stations gave preferential attention in their content to everything that had to do with their immediate surroundings, with the fabric of what constituted the community in which they were inserted. We would like, next, to point out some examples of how these stations facilitated the participation of the neighbourhood movement, more or less organised, in the communicative dynamics.

OMC, Onda Merlín Comunitaria, is a radio station founded in 1987 in the Villaverde neighbourhood that from the beginning connected very well with the neighbourhood fabric of its surroundings: the La Unidad Neighbourhood Association, the Pro-San Cristóbal Association or the Homemakers’ Association, among others, found in this new media a powerful way to “promote” their activities. During these years, the *Matiné* magazine was the preferential space to cover these associations, because in it, as one of our informants remembers

“[...] we talked about the park, that the City Council had thrown salt on the green areas to avoid having to water it, that is, they burned it [...], that kind of thing, “they tell us that in the street there have been a lot of potholes, and so on”. You gave small things, not that it was easy” (Personal interview 2014a).

This use of free stations as a spokesperson for the neighbourhood movement was not new in Villaverde, as it had been supported in the district of Onda Sur since 1983. This radio station, which as we saw was a pioneer in the capital, had from the beginning shown its involvement with its community. Thus, from very early on, it declared that it was open to all the residents of the neighbourhoods within its radius of action (Villaverde Alto y Bajo, San Cristóbal, Orcasur, Getafe and Ciudad de los Ángeles), and put its devices at the service of those who needed them either in a personal capacity or as representatives of an organisation. In this way, and in a district that continued to be plagued by important problems of industrial pollution, unemployment and lack of infrastructure, representatives of schools in the area and of the labour movement passed quickly through his microphones (Irigay 1983).

Another example of a free radio station that gave coverage to neighbourhood struggles in its broadcasts was Radio Acción, from the Estrecho neighbourhood, which during its short-lived life gave a broadcasting space to the Active and Unemployed Collective from the Barrio del Pilar neighbourhood. This collective even broadcast the takeover of La Vaguada, once the

“La Vaguada es nuestra” movement had been defeated, in order to “demand that at least people from the neighbourhood be given jobs in the construction of the shopping centre” (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2015). Through this exercise in participation, a voice was given to a neighbourhood struggle that had lasted for more than five years (EL PAÍS 1976) and was of vital importance to the neighbourhood.

A final, somewhat particular example of this type of relationship would be that of the San Miguel Neighbourhood Association in Hortaleza, with Radio Fhortaleza first and Radio Enlace later on. The former station, a personal project of two residents who broadcast from their homes, was totally focused on the neighbourhood and its problems, giving a voice to its residents and creating a sense of community in an area that was still receiving a large amount of migrants in the 1980s (RADIO FHORTALEZA 1983). This concern for the community made the neighbourhood end up giving them a space in their premises to develop their activity, with a guide organised by members of the association itself who made their programmes on Radio Fhortaleza (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2011c).

This station disappeared and at the same time, in 1989, Radio Enlace was created in the neighbourhood, a new project promoted by young people that soon began to broadcast from the space previously occupied by Radio Fhortaleza. In the case of Enlace, it once again opted for a clear centrality of the neighbourhood in its themes and for a close relationship, almost feedback, between the media and the neighbourhood, since the members of one group used to participate in the other. In this way, the antenna of Radio Enlace made visible the concerns of the residents of a neighbourhood that, even at the end of the decade, among other problems suffered from the absence of urban transport in decent conditions, in the public sphere, becoming part of the social and political agenda (PERSONAL INTERVIEW 2012d).

5. Conclusions

Based on the information presented in these pages, it is possible to draw several conclusions. The first of these is that, without a doubt, the relationship between the neighbourhood movement and the free stations was productive and intense. The radio stations, whether or not they depended on neighbourhood associations, allowed the citizens' movement to participate in communication and to actively integrate itself into the ideological projection dynamics we mentioned earlier. Thus, the demands and positions of the neighbours organised around the neighbourhood organisations were incorporated into the repertoire of struggles of the alternative subculture, at the same time as their demands were incorporated into the public sphere and passed on to the political and social agenda, to be heard and resolved.

Madrid's most disadvantaged districts and neighbourhoods had, thanks to the free radios, a means of communication

through which, by actively participating, they could make themselves heard and make visible some problems that, otherwise, would have remained hidden by the generalist media.

It is also possible to conclude that the space of the free radio stations became an important space of sociability in the neighbourhoods in which, as we pointed out earlier, activists from different movements, in this case the neighbourhood movement, came into contact with other militant realities, feeding their discourses and repertoires of struggle, think of the example of the feminist programme of Radio Carcoma.

The start-up of radio stations by the neighbourhood movement, as we have seen in the three examples discussed in these pages, attracted the attention mainly of the young people in the neighbourhoods where they were established: Canillejas, Vicálvaro and Orcasitas. We believe that it is possible to discern a double dynamic behind this reality. In the first place, it is possible that, taking into account the material conditions of abandonment in which these neighbourhoods were found, the proposal to young people of a form of leisure such as participation in the media was an alternative to the usual outings in contexts of high youth unemployment and environments exposed to delinquency and drug consumption, with which the associations would be doing an important job in their communities. Secondly, this relationship between young people and radio could also have helped to attempt to achieve a generational change for an associative fabric which, as we saw, was very unattractive in the 1980s.

Finally, it seems undeniable that it has been a prosperous relationship for both movements since, today, we can find federated broadcasters in the FRAVM, developing joint action plans in their communities and watching and fighting for the improvement of the living conditions of their neighbourhoods and districts, which are sometimes still the most disadvantaged in Madrid. Examples of this are Onda Merlín Comunitaria, Radio Vallekas, Radio Enlace or Radio Almenara.

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Deficient regulation of community media in Spain: the case of Cuac FM

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Abstract

This article makes a critical analysis of the fundamental right exercise to freedom of expression and, specifically, of the deficient community non-profit audiovisual communication services regulation in the Spanish context. The case of Cuac FM (A Coruña) illustrates the limitations and difficulties faced by citizens when accessing the media. Cuac FM is a community radio station that was forced to take legal action against the regional administration and which had its broadcasting rights finally recognised by the courts of justice.

Keywords

Non-profit audiovisual services, freedom of expression, audiovisual communication regulation, right of access, community radio stations.

Resum

Aquest article realitza una anàlisi crítica de l'exercici del dret fonamental a la llibertat d'expressió i, concretament, de la deficient regulació dels serveis de comunicació audiovisual comunitaris sense ànim de lucre en el context espanyol. El cas de Cuac FM (la Corunya) ha il·lustrat les limitacions i dificultats a què s'enfronta la ciutadania a l'hora d'accedir als mitjans de comunicació. Cuac FM és una emissora de ràdio comunitària que es va veure en l'obligació de litigar contra l'administració autonòmica i que va veure finalment reconeguts els seus drets d'emissió pels tribunals de justícia.

Paraules clau

Serveis audiovisuals sense ànim de lucre, llibertat d'expressió, regulació de la comunicació audiovisual, dret d'accés, ràdios comunitàries.

1. Introduction

Social media are powerful tools of collective influence that, in democratic systems, play the role of critical observers of reality, while having the capacity to set the political agenda and favour states of public opinion, and can even produce far-reaching political changes (LEWIS 2015). The media system should constitute, as a whole, a pluralistic platform of expression for a multiplicity of groups and interests (NORRIS 2008), since access to the media is an essential condition for the full participation of citizens in the public space (MACBRIDE 1980). Different international organisations such as the UN, UNESCO, the European Parliament (2008) or the Council of Europe (2018, 2009) have highlighted the role played by the media belonging to the so-called "Third Sector of the Media" (Barranquero 2016) and have recommended the member states to protect and promote them, urging them to make available the necessary spectrum of analogical and digital radio and television frequencies, for the adequate exercise of their functions.

An example of this is Resolution dated 24 June 2008 of the European Parliament, recognising the role of the third

sector media as "effective instruments for strengthening cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and local identity, contributing to intercultural dialogue". According to the European Parliament, the third sector would correct "the ideas disseminated by the mass media with regard to social groups threatened with exclusion, such as refugees, immigrants or ethnic and religious minorities". On his behalf, the Council of Europe in its Declaration of 11 February 2009 considers community media "as a distinct audiovisual sector, alongside public service and private commercial media" and urges member states to create legal infrastructures where community media can develop, establishing reserves of analogue frequencies "which may still be needed after digital switch-on" and providing funding to this sector so that "they are not at a disadvantage in a digital environment".

However, despite international recognition, if comparative law is taken into account, Community audiovisual media suffer from unequal regulation in the European context (MEDA 2015; ORTIZ SOBRINO 2014). In Europe there are countries where this sector enjoys a high degree of development and scope, even without extensive regulatory development to protect it (e.g. Holland or Austria), with other states such as France, Denmark, Norway,

Ireland or Italy whose legal system regulates the right of access to broadcast licences and provides instruments to ensure the economic sustainability of citizen-owned media (ORTIZ SOBRINO 2014; CHEVAL 2014; LEMA-BLANCO and MEDA 2016). In contrast, Spain has legislation on audiovisual communication that has yet to be developed and, as a result, the community sector is in a highly vulnerable and unequal position (GARCÍA-CASTILLEJO 2016; CHAPARRO 2014) due to a number of “barriers and administrative restrictions that contravene current legislation” (GARCÍA-CASTILLEJO 2016: 131).

This article addresses the limitations and restrictions to the exercise of freedom of expression and communication of citizens in the Spanish context and, specifically, regulation of access to the radio spectrum by non-profit audiovisual communication services. A critical analysis of the level of development and application of Spanish legislation on audiovisual communication is carried out, to then present the case of the free and community radio station Cuac FM (A Coruña, Spain) which, after 24 years of existence, has achieved the recognition of its broadcasting rights in the courts of justice, an extremely relevant fact for the third sector of the media.

2. Conceptualisation of community media and its regulation in the Spanish system

Community media, also called associative or citizen media, are characterised by being privately owned, non-profit media whose main mission is to meet the communication needs of local communities. They are characterised by encouraging citizen participation in both the ownership of the medium and in its programming, administration, operation, financing and evaluation (AMARC 2010). Community media have been internationally recognised as a counterbalance to excessive concentration of media ownership (COUNCIL OF EUROPE 2018), as well as effective tools to strengthen the cultural and linguistic diversity of regions (LEMA-BLANCO AND MEDA 2016), improve social cohesion and promote processes of training, literacy and media empowerment (LEWIS and MITCHELL 2014; LEMA-BLANCO 2018, 2015; LEMA-BLANCO *et al.* 2016).

The existence of citizen-owned media is inferred from the 1978 Constitution, which recognises and protects the right “to freely express and disseminate thoughts, ideas and opinions by word, writing or any other means of reproduction” (Article 20.1.a), as well as “to freely communicate or receive truthful information by any means of dissemination” (Article 20.1.d), it being the responsibility of the public authorities “to remove the obstacles that prevent or hinder the participation of citizens in the political, economic, cultural and social life of the country” (Article 9.2). This right to freedom of communication has subsequently been developed by the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, whose case law has confirmed in a number of sentences the right of citizens, through their various forms of

collective association, to participate in radio broadcasting, with the State having to establish the channels that guarantee this exercise (SAAVEDRA 1993). Thus, as Boix points out (2007: 40), various local television and radio stations “that operated without any legal support or administrative concession, saw their rights protected in various rulings of the Constitutional Court by virtue of the exercise of their right to freedom of expression.

Nevertheless, despite the constitutional text, non-profit community audiovisual communication services have had to wait for the approval of current General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010 (OFFICIAL STATE BULLETIN, BOE by its initials in Spanish 2010) to be explicitly recognised in the Spanish system as citizens’ right. This recognition is the result of intense dialogue with different political actors by the free and community radio and television station sector, organised under the protection of the Community Media Network (REMC by its initials in Spanish). During the drafting of Law 7/2010, the ReMC demanded “an urgent debate on the imperative need for a democratic state to have a solid and healthy third sector of the media” (CLÚA *et al.* 2006: 2) and actively claimed the broadcasting rights of community media, presenting a good number of allegations to the draft of the rule, which were partially reflected in the final text (Meda 2013; GARCÍA 2013).

Article 32 of Law 7/2010 regulates issues related to community media as follows:

“Private entities with the legal status of non-profit entities may provide non-profit community audiovisual communication services to meet the specific social, cultural and communication needs of communities and social groups, as well as to promote citizen participation and structuring of the associative fabric” (Article 32.1).

Section 2 states that “the General State Administration must guarantee in all cases the availability of the public radio domain necessary for provision of these services” (Article 32.2), which has been considered a turning point for a sector historically forgotten by the legislator, although it does not establish the obligation to make a “reserve of radio space” as recommended by some international bodies such as the Council of Europe (MEDA 2012).

The legislator makes the rights of legal persons responsible for community radio and television stations conditional on complying with a number of requirements, such as the prior granting of a licence or the obligation to submit financial reports to the audiovisual authorities. Restrictive limitations are also placed on the economic capacity of these media, since “their contents must be broadcast free-to-air and without any form of commercial audiovisual communication” (Article 32.1), which limits the medium’s capacity for self-financing. Furthermore, as stated in the same article, “unless expressly authorised by the audiovisual authority, annual operating costs may not exceed 50,000 euros in the case of radio stations and 100,000 euros in the case of television stations” (Article 32.6). It should be noted

that these conditions are never imposed on commercial media, nor are the reasons for such a difference in treatment between commercial and non-profit media justified in the regulation. For all these reasons, some authors have been complaining that, despite the progress mentioned, citizen-owned media continue to be discriminated against and limited in comparison with the public and private commercial sector (GARCÍA-CASTILLEJO 2016; GARCÍA 2015).

Law 7/2010 established the need to develop, within a maximum period of 12 months from its approval, a specific regulation establishing the basic conditions for provision of non-profit community communication services, as well as the procedure for granting the relevant licences (Transitional Provision 14). It should be noted that this regulation has not been developed and approved yet, despite the fact that a decade has passed since adopting this regulation. This legislative failure has drawn the attention of the Council of State itself (2019), which has described this situation as “particularly anomalous and unjustified, given that it is a constant complaint from the sector”. Meanwhile, the Government has continued to carry out *de facto* distribution of the radio spectrum that discriminates against community media, without establishing any reservations for this sector (MEDA 2013; ZALLO 2010), or planning licences for community television stations. These issues are being studied by the UN Human Rights Committee, following the complaint made by the Community Media Network (REMC 2018).

In recent years there has been little legislative activity to address this anomaly. In 2017, the Congress of Deputies approved a non-legislative proposal in the Committee on Energy, Tourism and the Digital Agenda, which urged the central government to “regulate the granting of temporary authorisations to community radio and television communication services that were in operation prior to 1 January 2009” (OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES, BOCG by its initials in Spanish 2017). However, this non-legislative proposal, backed by the majority of the political groups, did not result in any progress on the part of the executive.

At the regional level, a small number of autonomous communities have begun to develop specific regulations for the granting of licences for community media, as has been the case of the Government of Catalonia and the Andalusian Parliament. The Catalan Government has drawn up a draft decree on non-profit audiovisual communication services, which establishes that when the central government plans new frequencies, a tender will be launched to select frequencies from among the Community broadcasters in operation (Government of Catalonia 2018a). This draft, pending approval, also includes measures to promote community media and is accompanied by a regulatory impact assessment report, aimed at regulating community media as an effective mechanism to reduce radio piracy (GOVERNMENT OF CATALONIA 2018b).

In October 2018, the Andalusian Parliament approved the

Andalusian Audiovisual Law 10/2018, which establishes measures aimed at digital literacy (OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF ANDALUSIA 2018, BOJA by its initials in Spanish). This was the result of an intense debate which around forty sector-specific and educational organisations took part in, constituting the “Andalusian Forum for Education, Communication and Citizenship”. The contributions of the aforementioned forum have been essential for this law to regulate citizens’ right of access to public media, promotion and recognition of community media, promotion of media literacy and promotion of citizen participation in the Audiovisual Council of Andalusia, constituting the most advanced legislative development for the audiovisual sector in the Spanish context.

The Andalusian Communications Law provides for the need to achieve “as far as possible (...) a balance between public sector providers, non-profit community media and private commercial media” (Article 2). It also establishes different technological and economic conditions for private commercial media and community media when accessing new broadcasting licences. The law includes a specific process for awarding licences for non-profit communication services and allows these media to have access to public funding sources to carry out their activities (Article 56). Economic and technological viability will be determined in accordance with the characteristics of the sector and by virtue of the capacity of the medium “to contribute to the structuring of the associative network of the service provision area, the number of hours of programming carried out by persons, social groups and social entities in the service provision area or the existence of mechanisms to form part of the project, participate in decision-making and in the governing bodies” (Additional Provision 2). These conditions established by the legislator are intended to ensure that licences are granted to non-profit-making entities which, among other requirements, are governed by criteria of free access, democratic functioning and service to their community of reference, as demanded by Andalusian community radio stations.

However, the Andalusian Government recently approved the Decree-Law 2/2020 (BOJA 2020) which amends, among others, the Andalusian Audiovisual 10/2018 extremely regressively as far as local radio and television stations are concerned. This situation has been denounced by organisations such as EMA-RTV or the Platform for the Defence of Communication and Journalism of Andalusia, who consider that the decree, appealed to the Constitutional Court, violates the state’s competence over telecommunications and social communication media, by enabling radio broadcasts in chain. The decree therefore eliminates the obligation to have a broadcasting studio in the coverage area, while at the same time abolishes the prohibition on the inclusion or broadcasting of any type of audiovisual commercial communication on unlicensed stations (the so-called “pirate stations”) and also opens the way to the privatisation of municipal stations (Article 28.8).

3. Litigation of broadcasting rights: the CUAC FM case

Cuac FM is the community radio station of A Coruña. Founded in 1996, Cuac FM is owned by the Colectivo de Universitarios Activos (CUAC), a non-profit cultural association made up of a hundred members, which besides the informative activity of a local media, it also promotes various media training projects. Throughout its 24 years of history, Cuac FM has requested on several occasions to the Government of Galicia a licence to broadcast as a non-profit radio station, always obtaining a negative response and being placed in future planning or regulatory developments at the state level. After the approval of Law 7/2010, the regional government called a public tender for commercial broadcasting licences in 2012, which was appealed in court by the Community Media Network. This entity argued that the Galician administration was depleting all the concessions that could be granted under the existing radio spectrum planning, without attending to the needs of the existing community media or establishing a reserve in the radio space for future awards to this sector.

The High Court of Justice of Galicia (TSXG by its initials in Galician) admitted the appeal, but ruled in favour of the administration, interpreting that this procedure did not infringe the right to have a licence in the future for this community broadcaster, since “there is the possibility of opting for commercial licences” (TSXG Sentence No. 620/2016). However, the court did not assess the inequality of conditions that exist between media companies and non-profit entities when it comes to meeting the technical and economic requirements necessary to be able to participate in a competition for commercial licences (for example, the provision of a deposit) and which represent an entry barrier for entities that do not carry out an economic activity.

In spite of the non-awarding of licences for community broadcasters, the Galician institutions had been maintaining a policy of non-persecution and respect for the *status quo*, which allowed for the activity of community media, given the evident anomaly in the media system. However, this situation was altered in September 2017, with the opening of a sanctioning procedure against Cuac FM by the Galician Government, at the request of the Ministry of Industry, for broadcasting without the corresponding licence, subjecting this station to an administrative sanction of between €100,001 and €200,000, which led to the temporary cessation of its broadcasts on the FM frequency, although maintaining its activity on the Internet.

The group submitted a pleading to this sanctioning file which was mainly based on three arguments: (1) the recognised public service provided by the community radio station Cuac FM, of whose existence the regional administration had been aware since before the start of its activity, without that radio broadcast affecting the rights of other media in the area or representing any damage; (2) the non-existence of the infringement due to the recognition of the right of access to non-profit radio communication services which is deduced from transitional

provision 14 of Law 7/2010; and (3) the action in good faith by the defendant in the exercise of a fundamental right. An example of this was that, upon the opening of the sanctioning file, the defendant group immediately ceased its FM broadcasts.

The allegations presented were partially accepted by the Galician administration, which resolved absolving Cuac FM from the foreseen economic sanction, but establishing the prohibition to broadcast through the modulated frequency (CUAC 2018). Disagreeing with this administrative resolution, the association decided to file a contentious-administrative appeal against the Galician Government before the High Court of Justice of Galicia (TSXG) through the special channel for the protection of fundamental rights. CUAC requested the annulment of the ban on broadcasting on the FM frequency, arguing that the ban violated its fundamental right to freedom of expression.

The TSXG issued a Sentence that upheld the claims of the community broadcaster (Sentence 00507/2018), declaring that the General Secretariat of the Media of the Government of Galicia violated with its resolution “the fundamental rights of CUAC” by not making effective Article 20 of the Spanish Constitution, which recognises “the right to create and use media, in this case community audiovisual communication services through which to disseminate ideas, opinions and information”. The TSXG gives Cuac FM a temporary guarantee for broadcasting and bases this ruling on the fact that audiovisual legislation provides for a period in which operators can continue to broadcast until it is regulated by the state, “providing for the granting of the appropriate licences, without any regulation having taken place in Galicia”.

The TSXG’s sentence is also consistent with the doctrine of the Constitutional Court (Sentence of the Constitutional Court 31/1994 of 31 January), which ruled that the exercise of a fundamental right such as those recognised in Article 20.1 (a) and (c) of the Spanish Constitution cannot be deferred *sine die* by the legislator, since the absence of legal regulation would lead, *de facto*, to the outright prohibition of the exercise of freedom of communication. After the sentence of the TSXG, Cuac FM decided to resume broadcasting on FM on 1 November 2018 after thirteen months of silence on the airwaves. This sentence by the TSXG was subsequently appealed against by the Galician administration in cassation before the Supreme Court, which rejected the appeal and ordered the Galician Government to pay the costs of the proceedings.

4. Conclusions and proposals

This article presents an analysis of community media’s legal situation in the Spanish context from which it is concluded, firstly, that the exercise of media communication by citizens is not carried out in adequate conditions of equal access to the radio spectrum. This sector is discriminated against by the administration, as various authors and experts have denounced (GARCÍA-CASTILLEJO 2016; MEDA 2015). The Administration has

prioritised public and private commercial media in granting broadcasting rights (CHAPARRO-ESCUADERO 2014; ZALLO 2010), while it has kept community television and radio stations in a situation of legal uncertainty, penalising the communication activity that is carried out without any burden and with a social purpose, relegating it to a situation of marginality (MEDA 2013; GARCÍA 2015).

The absence of an appropriate regulatory framework, as well as an adequate funding model for community media, has been detrimental to the sector's economic and social sustainability, leaving them in an extraordinarily weak position compared to their European counterparts. Thus, while in countries such as Ireland, France, Austria or Germany, associative radio and television stations are legally protected and financially supported by the Administration, allowing them to employ a good number of journalists, social communicators and cultural promoters (CHEVAL 2014), in Spain these media seem to be condemned to perpetual amateurism (MEDA 2015). This situation also undermines citizens' right to be informed through different sources, especially in the audiovisual field, where television and radio continue to be the media most used by citizens (EUROBAROMETER 2017) as well as the ones they trust the most (EUROBAROMETER 2018). The weakness of the third sector of the media, in particular community media, puts audiovisual pluralism at risk, as recognised by the recent *EU Media Pluralism Monitor* report (MASIP *et al.* 2017). Receiving plural information is a right of the citizenry and is based on the legal obligation that alternative sources of information are protected by law and that, in addition, such sources of information exist (DAHL 1989 in KLIMKIEWICZ 2019: 3).

In Spain, the exercise of the right to communication is not fully guaranteed under the terms established by the constitution. An example of this is the case of the Community radio station Cuac FM, which was the subject of a sanctioning procedure that led to the cessation of its broadcasts on the FM frequency for 13 months, without the damage caused to the group having been repaired. There is therefore a situation of abandonment arising from the ineffectiveness of a State, which has decided to refrain from complying with a law passed ten years ago, and from the ineffectiveness of an autonomous community which has not known how to, or has not wanted to, regulate or protect community radio broadcasting services in its territory, having the tools to do so.

Seeking protection of their rights of expression and communication in the courts of law is not a trivial issue for community media. This implies having the capacity and skills to design a legal strategy, when many of them do not have adequate economic and human resources, especially if the lawsuits to be initiated entail the risk of paying legal costs that these non-profit media cannot assume, as they have denounced before the UN Human Rights Committee (CDR 2018). This is why the recognition of Cuac FM's broadcasting rights in the courts of law and, specifically, of the temporary broadcasting guarantee included in the 2008 law, is a particularly important

milestone for the sector. This is the first time that a court decision has recognised that the ineffectiveness of the administration is a violation of a community radio station's constitutional rights.

The Court interpreted that the transitional regime of the General Audiovisual Communication Law, which regulates those community communication services that precede the law, grants them legal protection until the sector is adequately regulated. Thus, recognition of the guarantee of temporary broadcasting would legally support the activity of a hundred or so community broadcasters who have no licence. It is to be expected that the Cuac FM case will also serve as a legal precedent for the regional and state administrations to consider their claims to persecute and close down community radio and television stations on the grounds that they do not have a licence. This sentence highlights the repeated failure of the competent public administrations to comply with their legal obligations by maintaining the General Audiovisual Communication Law inapplicable today, ten years after its entry into force.

Community radio and television stations contribute to democratise the current media system, insofar as they guarantee citizens to participate directly in media ownership and act as a counterbalance to the phenomenon of media concentration, reflecting political pluralism and diversity of opinion, as stated in the Council of Europe's recommendation of 2018. That latter reminds member states that community media "are particularly suitable for addressing the information needs and interests of all sectors of society, by providing different social groups, including cultural, linguistic, ethnic, sexual minorities, etc., the opportunity to receive and disseminate information, to express themselves and to exchange ideas".

Community media contribute to the media literacy of citizens through their direct participation in creation and dissemination of content. Their existence allows social groups and individuals who are not usually reflected in the mass media to become active participants in society by engaging in debates relevant to them, building their own story and transmitting it through their own medium. In order to carry out this mission, it is necessary to delve into the legal and effective recognition of this sector, establishing for them a sufficient reserve of the spectrum both in FM and in digital terrestrial television, developing a non-discriminatory regulation for granting broadcasting rights adapted to the sector's characteristics.

It is also necessary to eliminate the arbitrary restrictions contained in the current law that affect carrying out non-profit audiovisual communication services, in terms of budget and scope of activity limitations and which have been imposed exclusively for community services. Little progress has been made at the regulatory level in the European Union as a whole on the objective of balancing distribution of broadcasting rights among the three communication sectors, public, private commercial and community, following the own recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. There is an urgent need to promote, at European level, a common framework protecting right of access to audiovisual media

under equal conditions, as well as specific funding measures guaranteeing the development, growth and sustainability of community, associative and citizen-owned media.

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Amendment of the Andalusian Audiovisual Law by Decree-Law 2/2020 and the privatisation of local public media. Impact and constitutionality analysis

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Abstract

The validation by the Parliament of Andalusia of Decree-Law 2/2020 (9/3/20) amending 21 regional laws and six decrees took place in the middle of the COVID-19 state of alarm. Its approval was processed by the Provincial Council, preventing the possibility of an in-depth debate. The alleged urgency is questionable from social, political and legal criteria, and deserves to be subjected to analysis and assessment of possible economic and social impacts. The consequences of the validated regulation entail deregulatory and privatising measures that could go against current general audiovisual legislation. If the unconstitutionality of its precepts is not considered, it could be applied to other Autonomous Communities, which would entail redesigning the audiovisual map.

Key words

Andalusian Audiovisual Law, Decree-Law 2/2020, Spanish General Audiovisual Communication Law, audiovisual regulation, local radio, local television, local media.

Resum

La convalidació pel Parlament d'Andalusia del Decret Llei 2/2020, de 9 de març, que ha modificat vint-i-una lleis autonòmiques i sis decrets, s'ha produït enmig de l'estat d'alarma per la COVID-19. L'aprovació ha estat tramitada per la Diputació Permanent, tot impeding la possibilitat d'un debat en profunditat. La urgència al·legada és qüestionable des de criteris socials, polítics i jurídics, i mereix ser sotmesa a una anàlisi i avaluació de possibles impactes econòmics i socials. Les conseqüències de la norma validada suposen mesures desregulatòries i privatitzadores, que podrien anar en contra de la vigent legislació general audiovisual. En cas de no considerar-se la inconstitucionalitat dels seus preceptes podria aplicar-se a altres comunitats autònomes, la qual cosa comportaria el redisseny del mapa audiovisual.

Paraules clau

Llei audiovisual andalusa, Decret Llei 2/2020, Llei general de la comunicació audiovisual, regulació audiovisual, ràdio local, televisió local, mitjans de proximitat.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the impact on local public media and the possible unconstitutionality of the reforms to the Andalusian Audiovisual Law brought about by Decree-Law 2/2020, approved by the Andalusian Government at the height of the COVID-19 state of alarm and appealed to the Constitutional Court by the Spanish Government. The article analyses the impact that the amendments will have on radio, already characterised by the concentration in the use of frequencies by three of the large state-owned channels.

The research has arisen from the analysis of media concentration and the tendency to eliminate local media in

Andalusia, as concluded from recent research by Chaparro, Gabilondo, El Mohammadiane and García-Castillejo 2019; García-Castillejo and Chaparro 2019; Olmedo, López and Ruíz 2019; Chaparro, Olmedo and Gabilondo 2016; Gabilondo 2014; Gabilondo and Olmedo 2014; Bustamante 2014; García-Castillejo 2014; and Guerrero-Cuadrado 2014.

Amendments to the Andalusian Audiovisual Law (10/2018) proposed in the Decree-Law 2/2020 imply, in its article 28, amendments to precepts of the Andalusian Law that we understand may exceed the limits of basic State legislation in view of the current wording of article 40 of the General Law on Audiovisual Communication, incurring in unconstitutionality. These amendments imply a strong impact on the audiovisual

map, promoting a greater concentration by making possible the privatisation of the local public audiovisual service through private companies by means of indirect management. In this sense, it is essential to analyse the Decree-Law and its consequences, which is the purpose of this research.

2. Background

Decree-Law 2/2020 on improvement and simplification of the regulation for the promotion of the productive activity in Andalusia amends 21 autonomous Andalusian laws and six decrees. The laws it amends are related to territorial planning, historical heritage, tourism, internal commerce and also, as is the case analysed in this article, Law 10/2018, Audiovisual of Andalusia.

The Andalusian government justifies the need and urgency of this legislative measure based on the signs that point “towards a clear deterioration in both macroeconomic and sectoral indicators and in employment beyond what has been observed in 2019, always in line with the foreseeable evolution of the world and Spanish economy” (text derived from the explanatory memorandum of the Decree-Law itself), all of which is aggravated by the crisis caused and the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain and Andalusia.

The Decree-Law was validated on 2 April 2020 in the context of the declaration of the state of alarm approved by the Government of Spain due to COVID-19, by way of urgency through the Permanent Commission of the Parliament of Andalusia, the only body operating due to the closure of the Government due to the state of alarm, with the PSOE and Adelante Andalucía political groups voting against it.

This Decree proposes a substantial amendment to the Andalusian Audiovisual Law 10/2018. Among the changes that this initiative entails, worthy of mention is authorising municipalities to be able to agree on indirect management of the local public audiovisual service, which allows granting private entities the use of planned frequencies for the direct operation of the public radio and television service. The Decree-Law also states that individuals or legal entities with commercial licences, as well as privatised public licences, would not need to have a registered office in Andalusia, nor obtain, as they have done up to now, a mandatory report from the Audiovisual Council of Andalusia (CAA by its initials in Spanish). These measures would make it easier for local radio stations to broadcast programmes designed from the stations’ headquarters outside Andalusia, from any city outside the FM coverage area, or even from abroad. Furthermore, the amendments to the Decree cease to penalise advertisers who purchase space on stations without a licence or “pirates”.

The Spanish Government, understanding that the decision of the Andalusian Government was encroaching on State competences, requested a report from the Council of State in order to appeal to the Constitutional Court on the grounds of unconstitutionality

of the Decree-Law amending the Andalusian Audiovisual Law, as well as several provisions affecting competences in the field of heritage. The Permanent Commission of the Council of State issued Opinion No. 264/2020 (dated 16 April), reflecting that it observed unconstitutionality in some of its precepts, both those affecting the Audiovisual Law and those relating to heritage.

Throughout the above process the CAA has been inhibited from commenting on the substance of this reform. The body refused to issue, in its regulatory role, the *ex officio* report that would correspond, in addition to not responding to the questions and doubts raised by associations and entities in the audiovisual field of the Platform for the Defence of Communication and Journalism in Andalusia (PDCPA by its initials in Spanish).

The CAA justified its inhibition by claiming that it was not competent to rule on “already approved regulatory texts”, despite having been informed of the content of the Decree one month before the validation of the amendment to Law 10/2018. Subsequently, it published a report from the legal advisor, which merely indicated what the regulatory changes were (15/4/2020) without assessing the impact and legality of the change. It should be remembered that CAA’s work is based on observing compliance with the law and that its assessments are in no way binding.

3. Basis for the unconstitutionality of audiovisual provisions of Decree-Law 2/2020

The appeal submitted by the Government to the Constitutional Court, once the mandatory opinion of the Council of State had been issued, which only ruled on the issues raised by the Spanish Government itself in its application, was admitted for processing, with the consequent suspension of the entry into force of the contested provisions. The appeal, however, has not raised and therefore has not entered into an analysis of the unconstitutionality of what is probably one of the most flagrant attacks on plurality and effective competition in the Andalusian audiovisual sector and by application in Spain, by not questioning the amendment of Article 46 of the Andalusian Audiovisual Law. This would make possible, among other things, indirect management of the local public audiovisual communication service, not provided for in the General Audiovisual Law, something that is expressly included in the case of regional public radio and television stations since the reform undertaken in 2012.

Article 28.8 of the Decree-Law of Andalusia, amending Article 46 of the Andalusian Audiovisual Law 10/2018, in addition to introducing the possibility of granting the management of the local public audiovisual communication service to private companies, may lead to the loss of public local communication services, and puts at risk a factor of plurality in the media system and in the effective exercise of constitutional rights, such as the right of access of citizens in their social and political diversity to the media, protected by Article 20 of the Constitution.

This fact is a new step in the “privatising” trend that somehow confronts the original spirit of Law 7/2010, which clearly defined the provision of public audiovisual service to that offered by public entities and not to the indirect management by private entities.

The Spanish Government's negligence in lodging an appeal of unconstitutionality cannot be overlooked, since the Autonomous Communities do not have the power to introduce this specific amendment in the local public audiovisual service's management model, since they lack the constitutional and legal coverage to do so. In view of and after a careful reading of the wording of Article 40 of the current General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010, which did assume this possibility expressly and repeatedly through the reform of 2012 operated by the Government of the Partido Popular political party,¹ but exclusively for the service of regional coverage, and not for the case of management in its local mode.

The error of assessment stems from the fact that it seems to be assumed that the change made by which the possibility of “privatising” management of regional radio and television stations was promoted *de facto* by Law 6/2012 also applied to local public media and in particular to those provided by decision of the local authorities. A rigorous reading of this Law and of the new wording of Article 40 of the General Audiovisual Communication Law should leave no doubt about other interpretations. The general audiovisual legislation maintains reserving direct management of the local public audiovisual service to the municipal administration.

The explanatory memorandum of Law 6/2012 dated 1 August, amending the General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010 dated 31 March, to “make the management of public audiovisual communication services in the Autonomous Communities more flexible”, which opened up the possibility of indirect management or through other public-private partnership instruments, only refers to the autonomous community service, but never to that provided by local entities, (sic):

“... with the proposed amendment, the Autonomous Communities will be able to decide on provision of the public audiovisual communication service [the regional coverage service, not the local service], and they can opt for directly or indirectly managing it using different formulas including public-private collaboration modalities. (...). In addition, the Autonomous Communities which have been providing the public audiovisual communication service may transfer it to a third party in accordance with their specific legislation...”.

The reading of the previous text does not refer to other media that are not strictly the entities or organisms managed directly by the autonomous communities. It is also worth remembering that this amendment was made at the request of communities such as Madrid, Valencia or Murcia (then governed by the Partido Popular political party) that expressed their desire to

privatise the autonomous public radio and television stations. Only the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia has outsourced the regional television service under this reform by means of Law 10/2012, dated 5 December, amending Law 9/2004 dated 29 December on the establishment of the public enterprise Radiotelevisión de la Región de Murcia (RTRM - Radiotelevision of the Region of Murcia). Similarly, Article 2 of Law 6/2012 states that “privatisation” may open the door to indirect management of the autonomous public audiovisual service, but at no time does it refer to the local service.

The current wording of Law 7/2010, a law qualified as general and basic to which the autonomous regulations on this same matter must be hierarchically adhered to, as has already been made clear by the Constitutional Court in previous cases, falls² within the scope of article 149.1.27, which includes the State's competence to dictate the basic rules relating to the regime of the media. This competence is compatible with the autonomous communities' powers of execution and development, whereby “granting concessions for indirect management of the service due to its close connection with the media”, is a shared competence, and consequently the basic normative regulation corresponds to the State and³ therefore the new Andalusian regional legislation would incur in unconstitutionality by being contrary to what is established in article 40 of the General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010.

The current Public Sector Contracts Law of 2017 would also not cover the intention of the Decree-Law of the Andalusian Regional Government, which would modify Article 46 of Law 10/2018 to enable the public audiovisual communication service of a local scope, owned by local entities, to be managed by any of the forms foreseen in Article 85.2 of Law 7/1985, dated 2 April, regulating the Bases of the Local Regime, thus eliminating the exclusivity of direct management from the basic legal coverage.

The wording of the third paragraph of Article 40.2 of the General Law clearly states that the Autonomous Communities (nothing is said about the local entities, nor, incidentally, about the State) that agree to provide the public audiovisual communication service will determine the methods of managing the service, which may consist, among other things, of providing the service directly through their own bodies, media or entities, of attribution to a third party of the indirect management of the service or of production and editing of the various audiovisual programmes, or of provision of the service through other public-private partnership instruments, in accordance with the principles of advertising, transparency and competition, as well as non-discrimination and equal treatment. Likewise, the Autonomous Communities may agree to transform direct management of the service into indirect management, by transferring the ownership of the entity providing the service. This shall be carried out in accordance with the aforementioned principles, but at no time shall reference be made to the local service, which, as is known, is not subsumed under the autonomous community service or the service provided by the

State. Rather it is a differentiated categorisation of the public audiovisual service, as specified in the first paragraph of this same number 2 of Article 40 when it states that:

“2. The State, the Autonomous Communities and the Local Entities may agree to provide a public audiovisual communication service with the aim of broadcasting in open channels, either generalist or thematic, depending on the circumstances and peculiarities of the geographical areas concerned and on the criteria established in the previous section.”

From this premise, there is an invasion of the State's competences. A circumstance that would justify the lodging of the Constitutional Court's appeal of unconstitutionality, more extensive than the one presented by the Spanish Government last April 2020.

On the other hand, only in radio, privatising the management of municipal stations and their relationship with commercial channels as relay stations, as proposed by Decree-Law 2/2020, can arbitrarily alter the precarious balance of the distribution of concessions carried out so far by the regional tenders throughout the State. Concessions dependent on State technical plan planning would now be competing due to making new frequencies for commercial radio available. It should also be remembered that currently there are no analogue frequencies available. This channel would become a gateway to new frequencies completely outside the scope of state and regional public policies, an absolute deregulation that would also destroy a model of participatory and local public radio with 41 years of consolidation.

Under the General Audiovisual Communication Law, but also under the planning of the radio spectrum for provision of these local public services, it⁴ is noted that the planned radio spectrum is an exclusive competence of the State, moreover, in the case of radio, it reserves an exclusive, non-commercial frequency band for municipal broadcasters (107.0-107.9 MHz).

The Decree-Law 2/2020, also introduces another series of amendments to the provisions of the Andalusian Audiovisual Law 10/2018, which are also likely to be unconstitutional. It would be convenient for the Constitutional Court to be able to rule on their constitutionality, since otherwise the paradox could arise that unconstitutional precepts, not having been appealed, would remain “legally” in force.

In addition to those mentioned above, the group of provisions of Article 28 of Decree-Law 2/2020 we consider may be unconstitutional are as follows:

- a. Number Four, amending Article 37(b), to enable public service providers to make channel broadcasts and to connect to private commercial audiovisual media services.
- b. Number Six, which eliminates article 40, which prohibits including or disseminating any type of audiovisual commercial communication in broadcasts by persons providing audiovisual communication services who do not have the required authorisation or who have not fulfilled the duty of

prior communication.

- c. Number Ten, which eliminates the Article 66(c) by which the obligation to prove the continuous issue during two consecutive years is necessary for concluding the legal transaction.
- d. Number Eleven, which amends points 4 and 6 of section (a) by removing the power of the CAA to issue mandatory licensing reports.
- e. Number Twelve, deleting Articles 72(e) and 74(b) of Law 10/2018. Articles 72(e) and 74(b) of Law No 10/2018 refer to very serious and minor infringements respectively. Thus, letters e) and b) of the respective articles contain lists of the administrative sanctioning system, specific infringements that may be committed with respect to obligations contained in the Andalusian Audiovisual Law. In Article 72.e) the infringement is linked to amending the regime of enabling titles that the Decree-Law amends, under Law 6/2012 dated 1 August, amending the General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010, dated 31 March, to make the modes of management of public audiovisual communication services more flexible, but which is more than debatable in the case of local entities (only article. 2). The amendment of Article 74(b) refers to the infringement provided for “breach of the prohibition on broadcasting or contracting audiovisual commercial communications with audiovisual communication services that do not have the corresponding enabling title or have not fulfilled the duty of prior communication”, in accordance with the provisions of Article 40.1 of Law 10/2018.
- f. Number thirteen, amending Article 80(1) of Law 10/2018, removes Article 74(b) on *administrative liability for the broadcasting of advertising on stations without a licence*.
- g. Number fourteen, which eliminates Article 80(1) of Law 10/2018, as in the previous one, which cancels Article 74(b).
- h. Number fifteen, modifies paragraph f) of article 81 of Law 10/2018, on the obligation to collaborate with the Andalusian Regional Government, for advertisers who have *economic, professional, business or financial relations with the providers of audiovisual communication services without a licence to do so, who are popularly known as “pirate” radio stations and* which is now intended to exempt them from this liability.
- i. Number seventeen deleting the fourth additional provision creating the Information Statute, in this case it is clear that there is an unjustified use of the decree law in the absence of the necessary budget.

4. Effect of the regulatory change on the local broadcasting map in Andalusia

The precarious balance of distribution of concessions in Andalusia may be definitively broken by the irruption of Decree-Law 2/2020, which involves opening up the possibility of

Table 1. Public and private municipal licences in Andalusia

	Local public radio stations	Outsourced ocal public radio stations	Commercial radio stations
Almeria	8	4	25
Cadiz	18	1	37
Cordoba	17	3	25
Granada	21	4	30
Huelva	11	5	18
Jaen	8	3	34
Malaga	15	8	34
Seville	20	3	33
TOTAL**	118	31	236

*Privatised stations contrary to current legislation (outsourced)

**Includes Medium Wave stations.

Source: COMandalucía (<www.comandalucia.org>) / In-house document.

privatisation of local public media, which would foreseeably result in the conversion of municipal radio and television stations into signal repeaters for programming designed without any link to the territory.

In Andalusia there are a total of 524 concessions (Table 1), 236 to which are to commercial stations and 288 to local councils for direct management as local public broadcasters. However, of the total 288 licences granted to local councils, only 118 are in operation, a total of 139 frequencies are not in operation and there is a high number of outsourcing: 31 local councils outsource public broadcasters to private entities or individuals. This is a situation which has hitherto been illegal and which the amendments provided for in Decree-Law 2/2020 have legalised.

4.1 Outsourced local public radio stations

The current casuistry of the outsourced stations is varied. In some cases, they are linked to the programming of commercial channels (Cadena SER and COPE) without it being clear or recognizable what the interest of this spurious relationship is. A second case is that of the transfer in public tender or directly to a natural or legal person in the territory or nearby. In most of these cases the local council pays for the radio management service, there are no savings as justified in the measure. A third case is that where the management is transferred to a local non-profit association and there is some kind of subsidy to contribute to the sustainability of the radio.

The map open to public consultation of the research group Communication and Culture Laboratory COMandalucia (<www.com-andalucia.org>) gives a detailed account of this irregular casuistry since 2012. It should be noted that this situation is known both by the regional government and by the Audiovisual Council of Andalusia (CAA) and that surprisingly and in contravention of the regulations they have positively evaluated the renewal of licences.

The CAA always ended up giving the plea on the grounds

that the Administration did not provide sufficient information to contrast the situation. The government for its part ignored a situation of legal violation that affects municipalities governed by PP and PSOE. Only in one recent case has there been intervention by the CAA (2015) at the request of the Board in the case of Tomares Local Council, which had linked its emissions to Intereconomía channel. In 1998 the mayor of Cuevas de Almanzora was prosecuted and disqualified for privatising the municipal radio. These have been two isolated cases of intervention; the rest of the local councils have only received letters of warning with no results.

The change may now be more profound and would make any future regulatory intervention more difficult because of the interests generated and the argument about consolidated rights, in a map that may change radically if it ends up allowing local councils to close privatisation agreements with individuals and legal entities represented by the chains. The COPE network has already expressed its interest. In fact, the statement on the reform of the Andalusian Audiovisual Law was strongly questioned by the Spanish Association of Commercial Radio Broadcasting (AERC) with COPE's abstention, which asks for new licences to gain audience and speculates on displacing the Cadena SER from number one in the ranking.

The amendment to the Andalusian Audiovisual Law would lead to the strengthening of absolute deregulation, there would be practically no need for a law for access to a free and deregulated market. This case adds one more serious consequence: the dismissal of workers from local public media that would not be necessary for frequencies converted into mere signal repeater posts.

The complete cession of the municipal radio stations, generally to private companies, is a practice that only benefits the private contractor, while it leaves the municipality without a public medium that informs and contributes to the value of the territory, favouring the right of access for citizen participation and the right to communication.

These changes, if consolidated, would in fact leave spectrum planning up to the municipalities. From the municipalities point of view, it could be argued that this right could be might be legitimate if there were a change in that sense in the basic law. However, taking into account the right of any local council to apply for the enabling title and the volatility of municipal policy it would be easy to foresee the confluence of interests that would facilitate the transfer of a public right to private activity and even the formation of new private channels outside the National Technical Plan. The public audiovisual media must maintain at all costs their essence of public service, especially in territories where the absence of economic profitability for the private sector makes it unfeasible to guarantee the existence of local news agendas and the right of access, one of the great conquests of the local public media.

4.2 The new commercial broadcasting map consolidates channel repeater antennas

The Andalusian commercial broadcasting map, a map which should be eminently local because of the nature of the tenders and the technical coverage of the planned FM, is already in the hands of the large state-owned channels, as Table 2 shows. Activation of the Decree would mean an even greater oligopolisation of the radio frequency pool, whereas it would be necessary to move towards deconcentration.

Of the 236 licences granted to private groups,⁵ only three operate as independent stations, with two others not in use. The rest of the frequencies are distributed among the large groups of the state coverage chains: PRISA (125 stations, 47 generalist ones and 78 thematic or musical ones: 53%); COPE (44 stations, 29 generalist ones and 15 musical ones:

Table 2. Generalist and Commercial Thematic Licences by Province⁶

	Atresmedia		COPE		PRISA	
	Onda Cero generalist	Thematic stations	COPE generalist	Thematic stations	SER generalist	Thematic stations
Almeria	5	1	2	1	5	9
Cadiz	4	2	5	1	8	13
Cordoba	3	6	3	1	8	4
Granada	3	0	5	1	6	11
Huelva	1	2	2	2	4	4
Jaen	2	1	1	2	7	15
Malaga	4	2	5	3	6	11
Seville	3	2	6	4	3	11
TOTAL	25	16	29	15	47	78
	41		44		125	

	Other groups*		Independent stations	
	Generalist programming	Thematic programming	Generalist programming	Thematic programming
Almeria	0	2	0	0
Cadiz	0	4	0	0
Cordoba	0	3	1	0
Granada	0	1	0	0
Huelva	0	2	1	0
Jaen	0	3	2	0
Malaga	0	2	1	0
Seville	2	2	0	0
TOTAL	2	19	5	0
	21		5	

*Grupo Planeta, Radio Blanca, Radio María, Unidad Editorial

Source: COMandalucía (www.comandalucia.org). In-house documenta.

18.6%) and Atresmedia (41 stations, 25 generalist ones and 16 musical ones: 17.4%). To a lesser extent, other groups such as Planeta, Radio Blanca, Unidad Editorial and Radio María have stations (Table 2).

The situation created by Decree-Law 2/2020 leads to a depleting plurality and therefore generating a free public opinion. The Andalusian Audiovisual Law has already reduced the requirement for local radio stations to broadcast 15 hours of information per week, not including advertising, when previously the obligation was four hours per day of local content (Decree 174/2002) and Decree-Law 2/2020 reduces this time to 10 hours of information per week, although it could have been reduced to zero, because with the amendment the station is not obliged to have facilities in the locality. At present there are generalist stations such as COPE Nerva and Puente Genil, Cadena SER Lucena, Villanueva de Córdoba and Alhama de Granada, which act as simple relay posts.

In reality, except for those located in provincial capitals, most of the stations planned in smaller population centres and in the hands of the channels do not have their own programming. The only stations that serve the territory exclusively with local content are local public and autonomous community stations; of the latter, there are 30 in Andalusia (map: www.com-andalucia.org).

Another problem that has not been sufficiently discussed is related to thematic radio stations, most of them musical, 109 of which are owned by the three main groups (78 by the PRISA group). These stations lack local programming and hired staff. This condition violates the qualification tenders that required local investment, recruitment of staff, domicile in the area of coverage... Why were repeaters not planned directly instead of strictly local stations?

All the anomalies detected are the result of increasingly permissive legislation, poor planning and the absence of controls and sanctions, which is in keeping with a general situation throughout the State.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Spain has an audiovisual media map that in democracy has not been able to solve the need to attend to and procure an ecosystem that maintains the balance between state, autonomous and local coverage in the public and private sectors, not to mention the situation of legal abandonment of the non-profit community media. In fact, on the basis of concessions to private commercial local broadcasters, construction of state coverage channels has been allowed, obviating their obligations to the coverage territory. The logical thing would have been to plan specific tenders for those operators interested in offering a service exclusively of state, autonomic or local coverage. Without these premises, we have witnessed the exclusion and "ghettoization" of local programming both in the thematic music channels and in the generalist ones, where, minus the

advertising, it is difficult to exceed 15 hours a week of local broadcasting.

The legitimacy of the broadcast must not exclude the local blackout. Our neighbour France has long since solved this problem by setting up tenders, through its independent audiovisual authority, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, with up to five different categories of private non-profit and for-profit radio with restrictions on coverage and specificity of generalist and thematic programming. A public policy of attention to the demands of the market, but also designed from the interest of citizens (GARCÍA-CASTILLEJO AND CHAPARRO 2019).

In most cases, local public radio and television fill a gap in coverage that is usually justified by the low profitability of private commercial media at the strictly local level. It is not that, however, local public media are more profitable economically, it is impossible from an advertising market point of view, but they do have an obligation to provide a public service from which the commercial media are exempted. Local public audiovisual media are essential services for constructing the story at the local level, for debating and dynamising, for generating narratives that allow constructing the territory from the decision making in the management of what is next. It is the search for social profitability that should be demanded of them. Only in the local public radio of Andalusia, in the exercise of the right of access, more than 2000 people and 600 groups representing local civil society participate in the creation of content daily (CHAPARRO, OLMEDO & GABILONDO 2016). This is part of the wealth of a democracy that is now negligently put at risk (GUERRERO-CUADRADO 2014).

The Spanish audiovisual system has serious deficits arising from concentration, the weakening of public media, the absence of an Audiovisual Authority with sufficient powers and resources as required by European directives, and of course the absence of frequency planning for the third sector, which is another serious legal breach, in this case by the State. The decision of the Andalusian Regional Government makes the problems raised extremely serious.

The reform of the Andalusian government allows local entities to approve the indirect management by third parties of a local public audiovisual media, without this possibility being included in basic State legislation. It also allows them to broadcast on a channel without attending to local content, without the obligation to have installations in the territory itself (no operator will be obliged, neither commercial nor community), also putting at risk public employment that the private sector could not absorb, because this new regulation simply deals with providing repeater posts, breaking up the broadcasters in their area of coverage. Nor does it seem normal to allow commercial and institutional advertising in media without a licence.

The Andalusian Government has adapted the legislative framework to a reality in which there has been no desire to constructively intervene in depth, correcting the serious deficits in the use of the radio spectrum. This has not been done by the State, nor by the Autonomous Communities. However,

the solution cannot lie in normalising behaviour that was and should be outside the law. Not because there are infractions or crimes and they cannot always be avoided, the solution is to legalise their practice.

Although the main references, by involvement, have been related to radio as they have been identified as the priority objective of the reform of the Decree-Law, it should be borne in mind that the same criteria can be considered for local public television stations, although the greater number of private local channels available, their low economic profitability in many districts and the provisional nature of the call for tenders pending a new tender for awards, the previous ones were appealed against, lead to the interests in accessing the public market presently no being favourable. However, the circumstances are equally high risk for this sector in the event that local corporations with fictitious savings arguments decide to transfer the licences for their administration or operation to a private entity.

Spanish society is in need of agreements, the audiovisual sector is one of them and it must be designed from the interests of civil society and the sector as a whole, as was the Andalusian Audiovisual Law in 2018, this must be the procedure for any reform because only from debate and recognition of dissent can consensus be built. If there is no dialogue to discuss and correct the dangerous reform of the audiovisual framework in Andalusia, which represents a “privatisation” of the local public audiovisual service, there seems to be only one response left from the Constitutional Court.

Notes

1. The title of the law by which the reform of Law 7/2010 is undertaken in 2012 by the Government of the Partido Popular political party, is in itself sufficiently expressive of the scope of the reform, which was limited to the public audiovisual communication services of the Autonomous Communities and either by the will of the legislator or by forgetfulness or ignorance, it was not included in the amendment undertaken, the local public media. Thus, the title of the aforementioned law is: Law 6/2012, dated 1 August, on amendment of General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010, dated 31 March, to make the management of the autonomous public audiovisual communication services more flexible. It should be added that the text of this 2012 law falls within this regulatory scope and does not apply to local public media.
2. Judgement of the Constitutional Court dated 22 June 2017, in Appeal of Unconstitutionality 8112-2006 filed by the Spanish President of the Government.
3. The sixth final provision of the General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010, regarding the Title of Competence, states that: “This Law is issued under the State’s competence to issue basic legislation on the press, radio and television regime set out in Article 149.1.27 of the Consti-

tution, except for Articles 5.3, ninth paragraph, 11, 31 and section 5 of the second transitional provision which are issued under the exclusive State competence in the field of telecommunications, provided for in Article 149.1.21 of the Constitution. The provisions of this Law are applicable to all the Autonomous Communities, observing, in any case, the exclusive and shared competences in matters of media and self-organisation attributed to them by the respective Statutes of Autonomy”.

4. In the case of the local public radio of the Technical Plan approved by [Royal Decree 462/2015](#), dated 5 June, approving the National Broadcasting Technical Plan for VHF broadcasting with frequency modulation, and in the case of local public DTT by the current National Technical Plan for Digital Local Television (approved by Royal Decree 439/2004, dated 12 March, amended by the Third Final Provision of Royal Decree 391/2019, dated 21 June, approving the National Technical Plan for Digital Terrestrial Television.
5. The Andalusian Government assumed full powers in the area of concessions in 1984, and has since granted 216 frequencies.
6. More detailed information is available in the Andalusian Local Public Radio in Andalusia Map and the Andalusian Commercial Radio Map, prepared by the COMandalucía research group (University of Málaga) as a result of different research projects the authors of this article have participated in. Both data available in the following link: <<https://com-andalucia.org/radio>> (Accessed on: 28/05/2020).

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Unification of audio-visual content over iTV, a trigger to attract younger generations to the big screen: the case of Ultra TV

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Abstract

TV consumption habits have changed, especially among the younger generations, due to content fragmentation over several platforms. However, given the comfort associated with large screens, the TV set is still a desired device for watching audio-visual content. In this scenario, an interactive TV (iTV) approach that offers a unification of audio-visual content from different sources can attract younger consumers who are increasingly moving away from this device. Through the analysis of scientific papers with results from Ultra TV (an iTV solution for the unification of linear and non-linear content and sources) this paper aims to reflect on the potential influence of content unification on the behaviours and relationship of younger generations with the large screen. The analysis undertaken showed that a solution which provides comfort and agile access to content from various sources (linear and non-linear TV, Netflix, YouTube, Facebook) using a unique User Interface has the potential to attract younger consumers to use iTV more often.

Keywords

TV-Web convergence; interactive television; television consumption; content unification; audio-visual content.

Resum

Els hàbits de consum a la televisió, especialment entre les generacions més joves, han canviat a causa de la fragmentació dels continguts en diverses plataformes. Tanmateix, com que les grans pantalles s'associen a la comoditat, el televisor segueix sent un dispositiu desitjat per veure continguts audiovisuals. Tenint en compte aquest escenari, un enfocament de la televisió interactiva (iTV) que ofereix una unificació de continguts audiovisuals de diferents fonts pot atraure el públic més jove, que cada vegada s'allunya més d'aquest dispositiu. Mitjançant l'anàlisi d'articles científics amb resultats sobre Ultra TV (una solució d'iTV per a la unificació de continguts i fonts lineals i no lineals), aquest article pretén reflexionar sobre la influència potencial de la unificació de continguts en els comportaments i la relació de les generacions més joves amb la gran pantalla. L'anàlisi realitzada ha demostrat que una solució que ofereix comoditat i accés àgil als continguts de diferents fonts (televisió lineal i no lineal, Netflix, YouTube, Facebook) mitjançant una interfície d'usuari única té el potencial d'atraure els consumidors més joves perquè utilitzin la iTV més sovint.

Paraules clau

Convergència televisió-web, televisió interactiva, consum de televisió, unificació de continguts, continguts audiovisuals.

Introduction

With the proliferation of communication channels and the very ubiquitous nature of technologies and communications, media are omnipresent in consumers' daily lives (JENKINS 2001). However, media consumption has been changing over the years as consumers are seeking content that is more geared to their

individual preferences and activities (FLEURY 2016). In addition, media and audio-visual consumers are no longer seen as having only a passive role, as receivers of the communication message, but as active users (SPARVIERO 2019) who interact in a medium full of possibilities.

As Jenkins (2006) states, media convergence is the flow of content across multiple media platforms, cooperation between

industries and the migratory behaviour of target audiences, all of which play an important role in the very creation and distribution of content. Therefore, this convergence must be examined in terms of both social and technological changes.

In the case of television, the related technologies and viewers' consumption habits have evolved considerably (ABREU *et al.* 2017; CESAR, KNOCHE & BULTERMAN, 2010). The consumer has come to play an active role in their interaction with TV, having the need to have more control over the content made available. The television experience has also undergone changes in the way viewers have access to content on television since these contents are increasingly supported by Video on Demand (VoD) (VANATTENHOVEN & GEERTS 2015) and catch-up TV services (ABREU *et al.* 2017). TV-Web convergence, more precisely the connection between more conventional TV and the services supported by the Internet, has allowed consumers to search for information, interact with friends or colleagues and select other devices, such as laptops, to obtain complementary information on TV programmes as well as Over-the-top (OTT) content (HESS *et al.* 2011), providing the creation of new user experiences and consumption more adapted to a logic of anytime, anywhere. In addition, TV-Web convergence has allowed interactive TV (iTV) to support the delivery of various web contents in a logic of unification of content on television. This approach allows users a wider choice of content without switching devices, which can be especially tempting for young users who essentially watch OTT content (ABREU *et al.* 2019).

As the industry has already noted (ABREU *et al.* 2018), unification can be an asset, especially at home where the big TV screen is still the dominant device for watching TV content. In addition, if content unification can be supported by a single, unique and consistent user interface for all sources of content, it can be a trigger to attract younger generations used to watching audio-visual content on the Internet (ERICSSON CONSUMERLAB 2017) as they will benefit from all the content they want over the big screen without the need to jump from application to application, dealing with an ecosystem with different user interfaces.

In this context, this paper aims to reflect on this hypothesis by analyzing the Ultra TV¹ solution, which combines TV content (linear and non-linear) and OTT content into a single TV interface, through related papers describing its characteristics and the results of its evaluation in a field trial. After this introductory section, the paper is structured as follows: section 2 reflects about content unification on iTV and gives examples of commercial solutions; the consumption habits and behaviours of young users with respect to iTV are presented in section 3; section 4 describes the methodology followed to analyse the Ultra TV case; the analysis of the Ultra TV solution and relevant results are presented in section 5; and finally, section 6 sets out the final considerations.

Unification of content on iTV

Media convergence can be perceived as the phenomenon corresponding to the evolutionary process of the information society (DELIYANNIS 2016). Castells (2011) recognizes that the growing interaction between vertical and horizontal communication networks does not necessarily imply that mass media are taking on new autonomous forms of content creation and distribution, but rather that the process of convergence gives rise to a new media reality. This process is particularly important for television, since TV-Web convergence has allowed the expansion and dynamization of characteristics such as interactivity, participation and sociability that characterize today's TV (TUOMI 2016). With the dynamization and evolution of interactivity in television, iTV is characterized by benefiting from interactive resources similar to those available on the web which allow users to have greater control and decision-making power over the content watched (ABREU 2007). This behaviour of being able to personally choose the desired content to be watched from a huge variety of sources already occurs both on the web and on TV, and VoD and time-shifting are already common practice for users.

As users see iTV as a technology that provides a dynamic stream of audio-visual content and allows them to select non-linear content or to access live television (DELIYANNIS 2016), they expect greater flexibility regarding where, when and how to access digital TV-related content (FLEURY 2016).

The unification of content approach adopted on the Ultra TV solution makes it possible to offer audio-visual content from multiple sources (OTT and TV) in a simple and unique interface where the user does not need to jump between applications to access the content of his/her preference, thus remaining in the same ecosystem (ALMEIDA *et al.* 2018). In addition, the possibility of making personalised content available by predicting which content is most relevant for each user according to their watching habits can provide a perspective of a new unification approach.

Currently, the unification trend in the iTV domain is prominent in operator-based and OTT-based commercial solutions, which come close to cutting-edge approaches to unification such as Sky Q (Figure 1), Hulu (Figure 2) and Xfinity.

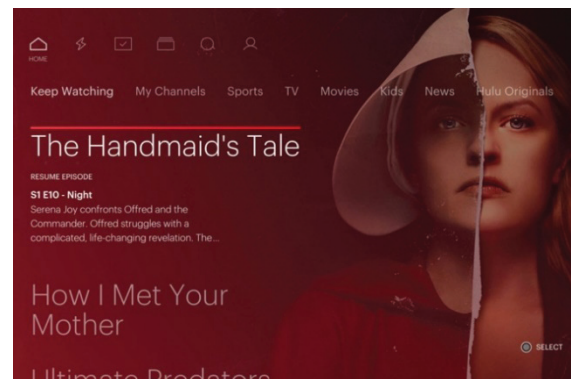
Sky Q, a unification partnership between Sky and Netflix, provides live TV and Netflix content in a single interface. Users can switch between these contents without any discontinuity, and it is a significant example of how the iTV domain is increasingly interconnected with content from other providers. Hulu has also integrated a new set of channels and live content to its original offer in a graphic interface where the traditional grid was replaced by lists featuring gradients that act as filters (ABREU *et al.* 2018). Xfinity, namely the X1 box that includes the Netflix application, besides allowing recordings and Time-shift TV also allows access to content by streaming through an integrated content search where the results are presented in a thumbnails grid or carousel navigation lists.

Figura 1. Sky Q user interface



Source: Express.co.uk.

Figure 2. Hulu user interface



Source: Techhive.com

Young users' habits and consumption behaviours with respect to iTV

Nowadays, TV is no longer limited to live broadcasting. Viewers/users have changed the way they watch audio-visual content, migrating from traditional TV (linear TV) to non-linear TV with the availability of catch-up TV, streaming and VoD services. In addition, they also use web/internet sources called OTT content (ABREU *et al.* 2017).

However, it is important to consider that users have different preferences and TV consumption needs, as reflected in the report produced by Ericsson Consumerlab (2017). In this report, six types of user groups are identified (considering the weekly time spent on TV and video consumption on various devices): **i) TV Couch Traditionalist:** viewers of traditional television. This is the least representative group, reflecting only 12% of the total number of consumers; **ii) Screen Shifters:** users using any device, anywhere to access TV and video content. They represent 21% of the total number of consumers; **iii) Mobility Centric:** users who essentially use mobile devices to consume audio-visual content. This group represents 22% of the total number of consumers; **iv) Computer Centric:** users who mainly use a computer to consume audio-visual content, either through streaming or downloads. They represent 14% of the total number of consumers; **v) Average TV Joe:** average TV watching time and reduced watching of other video content. This group represents 18% of the total number of consumers; **vi) TV Zero:** users who watch TV and video content in a reduced way. They represent 13% of the total number of consumers.

Regarding younger consumers aged 15-34, they prefer to watch TV and video content on mobile devices and computers, not because they discard the TV set but because they watch the content at the same time as performing other tasks (NIELSEN-COMPANY, 2015; ERICSSON CONSUMER LAB, 2017). In this way, it can be assumed that younger users essentially belong to the "Screen Shifter", "Mobility Centric" and "Computer Centric" groups. Nevertheless, these consumers use TV similarly

frequently to watch on-demand content (aged 16-19: 54%; aged 20-24: 51%; aged 25-34: 45%) and linear/live content (aged 16-19: 46%; aged 20-24: 49%; aged 25-34: 55%). Regarding on-demand content, these consumers are more likely to watch User-Generated Content, movies, TV series, sports and other on-demand programmes, and with regard to linear/live content, these consumers are more likely to watch movies, TV series, live news, sports and other events (both broadcasted and live streamed).

Regarding the possibility of a unification of audio-visual contents on iTV (merging the offer of different providers over the same user interface), a study conducted by Abreu *et al.* (2019) revealed that Generation Z (aged 12-20) and Millennials (aged 21-34) would value the following features: the possibility of having a larger screen and better image quality when watching content from internet sources (e.g.: YouTube, Facebook and Netflix); direct access to internet content on iTV without the need to switch between applications; simultaneous search on different sources; same functionalities and menus to interact with content from different sources/providers; access to a personal area with favourite content and recorded content.

Methodology

The main objective of this study is to contribute to understanding whether the unification of content on iTV, allowed by TV-Web convergence, can potentially influence the behaviours of younger iTV users (aged 12-34) and attract them to the large screen. To achieve this goal, an analysis of contents and papers describing the Ultra TV prototype and its evaluation in a field trial was undertaken (ABREU *et al.* 2019; SOCIALITVCHANNEL, 2019; VELHINHO *et al.* 2019; VELHINHO *et al.* 2020). This prototype was chosen because it aggregates in a single interface, and at the same level, TV contents (linear and non-linear) and OTT contents (YouTube, Facebook and Netflix videos). The maturity of the prototype and the ease of accessing the data also represented criteria for choosing this case.

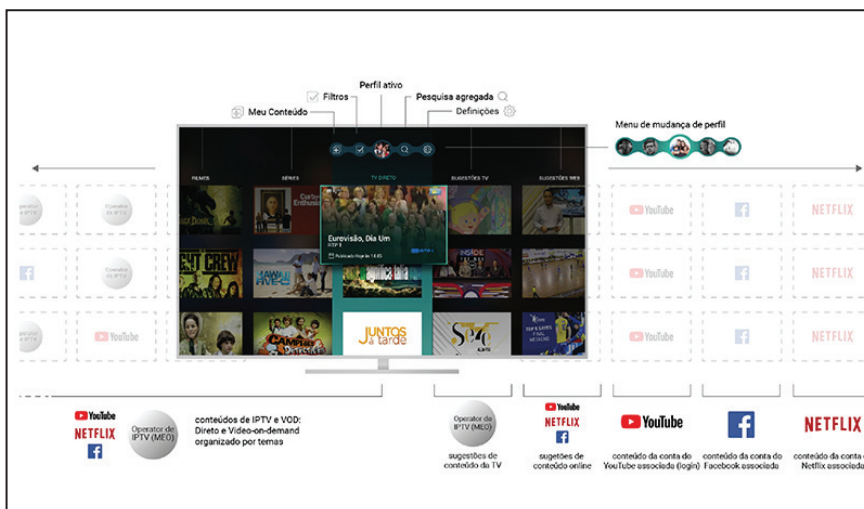
Ultra TV case

The advanced TV solution developed in the Ultra TV project combines TV programmes and OTT content, making it an integrated experience available to clients of the major IPTV provider in Portugal. The contents (from linear and non-linear TV, YouTube, Facebook and Netflix) are shown in a single User Interface (UI), and content recommendations are also offered considering the user's profile and consumption behaviours. The main screen of Ultra TV (Figure 3) allows users to access the content from a grid-based layout in which it is presented through thumbnails and organized by source and gender. The grid contains buttons that redirect users to specific areas to allow them to discover new content from each genre and source. It also presents a personal area that aggregates each user's favourite content and a resource to continue watching

the interrupted content. The grid columns can be turned on and off using the filter feature (Figure 4). In addition, family profiles can be created for collective watching scenarios. Using the main menu, users can manage these profiles (SOCIALITVCHANNEL 2019).

This solution presents several functionalities that facilitate interaction: a) in full-screen mode, the user can use the timeline to go back in the content on display so that they can follow its context; b) a contextual menu that allows the user to re-view the content/programme, classify it as a favourite and access extra information; c) side menus that provide a brief description of content watched and suggestions for other related content from other sources; d) a unified search with a predictive keyboard in which the results of live programmes, VoD and online sources are presented simultaneously (SOCIALITVCHANNEL 2019).

Figure 3. Ultra TV user interface



Source: [SocialiTV](#).

Figure 4. Ultra TV filter functionality



Source: [SocialiTV](#).

From the above, it was observed that the Ultra TV solution, which combines in a single interface linear and non-linear TV, Netflix, YouTube and Facebook videos which are often consumed by young users, has the potential to attract them to this type of iTV approach. This hypothesis was also corroborated in a field trial evaluation (Velhinho *et al.*, 2019) where 26 participants (most [20] aged between 12-34 years) experienced this unifying and personalizing approach on iTV. Participants mentioned that content unification was a valued feature, since it allows watching and accessing content using a single, simple and cohesive interface. In addition, grouping content from other platforms, such as Netflix, was considered an advantage. Features such as comfort and agile access to content on the iTV interface grid were also mentioned by participants as advantages and motivations for reducing audio-visual consumption on other devices when in a home environment, since they allow a reduction in the effort of interaction without the need to go to the browser or to access different applications.

Final considerations

With an increasing preference of young users for on-demand content, in an “anytime, anywhere” logic, there has been a tendency to use devices other than the TV set (connected to an iTV set-top box) for the consumption of audio-visual content, especially OTT content. This is due to (younger) users’ perception of the limitations in the quantity and diversity of content available on iTV, which confirms the need for products that aggregate current and personalized content which attracts more sceptical young audiences to iTV. In this respect, the unification of content on iTV is a possible solution to redirect younger users to this medium since it aggregates, at the same level, television (linear and non-linear) and OTT (YouTube, Netflix and Facebook videos) content in a single and cohesive UI.

By taking the Ultra TV case, an iTV solution for the unification of linear and non-linear content and sources, it was possible to strength this hypothesis. By analyzing scientific papers with results from Ultra TV, it was possible to conclude that the unification of content and personalization of iTV could act as a trigger to attract young people to iTV, since it has the potential to meet the needs of younger consumers by providing personalized content according to the preferences and consumption habits of each user, these being TV content (linear and non-linear) or OTT content (YouTube, Netflix and Facebook videos), and since it allows users to have quick access to content from different sources on the main screen grid with high levels of comfort and not having to use other devices to watch their preferred audio-visual content.

Note

1. <<http://sociality.web.ua.pt/index.php/portfolio/ultratv/>> [Accessed on: 15 June 2020].

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Influencers and coronavirus. Contents on the COVID-19 pandemic in social network prescriber publications in Spain (2020): the case of Instagram

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic declared in March 2020 meant that the population was confined to their homes. This is the first major global crisis faced by a hyperconnected society, so the use made of social networks makes a clear difference to the management of other previous disasters. Given this new scenario and immediately, we plan to monitor the use of these networks but referring to a very specific aspect: the influencers. In the present paper we assess the information on the crisis carried out by this type of prescribers in Spain at the very start of the crisis, attempting to evaluate their positioning and the possible influence of this on citizen behaviour and focusing on the case of Instagram.

Keywords

Influencers, coronavirus, crisis social networks Instagram, Spain.

Resum

La pandèmia de la COVID-19, declarada el març de 2020, va suposar el confinament de la població a casa seva. Es tracta de la primera gran crisi mundial que s'enfronta amb una societat hiperconnectada, per la qual cosa l'ús realitzat de les xarxes socials marca una clara diferència amb la gestió d'altres catàstrofes anteriors. Davant d'aquest nou escenari, i d'una forma immediata, ens plantejarem realitzar un seguiment de l'ús efectuat d'aquestes xarxes, però fent referència a un aspecte molt concret: els i les influencers. En aquest treball hem dut a terme una valoració de la informació sobre la crisi proporcionada per aquest tipus de prescriptors a Espanya en els primers moments de la crisi, tot intentant valorar el seu posicionament i la possible influència d'aquest en el comportament ciutadà, i ens centrarem en el cas d'Instagram.

Paraules clau

Influencers, coronavirus, crisi, xarxes socials, Instagram, Espanya.

1. Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 virus, known as the “coronavirus”, a global pandemic (SEVILLANO 2020). Since that moment, and already in previous weeks, many countries declared a state of alarm by confining their citizens to their homes. Spain imposed this situation on 14 March (BOE - SPANISH OFFICIAL STATE BULLETIN 2020). The closure of citizens in their homes with limited mobility meant that social network traffic skyrocketed. According to data from the consulting firm ComScore, only during the first month of confinement the consumption of social networks increased by 55% (SÁNCHEZ 2020) and, more precisely, “as the levels of use of social networks increase as a recurring habit (...) there is a great possibility that these behaviours (...) will continue after the pandemic” (REASON WHY 2020). We must take into

account, therefore, that we are facing the first global pandemic in a hyperconnected world (SÁNCHEZ 2020).

In this context, the authorities focused on educating the population about the need for this confinement and the preventive measures to be taken in view of the constant increase in contagion, with actions that included advertising campaigns (GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN 2020) and even messages in the street. However, in a context of over-consumption of digital media (DÍZ 2017), the position adopted by influencers could support or hinder institutional proposals and could even determine how the crisis could evolve.

By this we mean trying to confirm whether the capacity of influence of these prescribers is more social than commercial, especially if we consider that a lot has been said about the influence of social networks in political contexts (FERNÁNDEZ, HERNÁNDEZ & SÁENZ 2018) but their role linked to commercial

marketing, beyond the fashion market, seems to have been overlooked (PADILLA & OLIVER 2018). We therefore consider the contents of social networks, taking into account that there are many points of view: the very use of these networks as mobilizers of public opinion; the real capacity of influencers to prescribe and even to manage crisis communication, or the capacity of participation of the public, all of which are valued in this work.

2. Theoretical framework: Influencers and social networks

2.1 Influencers: definition, characteristics and current assessment

Our starting point for this research to be correct is to understand what we mean by the term *influencer* and how we differentiate it from other communicative phenomena within social networks. The current assessment of this figure as a prescriber of contents or products is mostly related to the number of followers of each one. However, it is important to establish a series of additional considerations to be able to understand a little more its role and its communicative consequences and even the existing criteria for that assessment.

2.1.1 What do we mean by influencer?

The *influencer* figure comes from the traditional concept of the prescriber in commercial communication. Prescription of products has been one of the most used resources in the history of modern advertising, although this prescription was more effective –according to all data– when the prescribers were recognised persons and, above all, linked to the world of cinema or television (TAVERAS 2014). Thus, “the use of celebrities in communication increases the credibility of the messages, increases the memory and recognition of the brands advertised, improves the attitude towards the organization that sells the customer, and even increases the purchase credibility” (AGRAWAL & KAMAKURA 1995: 56).

The term *influencer* became particularly interesting in Spain from 2015 onwards, when we gathered works that talk about influence marketing (CASTELLÓ-MARTÍNEZ & PINO 2015) and a change of trend became apparent, whereby the recommendation of other consumers became the most reliable information method for buyers in the face of the mistrust generated towards conventional advertising (NIELSEN 2015).

Many studies confirm the effectiveness of advertising based on the use of well-known characters, based on their credibility (ZAPATA & MARTÍNEZ 2016) and therefore: “The association of a product or a brand with a famous character is based on an aspirational dimension of the audience and on mechanisms of identification of the audience with the character that help to form the ideal self-concept. The famous person is thus presented as a representative of the target’s inclinations, tastes and preferences” (CASTELLÓ-MARTÍNEZ & PINO 2015).

From this influence marketing and the use of celebrities to

prescribe commercial products or services, there has been an evolution towards the use of the term *influencer*, (Freberg 2011) to allude to “that person with knowledge, prestige and presence in certain areas in which his or her opinions can influence the behaviour of other people” (FUNDÉU 2019).

We see, therefore, that the Anglo-Saxon literature had already been addressing the new situation of prescribers-influencers for several years due to the growth of social networks (BAKSHY, GALEOTTI & GOYAL 2009) but also to the changes in the needs of the public. In Spain, this figure was immediately related to fashion, the female gender and Instagram, establishing a category of prescribers who were “the instagramers”. However, this phenomenon has not been included in the academic literature of reference, despite having become one of the main themes of the final year papers of the communication degrees of Spanish universities (SIERRA, LIBERAL & LUCEÑO 2018).

For our study we establish a definition of *influencer* linked to the function expected of him or her in a marketing plan. Thus, we speak of an influential or relevant person in a certain sector, who can communicate directly with the public. This *influencer* would collaborate with companies to make known, improve the attitude or influence a certain behaviour on their products or services, in such a way that both benefit from this collaboration. We are therefore defining a very clear model of *influencer*.

2.1.2. How are influencers currently assessed?

Today, influencers are considered one of the main resources of commercial communication. The fundamental fact is that 68% of Internet users follow influencers in Social Networks (IAB 2020), and it is the “Millennial Generation” which has given greater growth to this content (GUILLÉN 2018) and establishing a direct relation between them and the influencers.

Management of the campaigns disseminated by this means is carried out through specialised agencies in 56.5% of the cases and in almost all of them they seek to work on branding and to capture new audiences (41%), to build up current targets (34%) or to increase the community of followers (29%). Similarly, the network they use the most is Instagram (67%) (BRANDMANIC 2018).

Advertisers seem to have relied on this formula for several reasons, the main one being the measurability that digital media provide, with initially very positive data regarding the effectiveness of influencers. The data is good from the point of view of Earned Media Value, on achieving an impact that would mean a much higher cost in paid media (REDIGOLO 2014).

The latest Infoadex study on advertising investment in Spain has included, within the estimated media (formerly called non-conventional media), a category called “Influencers”, which in 2018 represented a total of 37 million euros. Globally, the growth experienced in the investment of influencers means that in 2020 this market is expected to move 10 billion dollars, having marked a year-on-year growth of 83% in countries such as the United States and Canada (PURO MARKETING 2019).

The complexity that this resource has reached derives from

the wide offer available for the brands. In this way, platforms such as Audiense, Coobis or SocialPubli have been developed that allow for identifying the most appropriate profiles according to the target audience the brand wants to address, emphasising that not only the numbers of followers determine this choice. Once the appropriate influencer has been identified, a financial remuneration for his or her services is made, thus evolving from the beginnings of this dynamic in which payment for influencer was made by means of product samples.

Measuring the effectiveness of influencers is an early concern for advertising companies. The *2019 Study of Advertisers with Influencers* (SOCIALPUBLI.COM 2019), provides the specific data that the measurement is made mostly through the interaction rate (26.4%), 19% by visits and reach, 13.2% by the generation of traffic to the website and with a similar figure (13.2%) also sales, leads, acquisition or registration, being below 12.4%, the improvement of brand awareness, and, much further back, the clicks or new followers (7.4%).

2.1.3 Types and rates of influencers

At this point, another important issue is to determine the typology of influencers configured over the years. We establish four categories according to the projection they achieve:

a) Citizens. This is a social network user who, in principle, has no more attributes than others to influence their contacts. They are just people who talk and share information on social networks without having to be oriented towards a brand or service as, in fact, has no relationship with them (Ayala 2014). In this case, their importance does not derive from their individual role, since their only opinion may not be important for the brand, but the sum of many may influence it.

b) Advocates. They are also anonymous users of the networks, but they clearly show their support or defence towards a brand, product or service, but they do so out of real affinity with the brand, without receiving remuneration for that fact. This is a possibility that is highly valued by brands since it transmits a positive feeling through word of mouth (GARCÍA 2009). The studies conducted relate online prescription of users with online sales in a positive way (SAAVEDRA, LINERO & GUTIÉRREZ 2011).

c) Brand Ambassador. In this case we move to a paid figure (either financially or by product) who receives a payment from the company to set up a transparent commercial agreement that brings benefits to both parties. Unlike advocates, ambassadors are chosen by the brand and are authorised to represent it, speak and act as such. Companies take these actions in order to make their name stronger and to expand their community (TAYLOR, LEWIN & STRUTTON 2011). At this point, we also cannot lose sight of the fact that brand ambassadors can be employees, volunteers, partners and, of course, influencers or celebrities or any other figure with impact capacity (Marketing Directo 2019).

d) Microinfluencers. Unlike brand ambassadors microinfluencers do not have a long-term link with the brand they are promoting but are contacted punctually or on several occasions, but there is no exclusivity. They are also paid, and this responds

to the diffusion they give to the firm with their communication channel in addition to the fact that they are usually related to the area or sector of the brand, so they have a loyal community of followers who consider them prescribers. This does not mean that they do not work with other types of products since, in fact, they are considered a means of dissemination of interest.

We should point out that many agencies and professional entities differentiate between micro and macro influencers, making a difference in the number of followers, with micro ones reaching up to 30,000 and macro ones exceeding that figure (Alampi 2019). At the same time, the minimum to be considered an influencer would be having 1,000 followers. In the last year, low figure profiles but adequately segmented and with quality followers have achieved very positive results for the brands (Main 2017).

e) Celebrities. These are individuals who are highly recognised by society and who have the ability to use their status to amplify their messages. They are the most far-reaching of all the categories mentioned and therefore cost the most. They would include, actresses, actors, musicians, writers, sportsmen, artists, among others. In this case, the number of followers is well over 100,000 and the level of effectiveness is related to the confidence that the character brings (SCHOUTEN, JANSSEN & VERSPAGET 2020).

As for the cost of these actions, there is a great deal of obscurantism in terms of fees, although we have found data indicating that around 120 and 150 euros is paid per photo on Instagram in accounts with 10,000 fans; 500 euros for 50,000 and from 2,500 in the case of having more than half a million followers (Marketing Directo 2019b). Of course, these figures vary depending on the influencer, the brand and even their own rates. Globally, Table 1 provides a summary with different average rates.

2.2. The situation of social networks

2.2.1 Social Networking Penetration in Spain

As we have mentioned, the growth of influencers around the world has a direct relation to the penetration achieved by social networks. In Spain, the latest data provided by the International Advertising Bureau (IAB) report for 2019 indicates that 85.5% of Internet users aged 16-65 use social networks, which means that 25 million users in Spain have reached the stage of maturity of this medium, thus curbing its continued growth. The profile of network users is divided between 49% of men and 51% of women with an average age of 30 years.

As for the use of social networks, an average of 3.7 networks per user are used in a declarative way and they know more than 6 in a suggested way. Leading the ranking are WhatsApp ranking (88%), Facebook (87%) and YouTube (68%), the latter being the one with most young followers (76% are between 16 and 30 years old). Instagram, in fourth place, is the one that has gained more followers (from 49% to 54%). In fifth

Table 1. Global influencer rates by social network and reach (March 2019) Figures in dollars

	Nano-influencer	Micro-influencer	Influencer	Celebrity
Followers	500 – 5,000	5,000-30,000	30,000-500,000	500,000 or more
Instagram				
- Post	100	172	507	2,085
- Video	114	219	775	3,138
- Story	43	73	210	721
YouTube video	315	908	782	3,857
Facebook post	31	318	243	2,400

Source: eMarketet, 2019.

place, Twitter remains with 50%. In terms of usage preference, WhatsApp remains the favourite (as it did in 2017 and 2018), followed by Facebook. On the other hand, Instagram is in third position, ahead of YouTube, especially motivated by women and the 16-30 target. The fifth position is still occupied by Twitter, which stands out among men.

Social networks are a channel of influence and information. 47% of those surveyed consider that they influence when buying a product or service and 55% declare that they have looked for information about products or services in social networks before making a purchase, especially the female and under-45 target. In addition, 41% actively participate in networking about purchases made on the Internet (IAB 2020).

One of the keys to the success of social networks seems to lie in the concept of community: “the feeling of being part of a truly global community that connects emotionally. Contemplating an image made by another person can help us connect in an extraordinarily intimate way, despite the fact that people are jotted around in different places. And it is this very intense connection that can make great bonds” (ALONSO 2015).

2.2.2. The importance of Instagram

If we focus specifically on Instagram, the social network is perceived as the channel for consuming videos and photos, with selfies the most common. Its audience is mostly between 16 and 31 years old (40%) and 32 to 45 (38%), averaging it at 35.5 years. Instagram has a user rating of 7.8 out of 10 and a spontaneous notoriety of 69%, which means that it is well known among the public (AIMC 2019).

Further examining the reality of this network, on which we will concentrate our research, we cannot lose sight of its commercial capabilities. Thus, 50% of Instagram users follow at least one brand (MENTION 2018) and it has become a very suitable platform for commercial communication due to its low cost, the possibilities of its multimedia content, its wide visibility, the ease of its management and the incorporation – already a year ago– of Instagram Shopping that allows direct sales through the platform.

The presence of brands on Instagram is therefore more than necessary, especially if we consider that 83% of this network’s users declare to have discovered new products or services on

Instagram (MENTION 2018). Ahead of Spain we can see the steps of the United States where 71% of companies use Instagram and have confirmed that this network can generate four times more interactions than Facebook and, in fact, get a 15% reach of advertising worldwide (WE ARE SOCIAL 2019).

Instagram is therefore confirmed as an effective way of disseminating branded content and with sales capacity, it is considered that 80% of users have decided to buy a product or service after consulting information on it in this medium. The question is, therefore, how to manage these communication possibilities of this network, with influencers being one of the most frequent options (CASALÓ, FLAVIÁN & IBÁÑEZ-SÁNCHEZ 2018).

In this regard, 68% of users claim to follow influencers in social networks, with Facebook (45%) and Instagram (40%) the networks where most influencers are followed, followed by YouTube (33%) and Twitter (23%). 37% consider influencers to be credible and the same percentage believes that their comments are fairly or very advertising (IAB 2020).

3. Subject of study, starting hypothesis and methodology

Taking into account the starting point indicated in the previous section, our research focuses on analysing the role of the main influencers in Spain in the coronavirus crisis. More specifically, the main objective of our study is to assess how the main Spanish influencers have addressed (or not) the issue of the coronavirus in their social networks, specifically monitoring the case of Instagram. We have decided to approach this subject of study taking into account the need to answer a series of research questions posed from a general perspective. Thus, we start from an initial question that revolves around the use that the so-called influencers have made during the COVID-19 crisis of the Instagram social network. Based on this initial question, we developed research that also allowed us to determine the different uses of posts versus stories and, above all, what type of content was used in a context where the usual activity related to fashion and brand promotion, which was generally carried out by influencers in this network, could not be developed.

All of the above raises an important question regarding the involvement of influencers in the crisis, given the reality that

this is a crisis in which consumption was sharply reduced and, therefore, their role was questioned. Their position in the face of the pandemic is therefore a considerable unknown. At this point we cannot lose sight of the fact that their ability to prescribe can be fundamental in managing a crisis from the perspective of social awareness and solidarity.

In order to be able to respond to these hypotheses, we have to develop a specific methodology that goes through several phases. Thus, our first step must be to compile all the academic research that exists up to now on the reality of influencers. Once we can delimit this phenomenon and what we mean by it, we can go one step further and carry out the content analysis of the Instagram network corresponding to the 50 most important influencers. A content assessment will be established, designing a system that aims to be applied in this study and also its validity for future research and even in the follow-up of this case. This is, in any case, a qualitative methodology that will not use quantitative references to justify the conclusions of the project. We must also stress that these are initial conclusions (this is an open crisis) and we must contrast them with data from primary sources.

Once again, it is necessary to emphasise that in this type of research, content analysis is a fundamental method (FERNÁNDEZ 2002), as we seek to understand how the influencers influence their audiences and, above all, what type of messages they deliver in broad (qualitative) terms.

In this case, and taking into account our starting point in which we stated that the importance of influencers is not only granted by their number of followers, not even by their “likes” or interactions but by their prescriptive capacity valued in terms of social and non-commercial effectiveness, it was especially important to be able to determine the analysis sample. We must bear in mind that there are numerous rankings of assessment based on a variety of criteria, but in our case we have located a ranking based on the assessments of conventional prescribers in the country.

Thus, we justify the selection of the 50 main influencers taking into account the ranking elaborated by the Marqués de Oliva Foundation (2020) and we limit ourselves to Instagram taking into account that it is the network where the companies have focused their investments in influencer campaigns (MARKETING HUB 2019) and have registered greater increases in advertising investment in general. More specifically, advertising on Instagram has increased by 70% in 2019, in its global stories section, which leads to this network having 10% of total advertising investment (IAB 2020).

With a sample of the 50 leading Spanish influencers, we have tracked all posts published on Instagram by each of them in the period of 18 February and 19 March 2020. This means a whole month of analysis, marking the closure of the sample on the date of delivery of this article (March 19), which allows establishing an evolution before and during the outbreak of the crisis. With regard to the stories and due to their ephemeral nature, we focus on 19 March as the last available valuation date. All

these contents have been downloaded by making screenshots. A direct observation of each of the publications has been carried out on the exhibition, either static images (photography, illustration, etc.) or moving images (video), analysing both the visual and textual parts (text of the publication: message and use of specific hashtags on the subject of study).

4. Analysis: the behaviour of influencers during the coronavirus crisis in 2020

In order to determine the influencers we are going to monitor, we have used “Marqués de Oliva” Business Foundation’s ranking, which publishes a list based on 25,000 interviews. The last one was carried out between November 2018 and February 2019. As a result, the 50 most important influencers in Spain were determined. On the sample we have made a first review of their profiles, determining that most are women and are linked to fashion (area of work). We have also seen the number of followers in Instagram. In the follow-up we have verified that many of the profiles are not defined at a professional level (Prof.) and those that do are linked to fashion, above all models, or to the audiovisual world: photographers, designers, artists... (the data of this sample are collected for consultation in Annex 1).

According to the selection criteria, it is not the number of followers that determines whether an influencer is influential, but other elements are taken into account. In spite of this, we cannot ignore that the number of followers weighs, and a lot. The review carried out also allows us to determine that the importance of influencers is related to their presence in other networks or media (medium), especially in YouTube and, of course, having a blog that, in many cases, has been the starting point to achieve the presence and follow up they have. The commercial purpose of these profiles can be seen in the fact that they promote their business (Shop) or that of other brands. Once again, it is an aspect that would be of great interest for a specific study but that has no place in the present analysis.

Once we understand the research sample, we proceeded to examine it, giving rise to a new data collection (Table 2) in which we indicate the profile, its followers and the total number of posts published in the account since its creation (Total Post A), which allows us to determine whether it is a profile of sporadic, frequent or saturated publications.¹

Regarding the data on the frequency of publications, we establish a direct correlation between profiles that promote their own brand (A) or of commercial brands (B) in the Shop section, so that those who carry out these promotions are the ones who upload the greatest number of publications to Instagram.

In addition to this general appreciation, we have managed to count the number of posts published during the period analysed (Total Post B), and we have not been able to establish a relationship between the most saturated profiles and a greater participation. In fact, it is striking how some medium-frequency profiles (@paulaarguellesg) reduced their publications in this

period and others of low frequency (@marivalero22) increased it notably. In total, the 50 influencers published between February 19 and March 19, 1,338 posts, which means an average of 27 posts per profile over that month.

If we continue examining them, we have identified the posts that talk about the coronavirus crisis. To do this we have reviewed the content of the 1,338 published posts determining those that included text, images or hashtag on the subject, with a final figure (Total post C) of 172 posts, which is an average of 3.4 posts per profile on the coronavirus crisis. This figure, which is initially noted as low, must face another of the questions analysed, which is the date on which the influencers made the first publication on the subject. As we can see (post date), most of them started to talk about it between the 12th and 16th of March, just when the Central Government applied concrete measures against the infection and declared the state of alarm.

In addition to this, there are a few exceptions such as @ristomejide, who in February uploaded a video of his television programme talking about the subject, or @balamoda, who on the 10th of March commented on the problems that were occurring in Madrid. Thus, we establish an informal correlation, not included in the table, and which should be taken into account in more extensive studies, since the attention paid by the influencers to the problem is related to their place of residence. The comments of people from Madrid are more intense than those from other places in Spain and are those of people like @collagevintage who lives in Los Angeles are later.

The number of “likes” carried out on the first post about the crisis has also been assessed, finding, once again, notable differences in which there is a correlation between the volume of followers and the capacity to achieve this validation by the public. Note that the first five influencers (with @giorginagio as the winner) have almost three million more “likes” than the rest of the list. We have not gone into the possibility of establishing a specific weight to the likes in the capacity of interaction of each content, since this would mean the extending the initial research and, therefore, the extension of the subject of study, leaving this topic as a possibility for future research.

To complete the research we have also established a classification of the contents about the coronavirus in the analysed posts. Thus, we have differentiated between those that only included a hashtag referring to the crisis (A) (in most cases the #yomequedoencasa), those that included messages of encouragement to their followers and to the country in general (B) and also recorded negative content about the discomfort that the crisis and quarantine was generating (C). A specific category was created for messages that only described a specific moment arising from the crisis (D) and many texts were also taken into account in which the profilers made profound reflections on the situation or even acted as informants for their followers (E). Finally, the most frequent as the days went by, was the one related to the contents of advice to carry out the quarantine or even entertainment actions-as

they explained-to make the time pass better. In all cases, the constant is the direct appeal to the public looking for interaction and participation.

The use of Instagram stories deserves a special mention. We have collected the number of videos and images included in this format during March 19th, seeing how many of the influencers took advantage of the quarantine to do a detailed monitoring of their daily activity, with lots of videos in just a few hours. At this time, video tutorials abound for cooking, sports and even painting at home.

5. Results and conclusions

The results of this brief analysis are summarised in Table 2. The use of the Instagram social network by influencers during the crisis has raised a number of questions of interest regarding our subject of study. The importance acquired by the stories versus the posts can be seen in the fact that the number of contents through the stories during a single day exceeds, in many cases, the total number of publications in post format during a month. The influencers have registered very high rates of “likes” in the shared contents that dealt, in some way, with the coronavirus crisis, although these have been very few in a total of 50 accounts analysed.

As most of the influencers are people are involved in the fashion world, quarantine and confinement is a major limitation to their activities, although they seem to have replaced this problem with a greater focus on sport, cooking and leisure activities, including dynamics such as the suggestion of audiovisual or musical content.

It is surprising that the influencers with the largest number of followers have not been the most involved in the crisis in quantitative terms, although they have been from a qualitative point of view. Thus @dulceida, spoke of the need to stay home well in advance (10 March) and @alexandrapereira included a highlight section entitled “Coronatime” with stories about cooking and other activities it home. There is a clear coincidence that all the influencers who included content on the subject have done so in a quite positive sense encouraging people to stay at home, with small peculiarities such as the complaints of @teresaandresgonzalvo and @martalozanop about the cancellation of Las Fallas in Valencia.

We cannot ignore the 7 influencers who, as of 19 March, had not mentioned anything at all about the problem in their profiles. It coincides that three of them (@goicoechea; @sergiocarvajal7; @joanpala) are professional models who use the Instagram almost as a book of working photos without comments or textual contents, while another three make artistic works having thus their particular portfolio (@patryjordan; @hclavero; @paulaarguellesg), and it is not possible to assess the remaining case (@gracyvillareal).

On the opposite side are the influencers who have generated the greatest amount of content around this problem. @meryturriel and @martacarriedo did nine publications although both have

Table 2. Analysis of the publications on COVID-19. Influencers in Instagram (19 February to 19 March 2020)

	Instagram	Followers	Total post (A)	Total post (B)	Post date	Likes post	Total post (C)	Type of post	Stories
1	dulceida	2.7 mill.	8,070	42	12/03	166,170	6	B / E / F	19
2	saracarbonero	2.6 mill.	1,374	13	14/03	57,035	3	E / F	7
3	paulagonu	2.0 mill.	2,250	20	18/03	108,191	2	C / F	20
4	alexandrapereira	1.8 mill.	3,071	44	12/03	37,211	8	B / C / E / F	23
5	georginagio	18.4 mill.	402	11	16/03	4,411,025	2	A	0
6	lauraescanes	1.5 mill.	2,192	23	12/03	91,539	4	E / F	23
7	collagevintage	1.1 mill.	6,697	17	16/03	11,634	2	E / F	3
8	goicoechea	1.1 mill.	1,643	32	0	0	0	0	5
9	pelayodiaz	1.0 mill.	6,796	43	13/03	16,048	4	B / E	0
10	albpaulfe	1.0 mill.	2,185	13	14/03	50,224	2	B	12
11	galagonzalez	1.1 mill.	8,044	45	12/03	11,861	2	D	0
12	verdeliss	1.2 mill.	3,350	35	12/03	55,375	8	B / E / F	28
13	sergiocarvajal7	1.0 mill.	1,504	10	0	0	0	0	13
14	ristomeijde	1.2 mill.	1,002	10	26/02	98,942	3	E	1
15	rociOosorno	1.1 mill.	2,253	30	13/03	59,062	5	F	16
16	mariapombo	1.4 mill.	2,592	28	15/03	147,138	2	B	15
17	patryjordan	993K	985	2	0	0	0	0	6
18	ninauc	798K	3,002	66	12/03	10,224	2	D	12
19	belenhostalet	814K	2,960	47	14/03	17,515	8	C / F	11
20	martalozanop	846K	2,107	14	10/03	51,300	2	B / C	7
21	meryturiel	826K	3,182	32	14/03	39,816	9	B / E / F	28
22	martacarriedo	570K	8,834	53	13/03	7,839	9	D / F	36
23	misshedwig	539K	3,086	7	14/03	1,073	2	E	10
24	trendy_taste	539K	4,906	20	12/03	7,565	7	F	9
25	madamederosa	578K	4,286	35	14/03	110,678	3	E	4
26	gracyvillarreal	599K	2,287	32	0	0	0	0	0
27	teresaandresgonzalvo	545K	2,798	20	10/03	50,487	2	C / A	20
28	paulaordovas	486K	10,600	60	15/03	18,829	1	F	0
29	alexdomenec	412K	3,286	31	14/03	16,520	5	A	11
30	jasojudith	483K	996	16	14/03	34,806	1	F	19
31	gigi_vives	434K	4,918	49	13/03	7,909	2	A	7
32	mariafrubies	543K	2,827	28	13/03	35,209	7	B / F	8
33	marcforne	399K	7,802	77	13/03	7,432	4	D	12
34	andreabelverf	439K	4,068	38	13/03	8,254	4	F	5
35	rocioccamacho	511K	1,000	23	13/03	24,526	4	B / C / F	28
36	bartabacmode	393K	8,304	31	12/03	7,870	6	B / F	8
37	andreacomptonn	374K	3,658	19	13/03	22,300	2	B	0
38	alexchiner	331K	522	11	11/03	16,611	3	C	6
39	hiclavero	469K	215	4	0	0	0	0	0
40	pau_eche	3,0Kl.	7,501	44	13/03	61,908	8	B	6
41	lnes_arroyo	328K	3,927	12	18/03	4,029	2	E	8
42	mariavalero22	321K	673	32	14/03	38,957	6	F	40
43	laubalo	350K	1,037	8	14/03	54,586	2	B	20
44	itziaraguilera	247K	1,003	10	16/03	5,711	2	B	12
45	izhan_go	218K	1,455	6	15/03	24,059	1	D	12
46	joanpala	211K	1,385	30	0	0	0	0	0
47	balamoda	243K	6,289	23	10/03	4,248	6	B	10
48	carlahinojosar	235K	1,829	37	12/03	2,576	8	A / B / C	1
49	paulaarguellesg	207K	2,361	0	0	0	0	0	0
50	vickygom3z	226K	655	5	15/03	34,789	1	A	0

Legend. Total post (A): total number of post in the profile/ Total post (B): total number of in the studied period. / Post date: date of the first post about the issue. / Likes post: number of likes of the first post. / Total post (C): total number of post about the issue in the analysed period. / Type of post: post categories according to content. A: only hashtags; B: positive; C: negative; D: neutral; E: reflexive or informational; F: tips and entertainment. / Stories: number of stories during the last day of analysis: 19 March 2020.

Source: Authors, 2020.

very different profiles, the former more homely and highlighting her role as a mother from the United States while the latter uses selfies and exercises to do at home. In the next level, with 8 publications, there are 6 profiles that coincide with highly notorious influencers such as @dulceida, @alexandrapereira or @pau_eche, who is the actress, Paula Echeverría who seems to have adopted a very active role even working in fundraising. It is precisely charity actions that should be an important feature of prescribers in the face of the crisis without, until the day the analysis is completed, too many of them have been collected, beyond the demand for #yomecorono made by @pau_eche and @dulceida. The specific initiatives that stand out are in the profile of @rocioOsorno who offered her sewing workshop to make masks free of charge for hospitals in her area or the remarkable move of @madamederosa who went back to her job as a nurse at that time.

The solidarity of most of the influencers is understood by the contribution with a wide range of activities for the home, mostly sports exercises like those performed by @paulaordovas live or @lauraescanes on Instagram TV or making available to the fans lists of songs (@misshedwig) or films. The opinionated content on the social and political situation is very scarce and comes from male profiles (@sergiocarvajal7; @pelayodiaz) and is not collected in the posts but in the stories, with individual messages directly to the camera.

But the final proof of the total commercial bias acquired by the influencers is not only in the fact that during the crisis they continued with their commercial activities (@goicoechea held draws with brands) but also that they tried to adapt this sales process to the situation at the time. Thus, @marcforne makes his first post about the quarantine coincide with content about the distributor Zalando, indicating that they can buy at home and @gigi_vives takes advantage of the recommendations on films for confinement to announce a make of televisions. We found more content of this type and, in fact, @mariapombo shares in her contents the unboxing of Zara packages that have just arrived at her home.

It is clear that the crisis may pose a problem for influencers if their contents lose interest for their followers, so we cannot determine if the continuity of their commercial activities has an economic purpose or if they are trying to maintain normality in order to continue connecting with their audiences. The messages are clearly positive and encouraging, trying to avoid the feeling of tiredness or concern that is present in the media during this period. Shopping is encouraged, but sport and conversation are also encouraged. Most of the posts include questions to find out how the recipients are doing and even games or direct contacts are considered (@lauraescanes includes questionnaires in her stories).

Clearly, the role of the influencers has been revealed as another way of entertaining society. Their involvement is positive from the expression of the need to respect confinement, but they struggle with the need to maintain a normality that allows them to maintain their contact with the public and, above all, their

influence on them. The profiles' commercial activity is clear, constant and direct and, in spite of having to adapt to making social awareness messages, they cannot make this final object of their activity disappear. Our country has reacted positively to this way of managing the problem, maintaining and even increasing the monitoring of these profiles.

Note

1. The average number of monthly publications for each account has been calculated from the total number of posts and the year of creation.

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Annex 1. The top 50 influencers in Spain. Main data (2020)

	Nombre	Instagram	Prof.	Area	Blog	Media	Shop	Followers
1	Aida Domènech	dulceida	--	M	X	--	A	2.7 mill.
2	Sara Carbonero	saracarbonero	Journalist	LS	X	Elle	B	2.6 mill.
3	Paula Gonu	paulagonu	--	M	--	YT	--	2.0 mill.
4	Alexandra Pereira	alexandrapereira	--	M	X	---	A	1.8 mill.
5	Georgina Rodríguez	georginagio	---	S	X	---	--	18.4 mill.
6	Laura Escanes	lauraescanes	Model	LS	--	---	--	1.5 mill.
7	Sara Escudero	collagevintage	--	M	X	---	A	1.1 mill.
8	Jessica Goicoechea	goicoechea	Model	B	X	---	A	1.1 mill.
9	Pelayo Díaz	pelayodiaz	Advertiser	M	X	---	--	1.0 mill.
10	Alba Paul Ferrer	albapaulfe	--	V	X	---	B	1.0 mill.
11	Gala González	galagonzalez	Model	M	X	Book	A	1.1 mill.
12	Verdeliss	verdeliss	---	M	X	YT	A	1.2 mill.
13	Sergio Carvajal	sergiocarvajal7	Model	M	--	YT	--	1.0 mill.
14	Risto Mejide	ristomejide	Advertiser	O	--	Book	---	1.2 mill.
15	Rocío Osorno	rocioOsorno	Designer	M	--	--	A	1.1 mill.
16	María Pombo	mariapombo	---	M	X	--	B	1.4 mill.
17	Patricia Jordán	patryjordan	Blogger	F	X	YT	A	993K
18	Nina Urgell	ninauc	--	B	--	--	--	798K
19	Belén Hostalet	belenhostalet	--	LS	--	--	--	814K
20	Marta Lozano	martalozanop	Model	M	--	--	--	846K
21	María Turiel	meryturiel	---	M	--	--	--	826K
22	Marta Carriedo	martacarriedo	Marketing	M	X	--	A	570K
23	Carol Peña	missshedwig	Photographer	A	X	--	--	539K
24	Natalia Cabezas	trendy_taste	---	M	X	YT	--	539K
25	Ángela Rozas Saiz	madamederosa	---	M	X	--	--	578K
26	Grace Villareal	gracyvillareal	--	LS	--	YT	--	599K
27	Teresa Andrés Gonzalvo	teresaandresgonzalvo	Model	LS	--	--	--	545K
28	Paula Ordovás	paulaordovas	--	M	X	Vogue	--	486K
29	Alex Domènech	alexdomenec	--	LS	--	--	--	412K
30	Judith Jaso	jasojudith	Youtuber	LS	--	YT	--	483K
31	Gigi Vives	gigi_vives	Creative	A	--	--	A	434K
32	María Fernández-Rubies	mariafrubies	--	LS	--	YT	--	543K
33	Marc Forné	marcforné	Model	M	--	--	--	399K
34	Andrea Belver	andreabelverf	Blogger	M	X	--	B	439K
35	Rocío Camacho	rocioccamacho	Entrepreneur	LS	X	--	A	511K
36	Silvia García	bartabacmode	--	M	X	YT	A	393K
37	Andrea Compton	andreacomptonn	Youtuber	LS	--	YT	--	374K
38	Alex Chiner	alexchiner	--	LS	--	--	--	331K
39	Pau Clavero	hiclavero	Artist	A	X	--	A	469K
40	Paula Echeverría	pau_eche	Actress	M	X	--	A	3.0 mil.
41	Inés Arroyo	ines_arroyo	Entrepreneur	M	X	--	A	328K
42	María Valero	mariavalero22	Creative	A	X	--	--	321K
43	Carla Laubalo	laubalo	Creative	A	--	YT	--	350K
44	Itziar Aguilera	itziaraguilera	Artist	A	--	--	A	247K
45	Izhan Go.	izhan_go	---	A	--	YT	--	218K
46	Joan Palá	joanpala	--	LS	--	--	B	211K
47	Belén Canalejo	balamoda	Blogger	LS	X	--	A	243K
48	Carla Hinojosa	carlahinojosar	Digital	M	--	--	A	235K
49	Paula Argüelles	paulaarguellesg	Creative	M	--	--	B	207K
50	Vicky Gómez	vickygom3z	Artist	LS	--	YT	--	226K

Legenda: Prof.: Profession / Área: M. Mode; L. Life Style; S. Health; B. Beauty; O. Opinion; A. Art; F. Fitness. / Shop: A. Own; B. External brand. / Followers: number of followers in Instagram.

Source: Authors, 2020.

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Analysis of media literacy initiatives by schools and local media in Catalonia

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Abstract

This paper examines media education initiatives in the educational and media system of Catalonia. The purpose was to observe how media literacy is promoted in the classroom. To this end, two questionnaires were completed by 115 teachers and ten local media managers. The results show that the schools tended to use school or local media to teach media literacy, although they did not follow standard indicators to achieve media skills and placed greater emphasis on entertaining students than on critical learning about the use of the media.

Keywords

Media literacy, media education, local media, education, Catalonia.

Resum

Aquest article analitza iniciatives d'educació mediàtica del sistema educatiu i comunicatiu de Catalunya. L'objectiu és observar com es promou l'alfabetització mediàtica a les aules. Per això, s'han realitzat dos qüestionaris, que han respost 115 docents i deu responsables de mitjans de comunicació locals. Els resultats indiquen que els centres formatius acostumen a fer ús de mitjans escolars o locals amb una voluntat d'alfabetitzar en mitjans, tot i que no segueixen uns indicadors estàndard per assolir competències mediàtiques i emfasitzen més l'entreteniment de l'alumnat que l'aprenentatge crític de l'ús dels mitjans.

Paraules clau

Alfabetització mediàtica, educació, mitjans de comunicació locals, educació, Catalunya.

1. Introduction

The most recent Estudio General de Medios [EGM, *General Media Study*] (2020) estimated that from the age of 14 onwards, most internet users watch mainly audiovisual content online: this order, streaming videos, music, and films and using platforms for watching movies, TV series, recorded broadcasts, etc. In other words, spaces where audiovisual language plays a fundamental role in conveying messages that roam across the digital universe on its diverse screens, which can influence the way of conceiving the environment without informing explicitly (FERRÉS 2015).

In an environment more digital than ever where children and young people in many cases have direct and constant access to the web, media and information teaching are needed to enhance media and audiovisual narrative culture literacy. The purpose is to lessen the hazards of manipulation based on a critical perspective in which the individual is aware of the power structures, techniques and factors used by media and other communication platforms and channels (MONTROYA 2005).

Against this background, media and information literacy (MIL) is a crucial learning tool for individual and collective

development and the consolidation of democracy inasmuch as it provides people with the tools to understand their oversized information environment and gain critical insight and analysis for making personal decisions. The *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels*, coordinated by Paolo Celot and José Manuel Pérez Tornero and drawn up for the European Commission (EC), argues that media education “is part of the basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world, to freedom of expression and the right to information” (CELOT & PÉREZ TORNERO 2009: 23).

In today's ever-changing landscape, the ability to adapt to such volatile new practices with technological innovation is a challenge the Catalan Government has tied to Agenda 2030, which also aims to promote “teamwork, information management, critical thinking, communication skills and problem solving” (GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA 2016: 10). Indeed, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) set by the United Nations (UN) in Agenda 2030 specifies that citizens must be empowered with the tools needed to enjoy “healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges” while promoting creativity and knowledge and the acquisition of core competencies in literacy

and numeracy along with analytical and other cognitive, interpersonal and social skills (UNESCO 2015: 7, 48).

In this aspect, media literacy should be part of the formation of each individual to obtain the skills and new learning required by the current society, where the school has a relevant role due to its intrinsic social function. The institution is given responsibility and confidence as a space for learning about issues that children and young people cannot acquire in the family environment, and that define their growth. Like schools, the media also share the aim of educating or forming citizens for a common benefit in the short and long term. We would say that both professions have the responsibility to guide the population in the best possible way. Accordingly, there is an ideal symbiotic relationship for conveying knowledge and educating in the media as a result of their close association.

The purpose of this article is to publicize how schools promote AMI in the classroom and beyond. It also aims to describe how the activities and interactions between the actors within the Catalan educational-communicative ecosystem manage to develop the spirit and critical attitude of the students. From thorough research (2019), we have established an initial overview of existing media literacy initiatives in Catalonia and have highlighted the learning methods and actions of some schools to offer a sample of the pedagogical diversity, which aims to approach the milestones that demand the changing environment for the development of children and young people.

2. State-of-the-art

The information and communication society concept emerged in the 1960s to explain the processes resulting from the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) into everyday life. It has had a considerable impact on the way we understand the world, evaluate information and assimilate it individually and as a society. Castells (2005) even argues that technology has become and “is the backbone of our society” (p. 4). In other words, he would argue that social structures are organised digitally and indeed contends that power resides more in networks than in cities (CASTELLS & CARDOSO 1996).

The new media environment in which technologies are proliferating, and therefore also digitalisation and the introduction of screens as another part of daily life, means that MIL not only makes sense but is also gaining traction across Europe, Spain and Catalonia as will be discussed below.

European organisations began to get involved in the field with the Grünwald Declaration in 1982 that underlined the close relationship between education and the media. It addressed the need for education and political systems to work together to foster public understanding and participation in media processes in all their forms so that people would develop greater critical awareness and consequently greater competence with respect to the introduction of technology.

In 2000, the Lisbon European Council identified the

knowledge-based society as the foundation for understanding the current economy to make it competitive and sustainable. It considered education as an essential sector for improving the level and quality of work and therefore called for changes and other training opportunities in education systems such as “the promotion of new basic skills, in particular in the information technologies” (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2000). This precedent indicates that the term *competence* was born associated with the labour domain and has since spread to academia until becoming key in the educational reforms in most of the European Union member states (EU). As Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) note, being competent does not guarantee professional efficiency “but rather it enhances personal excellence. Media competence should help to develop the personal autonomy” of the public “as well as their social and cultural commitment” (p. 2).

Following the same line, the European Commission defines the term *competence* to refer to “a combination of skills, knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes, and to include the willingness to learn in addition to know-how” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2004: 5). Alongside this description, Ferrés, Figueras-Maz, Masanet and Hafner (2015) consider that critical thinking, understanding and analysis are essential and must be taken into account as competences, although in terms of media skills they believe critical awareness is crucial since it indicates a predisposition to act.

From a school perspective, Len Masterman (1983) maintains that students first have to understand the media in order to grasp the reality the media present to them. Hence to begin with they need to learn how the media work. David Buckingham (2004) argues that media education “is the process of teaching and learning about the media [...]” designed “to develop both critical understanding and active participation. It enables young people to interpret and make informed judgements as consumers of media; but it also enables them to become producers of media in their own right”. He notes that “media education is about developing young people’s critical and creative abilities” (BUCKINGHAM 2004: 21).

Against this background, Directive (EU) 2018/1808 was published, marking the beginning of a pathway that seeks to deliver media literacy for all generations in partnership with European Union member states which have two years to implement it in their legal systems. Article 33 of the Regulation also stipulates that “by 19 December 2022 at the latest, and every three years thereafter, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee a report on the application of this Directive” (BOE 2018: 23).

As far as Spanish legislation is concerned, the core principle is that media literacy should be addressed at the national level in order to achieve the targets set in the Education Quality Improvement Act (LOMCE). The preamble of the Act says that “children need to acquire from an early age cross-cutting competencies, such as critical thinking, diversity management,

creativity and the ability to communicate, and key attitudes such as individual confidence, enthusiasm, perseverance and acceptance of change". However, media education subjects are optional or breadth subjects at the regional level. Whether they are included in the curriculum depends on the regulation (if any) and the scheduling of educational programmes in each region. However, the LOMCE also stipulates that teachers are to include media-related skills in the subjects they teach to avert information and digital illiteracy.

In the case of Catalonia, the 2005 Catalan Broadcasting Act specified that the Catalan Government is to ensure utmost communication, understanding and expression skills in the broadcasting and ICT fields. Furthermore, the Catalan Statute of Autonomy says that the public authorities "shall facilitate knowledge of the information society and shall encourage equal access to communication and to information technologies" (BOE 2006: 15). Following the regulations enacted at various levels, in 2017 the Catalan Ministry of Education and the Catalan Audiovisual Council (CAC) entered into a partnership agreement to drive media literacy in the educational community. Its measures include promoting agreements between broadcast media and their nearby schools so that the former can share their knowledge, arrange visits or produce and broadcast training mini-programmes with students. As a result of this agreement, the eduCAC programme was also set up in the same year to "promote media education in formal and informal settings" (EDUCAC 2020) which additionally includes publicising teaching tools and materials for teachers and families.

The call for information teaching is evident not only in regulations, declarations and agreements but also on a practical level. This research is warranted because there is concern about the acquisition of media skills by children and young people, and also the perception that there is a tendency for media education to be supplied by schools, local media and education and media industry organisations. The purpose is to meet a learning demand that provides the public with the knowledge they need to gain a mature opinion of the situation and its various languages and to train people as content producers in the media and digital setting. It is about individual and collective empowerment vis-à-vis the media as a "strategy to consume them intelligently, to enjoy and take ownership of them in our lives, to learn, to understand and to interact" (AGUADÉ 2014: 1).

3. Methodology

The study method analysed media education initiatives in Catalonia run by schools in conjunction or otherwise with other actors that support or drive this kind of activity. It was built around a number of variables that showed how different schools combined the academic curriculum with media skills work. The research began by exploring the "La ràdio als centres" database published by the Catalan Electronic Education Network (XTEC),

which includes over 100 school radio stations across Catalonia in order to get a preliminary overview of schools that deliver media education in the classroom. This documentary source made it possible to address the individual features of initiatives recognised by the Catalan Government.

An online survey was drawn up to obtain a more significant sample. It was sent to all primary and secondary schools in Catalonia listed by the Catalan Department of Education on their online school directories, to get an initial qualitative and quantitative sample that would allow us to compare media education activities across schools. The initial focus was on identification aspects: name of the primary or secondary school, location, type of school, ownership. Then, we considered the items entirely related to the production or learning of media content: name and status of the initiative, years in which it is taught, scheduling, resources and tools used, and relationship with the media. A description and assessment of the activity was also requested. During this first survey period from December 2018 to April 2019, the respondents to the questionnaire were teaching staff. In total, 115 people replied as principals or teachers at schools interested in media literacy or running an initiative.

Based on the teachers' answers, between March and April 2020 a second survey was sent by mail to 62 local media managers in Catalonia that were known to have a relationship with schools. Ten people answered the questionnaire. As in the first form, the respondents were asked to identify themselves and their jobs. They were also asked about the years with which they conducted activities, scheduling, the type of content the students deal with and how important their role was, the year in which they first came into contact with schools and the proposals they offer as local media. They were also asked about their motivations for engaging with schools.

The respondents' inputs helped to organise media literacy activities, as shown in Figure 1, and to contextualise the results and understand the patterns of existing initiatives.

4. Results

It has been observed that each school combines the academic curriculum with media skills in a different way. There are primary and secondary schools which choose to work on them using their own resources and this leads to the emergence of school media. As for those schools that partner with municipal or general interest media to provide media education, Deó's classification (2000) shows there are three types of activities in terms of local television production, which can be extrapolated to radio programmes or the press:

- The **benchmark activities** are designed to take place over a limited period of time on a one-off basis and are aimed at a very specific group. The most usual are outings to media outlets, guided tours, workshops and project work. They chiefly explore the inner workings of the media outlet so

Figure 1. Schools with media education initiatives. Sample analysed

County	Total	County	Total	County	Total
Maresme	21	Alt Penedès	4	Pla de l'Estany	2
Vallès Oriental	19	Ribera d'Ebre	3	Tarragonès	2
Baix Llobregat	13	Alt Empordà	2	Alt Camp	1
Osona	11	Baix Camp	2	Baix Ebre	1
Vallès Occidental	11	Baix Empordà	2	Conca de Barberà	1
Barcelonès	9	Baix Penedès	2	La Garrotxa	1
Urgell	8	Berguedà	2	Moianès	1
Bages	7	Gironès	2	Noguera	1
El Priorat	7	La Selva	2	Segrià	1

Source: author's own compilation.

that the students can also gain a technical or production understanding about it.

- **Teaching support activities** add to and expand on the students' academic work. They are assessed, for example, by making a broadcasting or press item, which means they have a clear educational purpose. They cover various topics and the depth and diversity of content they may explore depends on the complexity of the exercises involved.
- **Integration activities** involve the direct engagement of students in creating a journalism product. They are usually conducted on an occasional or one-off basis since content production calls for more time and commitment. The idea is to show students what journalism and the media are like while the purpose of these partnerships is to display the end product in local media outlets. The partnership is closer and more continuous which means the students coordinated by teaching staff can design recreational and educational activities.

The methodology employed resulted in the identification of 172 media education initiatives in primary and secondary schools in Catalonia similar to those presented; 139 involved contact with local media to produce content or introduce students to the media, while 35 worked on school magazines, newspapers, radio or television in lockstep with or in addition to curricular activities.

Geographically, there were 98 schools in Barcelona province teaching media education with the support of a local media outlet; 19 in Tarragona; 12 in Girona and 10 in Lleida. Figure 1 shows that the county with the highest number of primary and secondary schools conducting initiatives with a municipal media outlet was el Maresme; specifically it had 21, of which 12 were run in Mataró, the county capital (Fig. 1).

While Barcelona had most of the interactions on this list, the number of schools varies in each province and to an extent this determines the number of initiatives in each one. From highest to lowest, there were 489 schools in Barcelona, i.e. 33.98% of schools in Catalonia, 347 in Girona (24.11%), 343 in Tarragona (23.84%) and 260 in Lleida (18.06%).

To gain a reliable assessment of the quantitative data, 115 initiatives drawn from the responses of the teachers and media managers who took part in the survey were carefully explored. It is estimated that there were 46 schools conducting media education activities in preschool education, 82 in primary, 27 in secondary (many of these schools host the various educational stages in the same facilities), three in specially disadvantaged schools and one in a special education school. Of these, 109 were at a state primary or secondary school while the remaining six were at a state-subsidised school. Most of the cases considered in the research (100 of the 115 or 86.9%) were in contact with a local broadcasting, press or digital media outlet.

The bulk of media literacy activities in state schools were at the preschool and primary levels without much quantitative difference. There were 46 preschools where media education was taught to all years. The same applied at all levels of 44 primary schools. In this case, there was a greater variety of levels working on media skills. Other schools choose to do so in one, two or three years. The most common are upper stage years, i.e. Years 5 and 6, in which twelve schools did more with the subject. In lower secondary education there were 27 schools where media and communication activities were carried out, and 10 of them did so for all years. Seven of these 10 also teach media skills in upper secondary education, plus Icaria High School (Barcelona), and five in vocational training, such as Guillem Catà High School (Manresa).

As for the most used media, 82 radio, 21 television and 51 press projects (considering student posts on the school's blog or website) were noted. There were 21 initiatives which were strictly school-based, i.e. not tied to a media outlet outside the school. Of these, 14 had their own school newspaper or magazine which they published digitally on a blog or the school website while nine used their radio studios at the school. In terms of media education frequency, 30 of the 115 schools taught it on a weekly basis, nine on a term basis, and eight every day. There were 28 schools in the research which did not specify precisely what their activity period was because it had not been set.

The first media activities revealed in the surveys and which are still ongoing today were in the county capital of el Maresme at Valldemia School, Angeleta Ferrer School and local TV and radio station Mataró Audiovisual. The two schools started to work with broadcasting projects in the 1999-2000 school year and in 2006-2007 they joined forces with the local radio station in Mataró to put speaking and writing curricular skills into practice and also build using ICT into the learning process. Along the same lines, Sant Isidre de Capçanes School (El Priorat) began running a programme with Ràdio Falset in 2000 which was expanded in terms of media in 2013 by setting up a school magazine which continues to come out today.

Angeleta Ferrer School is a prime case of cross-cutting integration of activities into the school. In view of the excellent results and popularity of the broadcasting project, it was extended to the municipal media outlet's radio studios. Since 2006, it has been the only school to make a programme at Mataró Audiovisual every term. They have added radio as a teaching component from Preschool 3 to Primary 6 with the programme *Molinet de Colors* as part of "Les escoles a la ràdio". In 2007, the CAC granted them the award "The CAC in School", in the Primary Education category, for their integration skills and efforts and for expressly dealing with radio.

Other schools running weekly media education activities included Sant Martí School (Cerdanyola del Vallès) where Primary 3 students do a programme on Cerdanyola Radio as part of the Cerdanyola Educa project. In Figueres, Primary 6, Lower Secondary 3 and Lower Secondary 4 students at state-subsidised Escolapias School produce two sections which are broadcast in the programme *Fem campana* on Ràdio Vilafant. Sant Jordi School (L'Ametlla de Mar) does *Sortim a l'escola*, a participation programme in which students from preschool to primary talk about projects, outings and other school initiatives which may be of interest. Local radio and TV station La Cala RTV also gives them a day every year on which they do all the segments of the radio schedule: *Avui la ràdio la fem naltros*. Likewise, Salvador Espriu School (Granollers) shows its school work across the board on an annual basis in a one-off programme on Vallès Oriental Televisió (VOTV) and in the newspaper *El 9 + petit*.

Another school using the media for teaching purposes is Giola High School in Llinars del Vallès. As part of Catalan language classes, journalist and teacher, Laura Ballesteró motivates Lower Secondary 1 students' academic projects by giving them a longer life: journalistic pieces following curricular content and reaching the required standard may be published in local digital media *El Punt Vallès* or the Vallès Oriental edition of *El 9 Nou*. A teaching support activity enables the students to work in a real life context.

A similar line of teaching support but this time on television is the *Cargol Noticiari* programme made by Year 6 students at Ronçana Infant and Primary School (Santa Eulàlia de Ronçana) run with Canal SET. This interaction with the local TV station goes back over 25 years to promote the use of Catalan by

preparing school news stories which are recorded, edited and put together by the station's professionals.

In a similar way, Vilamajor High School (Sant Pere de Vilamajor) started out in radio in the 2018-19 school year with an optional subject for two groups of Lower Secondary 3 students. To help them acquire media skills, the school is supported by the COMSOC-Comunicació Social association which has been using radio as a tool for social communication and transformation since 2008 as part of media education. The programme's topics are based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Agenda 2030, chosen by the students. Under this umbrella, the project is funded by Sant Antoni de Vilamajor Town Council and supported by Barcelona Provincial Council.

At Pere Vives i Vich High School (Igualada) they have also been doing a radio optional subject called "Fem de reporters" since 2014. In this case, the idea is to learn about issues at the school and improve digital and media skills by writing scripts, interviews and news stories, which they then record, and edit. Meanwhile, Lower Secondary 3 students also visit the studios of Catalunya Ràdio and TV3 as a core activity, something also done by Giola High School at TV3.

Local media are often the resource and tools for many schools that may not have the assets to make complex productions. They are, for example, for the three schools that go to La Garriga municipal radio station to make their own programmes, take guided tours and work together on thematic capsules and specific slots. The studios host approximately 200 students with the aim of improving group work, reading, spoken presentations and knowledge about municipal media. Ràdio Tàrrrega also has eight schools taking part in an initiative which began in 2013.

Hence, there are municipal media outlets which offer and suggest activities for children, teenagers and teachers with a vision of public service, accessibility and openness to their surroundings. Ràdio Televisió Cardedeu invites schools to three different types of activities to introduce students to the medium: visiting the facilities to learn about the history, programmes and importance of the media organisation together with longer workshops to teach the skills needed to learn about and produce a news item or do an interview and thus take into consideration the roles of each member on television. Televisió de Sant Cugat also produces the programme *Pica Lletres*, in which lower secondary students test their knowledge of Catalan and run special activities as an incentive for educational communities which can take advantage of the station's offering.

Gerbert d'Orlhac School, for example, participates in all the town's local media, i.e. Cugat Ràdio, Cugat TV and TOT Sant Cugat (press), where they occasionally prepare interviews, debates or articles. Mònica Lablanca, the editor of *cugat.cat*, says that the partnership with the schools shows them a way of working with information and journalism "based on diligence and professionalism". Alongside working with local media, Sara Laguna, principal at Gerbert d'Orlhac School, says they also practise media skills at the school with their own resources.

Every week since 2012, they have held a newspaper workshop covering a range of issues, which is where they do “more specific work in terms of media”.

The above cases show the schools’ flexibility in building media skills learning into school timetables along with their resolve to arrange settings for media education and a commitment to seek out resources to make it happen. The goal of each media education initiative is different and therefore not quantifiable. Nevertheless, the results of the surveys showed common purposes in most schools which are broken down into curricular and social skills. Firstly, the schools use media education to work on language skills, especially speaking and writing, along with interpersonal and intrapersonal communication and to foster teamwork, the students’ MIL and broaden their cultural knowledge by bringing them into contact with media outlets to awaken their interest in the media, current affairs and environment in which they take place.

Secondly, there is a fun and entertainment aspect to production that is also designed to foster the students’ creativity and voice and enhance the tasks they do in the classroom by making them public as productions which may become part of the media’s programming schedules. For example, students at Miquel Martí i Pol School in Barberà del Vallès broadcast school projects of interest to the town on Ràdio Canet and also report on events and activities run by the school.

5. Conclusions

This paper began by asking how media and information literacy is enhanced in the classrooms of Catalonia’s schools. There are many answers to this question depending on the setting and the administrative, technical and time constraints of each primary and secondary school. However, there are some shared principles.

The data gathered in the surveys show that 94.7% of the 115 media education initiatives take place in state schools in the preschool (53.9%) and primary (62.6%) stages. In preschool, 46 of the 62 schools run some kind of media literacy activity in all years from P 3 to 5. Equally, 43 of the 72 primary schools do some at all levels. The rest do so in one, two or three years depending on availability and resources they need.

Of the 115 schools, 100 run some kind of activity with local media with the aim of educating their students in the media or looking for technical, production or mentoring help. The results reveal that connections are forged between the educational and media systems because the school seeks to introduce students to the media domain so that they can acquire new knowledge and contact with reality and do more recreational academic tasks. Hence, this is engagement in media education but more from an entertainment perspective rather than promoting critical awareness and attitudes vis-à-vis the media. Many of the programmes use media production as a stimulus or tool to test students’ spoken and written language skills, social skills such

as teamwork, learning to listen, to share and take responsibility and be self-sufficient, or to teach them more about ICT.

However, the wide variety of methodologies combining the academic curriculum with adding and fostering media skills is down to the readiness, options and creativity of individual schools and teachers to manage training schemes of this kind. Some educational communities have constructed a teaching approach coupled with producing local journalism content with local media outlets. This is the case of Angeleta Ferrer School, which has been working on broadcasting projects since the 1999-2000 school year and has been in contact with Mataró Audiovisual since 2006-2007.

Media literacy initiatives have stood out and added value to academic work have been able to continue and flourish. Success stories include the “Cargol Noticiari” broadcast that Year 6 students at Ronçana Infant and Primary School (Santa Eulàlia de Ronçana) have been making for more than 25 years on Canal SET and the radio programme made by Sant Isidre de Capçanes School (El Priorat) with Ràdio Falset since 2000 which have built in media education and become firmly established. However, implementing activities of this kind involves the difficulty that primary and secondary schools need structural changes and time to adapt. Hence some run one-off activities which are not so prolonged or difficult to perform yet which nevertheless pursue the same purpose of delivering media education along parallel pathways.

It would seem that schools usually seek professional support and conduct media literacy initiatives by tapping school or local media to teach media literacy. However, each educational community uses different teaching approaches and does not follow specific parameters defining the achievement of media literacy in the sense proposed by the European Union, UNESCO or the SDGs in Agenda 2030. At all events, what is evident is the satisfaction of the students in doing media education activities, especially ones that become meaningful when the work is shown to the outside world or on outings conducted to learn more about the media in a more experiential way.

Turning to the kind of content they publish on television, radio or in the press (paper or digital), the topics they cover are diverse. In particular, they include ones in the school setting, with local interest, on current affairs or general culture that can add to the curricular dimensions. There are also very specific initiatives, such as the one run by Vilamajor High School where school radio becomes a tool to explore some of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in Agenda 2030.

As regards the milestone set by the UN in the SDGs to ensure Quality Education, there is the suggestion that education should be rethought by tailoring it to the social and media changes which technological innovation brings about. In this case, using methods that factor in MIL and teaching ICT in the classroom is a challenge, which is beginning to emerge in view of the results presented.

To sum up, it would seem that these initiatives are the upshot of the most recent regulations for media literacy including

European Directive 2018/1808, the Spanish LOMCE and the Catalan Broadcasting Act of 2005, which led to the partnership agreement between the Ministry of Education and the CAC in 2017. The legislative call for organising media education teaching and learning programmes will have driven media activities which for the time being are emerging voluntarily on an optional basis and in a cross-disciplinary way at all levels or in specific years. To avoid missing the chance to deliver media education, schools coordinate with media outlets or design school radio or television stations, newspapers and magazines that address media literacy to work towards social progress and the civic responsibility of future generations.

Finally, and over and above its educational aspect, using the media in the education setting should also provide students with the tools needed for critical media education, not only in mainstream media but also in using the internet and social media. However, this calls for further research about children and teenagers' internet consumption and use.

Note

This article is based on the information gathered in the author's final year journalism project. The work was directed by Norminanda Montoya, Professor at the Faculty of Communication Sciences at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), and by Sylvia Montilla, Head of the Research, Studies and Publications Unit of the Catalan Audiovisual Council (CAC). The work is available in its entirety in the Digital Document Repository of the UAB:

https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/tfg/2019/218156/TFG_Gonzalez_Deumal_Claudia.pdf

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Annex 1. Schools with educational-communicative practices. Sample analyzed

School	Media	Location	County
Escola Eladi Homs	Radio, Press, Internet	Valls	Alt Camp
Escolàpies Figueres	Radio	Figueres	Alt Empordà
Escola Maria Pagès i Trayter	Press	Ordis	Alt Empordà
Escola Puig Segalar	Press	Viladamat	Alt Empordà
Escola Sol i Vent	Radio, Internet	Vilafant	Alt Empordà
Institut Gelida	Radio	Gelida	Alt Penedès
Escola Intermunicipal del Penedès	Radio	Sant Sadurní d'Anoia	Alt Penedès
Escola Subirats	Press	Subirats	Alt Penedès
Institut Alt Penedès	Press	Vilafranca del Penedès	Alt Penedès
Escola de Maians	Radio	Castellfollit del Boix	Bages
Escola Sant Miquel	Press	Castellgalí	Bages
Institut Guillem Catà	Press, Internet, Television	Manresa	Bages
Escola Pla del Puig	Radio	Sant Fruitós de Bages	Bages
Escola Sant Vicenç	Press, Internet	Sant Vicenç de Castellet	Bages
Escola La Serreta	Radio	Santpedor	Bages
Escola Riu d'Or	Radio, Internet	Santpedor	Bages
Escola Els Ganxets	Radio, Press, Internet	Reus	Baix Camp
Institut Escola Pi del Burgar	Press	Reus	Baix Camp
Escola Mestral	Radio, Television, Press, Internet	Vandellòs i L'Hospitalet de l'Infant	Baix Camp
Escola Font de l'Arc	Press	Vilanova d'Escornalbou	Baix Camp
Escola Sant Jordi	Radio	L'Ametlla de Mar	Baix Ebre
Escola Fanals d'Aro	Radio, Television, Press, Internet	Castell - Platja d'Aro	Baix Empordà
Escola Guillem de Montgrí	Radio	Torroella de Montgrí	Baix Empordà
Escola Frangoal	Radio	Castelldefels	Baix Llobregat
Institut Joanot Martorell	Radio	Esplugues de Llobregat	Baix Llobregat
Escola Can Vidalet	Radio	Esplugues de Llobregat	Baix Llobregat
Col·legi Sagrada Família	Press	Gavà	Baix Llobregat
Col·legi Sant Josep	Radio, Television, Internet	Sant Boi de Llobregat	Baix Llobregat
Escola Pompeu Fabra	Press, Internet	Cunit	Baix Penedès
Institut Ernest Lluch i Martín	Radio	Cunit	Baix Penedès
Escola Angels Garriga	Radio	El Vendrell	Baix Penedès
Escola Llibertat	Television	Badalona	Barcelonès
Institut Barres i Ones	Press	Badalona	Barcelonès
Escola Jaume I	Radio	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Escola Seat	Radio	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Escola Sagrada Família	Television	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Institut El Cairat	Radio, Television	Badalona	Barcelonès
Institut Icària	Radio	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Institut Escola El Til·ler	Radio, Press	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Escola Mossèn Jacint Verdager	Radio	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Escola Collaso i Gil	Radio	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Institut Príncep de Girona	Radio	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Escola El Sagrer	Radio	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Escola Barrufet	Radio, Press	Barcelona	Barcelonès
Escola Joaquim Ruyra	Radio, Press	L'Hospitalet de Llobregat	Barcelonès
Escola Santa Maria d'Avià	Radio	Avià	Berguedà
Escola Sant Joan	Television	Berga	Berguedà
Escola Olvan	Press	Olvan	Berguedà
Institut de Puig-reig	Radio	Puig-reig	Berguedà
Escola Valldemur	Radio	Barberà de la Conca	Conca de Barberà
Escola Llebetx	Press, Internet	Vilanova i la Geltrú	Garraf
Institut de Celrà	Radio	Celrà	Gironès
Escola Puig de les Cadiretes	Television, Internet	Llagostera	Gironès
Escola Castellum	Radio, Press	Sant Julià de Ramis	Gironès

Annex 1. Schools with educational-communicative practices. Sample analyzed (continuation)

School	Media	Location	County
Institut Pere Vives i Vich	Radio	Igualada	L'Anoia
Escola de Ciutadilla	Radio, Press	Ciutadilla	L'Urgell
Escola Malagrida	Press	Olot	La Garrotxa
Institut La Garrotxa	Radio, Television, Press	Olot	La Garrotxa
Escola Joaquim Ruyra	Radio	Blanes	La Selva
Institut Escola Lloret de Mar	Radio, Television, Press, Internet	Lloret de Mar	La Selva
Escola Sant Martí	Radio	Arenys de Munt	Maresme
FEDAC Canet	Radio	Canet de Mar	Maresme
Escola Turó del Drac	Radio	Canet de Mar	Maresme
Escola Joan Coromines	Radio	Mataró	Maresme
Escola Valldemia	Radio	Mataró	Maresme
Escola Antoni Doltra	Radio	Pineda de Mar	Maresme
Escola La Lió	Radio	Premià de Mar	Maresme
Escola El Dofí	Radio	Premià de Mar	Maresme
Escola Dones d'Aigua	Radio, Press	Sant Iscle de Vallalta	Maresme
Escola Ignasi Iglesias	Radio	Tordera	Maresme
Institut Jaume Almera	Radio, Television, Press, Internet	Vilassar de Dalt	Maresme
Institut Moianès	Radio, Press	Moià	Moianès
Escola Jaume I	Press	La Sénia	Montsià
Escola Alfred Potrony	Radio, Television, Press	Térmens	Noguera
Escola Salvador Espriu	Press, Internet	Vallfogona de Balaguer	Noguera
Escola Puig-Agut	Radio, Press	Manlleu	Osona
Escola Muntanyola	Press, Internet	Muntanyola	Osona
Escola Lluçanès	Radio	Prats de Lluçanès	Osona
Escola Mare de Déu del Sòl del Pont	Radio, Press	Roda de Ter	Osona
Escola Les Pinediques	Radio, Television	Taradell	Osona
Escola Camins	Radio, Television	Banyoles	Pla de l'Estany
Escola Baldiri Reixac	Radio	Banyoles	Pla de l'Estany
Escola Sant Isidre	Radio, Press	Capçanes	Priorat
Escola Polinyà	Television, Press, Internet	Polinyà	Ribera Baixa
Escola Sant Miquel	Television	Ascó	Ribera d'Ebre
Escola Lluís Viñas Viñoles	Radio	Móra d'Ebre	Ribera d'Ebre
Institut Escola 3 d'Abril	Television	Móra la Nova	Ribera d'Ebre
Escola Antoni Bergós	Radio, Internet	Lleida	Segrià
Escola Europa	Press	Salou	Tarragonès
Escola Santa Maria del Mar	Radio	Salou	Tarragonès
Escola Saavedra	Radio	Tarragona	Tarragonès
Escola Cal·lípolis	Press	Vilaseca	Tarragonès
Institut Manuel de Pedrolo	Press, Internet	Tàrrrega	Urgell
Escola Maria-Mercè Marçal	Radio, Press, Internet	Tàrrrega	Urgell
Escola La Jota	Radio, Internet	Badia del Vallès	Vallès Occidental
Escola Miquel Martí i Pol	Radio, Press, Internet	Barberà del Vallès	Vallès Occidental
Escola Emili Carles Tolrà	Radio, Press, Internet	Castellar del Vallès	Vallès Occidental
Escola Les Fontetes	Radio	Cerdanyola	Vallès Occidental
Escola Sant Martí	Radio	Cerdanyola	Vallès Occidental
Escola Font Freda	Radio, Press	Montcada i Reixac	Vallès Occidental
Escola Mitja Costa	Radio	Montcada i Reixac	Vallès Occidental
Escola Catalunya	Radio	Sabadell	Vallès Occidental
Institut Leonardo da Vinci	Radio	Sant Cugat del Vallès	Vallès Occidental
Escola Gerbert d'Orlhac	Radio, Television, Press	Sant Cugat del Vallès	Vallès Occidental
Escola Els Pinetons	Radio	La Garriga	Vallès Oriental
Escola Salvador Espriu	Television, Press	Granollers	Vallès Oriental
Institut Giola	Press, Internet	Llinars del Vallès	Vallès Oriental
Escola Federico García Lorca	Press	Mollet del Vallès	Vallès Oriental
Col·legi Lestonnac	Television, Radio, Press	Mollet del Vallès	Vallès Oriental
Escola Can Parera	Press	Montornès del Vallès	Vallès Oriental
Institut Marta Mata	Radio, Internet	Montornès del Vallès	Vallès Oriental
Institut Vilamajor	Radio	Sant Antoni de Vilamajor	Vallès Oriental
Escola Matagalls	Radio, Internet	Santa Maria de Palautordera	Vallès Oriental
Institut Eugeni Xammar	Radio	L'Ametlla del Vallès	Vallès Oriental

Source: author's own compilation.

Critical Book Reviews

FRANCÉS I DOMÈNEC, M; OROZCO GÓMEZ, G. (COORDS.) *Documentación y producción transmedia de contenidos audiovisuales*.

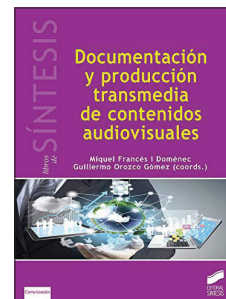
Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2019. Colección Comunicación. 350 pages.

ISBN: 978-8491713661.

By CARMEN PEÑAFIEL

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The coordinators of this work, Miquel Francés and Guillermo Orozco, place an undoubted value on documentation and transmedia production of audiovisual content in a scenario where they pose two main challenges: the first, related to rescuing traditional, analogical audiovisual content, to switch to digital formats; the other, the one posed by new transmedia production models in a post-broadcasting scenario. The 19 chapters of the book, structured in four parts, revolve around these two challenges: Documentation and regulation; Audiovisual documentation in digital production and dissemination; Documentation and new formats; and Experiences in audiovisual archive management, accessibility and dissemination. Thus, 24 authors from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Spain and Mexico analyse relevant challenges for documentary makers and audiovisual communicators across the 350 pages of the book, offering different perspectives on audiovisual documentation criteria in a transmedia environment.

Guillermo Orozco, Professor of Audiovisual Communication at the University of Guadalajara (Mexico) and International Coordinator of the Ibero-American Television Fiction Observatory preface the work. He points out that “After reading these chapters it becomes more intelligible and possible to really imagine what obstacles need to be overcome, and how an efficient, significant, varied and accessible documentation could be achieved for current audiences in their interaction and own transmedia production” (page 22).

The book takes an optimistic and, at the same time, a prudent view through the knowledge and contributions of the large number of authors who analyse audiovisual production in the 21st century, characterised by new workflows where archive management must be networked and inserted in the transmedia contents and format production chain. The coordinators of the work consider that “Documentary treatment must preserve information, protect copyright and allow easy access to audiovisual documentation (...). Documentary collections must be conceived as centres that assume maximum democratisation and transference so that users can access them transparently

and safely” (back cover).

The first part of the book, dedicated to documentation and regulation, includes chapters on documentary archives in dissemination of science and culture; databases, algorithms and historical backdrops; the right of access to information, copyright and audiovisual production in the converging environment; and the complex legal framework. Image archiving allows for tangible preservation of the intangible. In other words, intangible cultural heritage defined by UNESCO as traditions, social practices, arts, knowledge related to nature, etc. Lorna Chacón points out that “along with conservation of materials, work must be done on dissemination, because memory must not only be protected but also known” (page 35).

The second part of the work focuses on audiovisual documentation in digital production and dissemination. This part reviews new organisational charts in the documentary flow of television newsrooms. Specifically, chapter 7 deals with the resilience of Radio Televisió Valenciana’s audiovisual collection, where the information of origin is used to plan the future of the digitized collections by channelling the past. The next chapter talks about new technologies in audiovisual production and integrated archive management. Lola Bañón says that “professional profiles have diversified to cope managing huge amounts of data. Key processes in journalistic quality, such as verification, are now essential, since the participatory possibilities bring to the professional environment materials generated by citizens. The advent of the prosumer figure has caused consumers and producers of information to assume new roles derived from mobility and personalisation of content” (page 111).

The third part is entirely dedicated to documentation and new audiovisual formats and narratives. It offers numerous information on new media and journalists, media literacy, pseudo-journalists, and its situation in Spain. Another chapter also analyses new audiovisual content and archive dissemination models with the crisis of the public television model, the future of financing and the particular case of the BBC. Chapter

11 talks about the strategic link between documentation of political leadership in the transmedia environment and managing the privacy of political stakeholders as part of the narrative. Chapter 12 deals with the transmedia project and document management as a tool in knowledge creation. The third part ends with audiovisual formats and the presence of the institutional brand in the informative contents of universities on YouTube.

Finally, the fourth part of the book gathers experiences in management, audiovisual archive accessibility and dissemination. The articles offered are related to an interconnected 4.0 network of documentation and scientific audiovisual heritage (ASESIC) and the documentary value of the "Fem tele de 9" repository. Also, the importance of creativity in generating shared academic content, based on the case of "Senyal U", where creativity plays an important role in making visible what has already been observed. Finally, the fourth part explains the struggle for human rights as the promoter in Argentina of the photo libraries network and the documentary rescue of the cinematographic viewpoint of immigrants in the Colombian Caribbean.

The epilogue of the work comes full circle with some reflections on current audiovisual content management, the IP revolution and technologies on the Internet, new standards and protocols, artificial intelligence, the user experience, social content and transmedia, as well as storage and archive technologies.

The work is a challenge with different contributions and ingredients on the new models of audiovisual content generation and its transmedia, social and multiplatform consumption. Miquel Francés and Guillermo Orozco comment that, fortunately, now the obstacles are not insurmountable for small and medium audiovisual communication projects and the results are already appreciated, multiplying optimal creative contents and projects shared by professionals who no longer have frontiers or distances in their work.

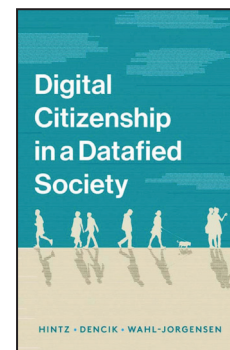
Nowadays, the compatibility and adaptability of contents with the current social networks and platforms is absolutely necessary. These networks and platforms demand them and create them at a surprisingly high speed, providing a lot of relevant data, not only on the contents in terms of information formats or conversions, but also on the corresponding information and documentation systems.

The book is written in clear and precise language and has an agile style, typical of the expertise of the people who have collaborated. This informative work is, undoubtedly, a highly recommended, essential and current reading for professionals, researchers, academics and undergraduate and graduate students in the field of Documentation, Communication and Information. It is also valuable for those who are curious to know the ins and outs of the post-broadcasting era in the management of documentary sources and the transmedia production of audiovisual content.

HINTZ, A.; DENCİK, L. I WAHL-JORGENSEN, K. *Digital citizenship in a datafied society*.
Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019, 180 pages.
ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-2715-1. ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-2715-1 (pb)

BY SARA SUÁREZ GONZALO

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Digital citizenship: between active participation and mass surveillance

Since the late 1990s, the amount of data generated, gathered and processed daily basis has increased in an unprecedented way. Digitisation and datafication of everyday life, or in other words, converting our everyday activities into data using digital technologies, is now a growing trend. This not only generates tracking people's activities and behaviour on the web, but also tracking "analogue" activities and behaviours, which, paradoxically, we already often refer to as the offline world.

New big data processing technologies have become a core asset in our societies. More and more public and private institutions are making use of big data analysis. The recent COVID-19 crisis makes it clear that the commitment to the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence techniques is full. Nevertheless, the development of these technologies is very much affected by the commercial interests of big tech corporations.

Edward Snowden's revelations in 2013 marked a turning point in public perception of big data exploitation. The former NSA worker not only put the risks of mass surveillance in the spotlight, but also sparked the debate on how these data processing processes would modify the very sphere of citizenship.

The book *Digital Citizenship in a Datafied Society* focuses on this scenario to understand the consequences of datafication and to address a question that is essential these days: How can we understand citizenship in a society marked by big data gathering and processing?

Hintz, Dencik and Wahl-Jorgensen, the authors, are also co-directors of the Data Justice Lab, a centre that belongs to Cardiff University. The Lab studies the relationship between datafication and social justice and, more particularly, policies related to data exploitation processes and the implications of their institutional and corporate uses.

This book is the result of a two-year research project entitled *Digital Citizenship and Surveillance Society: UK State-Media-*

Citizen Relations After the Snowden Leaks and has insights from the Surveillance and Citizenship international congress, held within the framework of this project.

The authors argue that, in the current context of big data exploitation, traditional conceptions of citizenship are threatened by datafication and surveillance practices, which people cannot control individually. Therefore, they say, these should be thoroughly reviewed. Either the traditional conception of citizenship as a relationship of rights and obligations between the state and citizens, or other more current conceptions of digital citizenship, focusing on the potential of new technologies for networked participation and influence on decisions that affect one's life.

The book analyses social, political and discursive contexts and legal frameworks in which the new citizenship is constructed, with special attention to the case of the United Kingdom, where the research is carried out. It highlights the importance of paying attention to social, economic and political forces that shape the meaning of digital citizenship today, and also to norms and ideologies that support it and practices that contest it. A key aspect to understand these issues, the authors say, is to comprehend how the different parties involved in the redefining citizenship process relate to each other and what discourse they promote.

The research carried out by Hintz, Dencik and Wahl-Jorgensen uses different methodologies, including focus groups, interviews, content and discourse analysis, as well as political and legal documents. British citizens, journalists, politicians, experts, engineers and activists are taking part in it.

The book is divided into six chapters:

The first, *Citizenship in a Digital Age*, concludes that current conceptions of digital citizenship, particularly focused on the "empowering" role of digital technologies, are limited by surveillance, organisation and content restriction practices. In the current scenario, they say, digital citizens are both active and monitored citizens whose civic identity is constructed partly in a conscious and voluntary manner and partly with the

digital and involuntary tracking of their behaviour. Therefore, the authors call for special attention to the complex structures that determine our use of digital tools.

The second chapter, *Datafication and Surveillance*, analyses the concepts and practices that define the current data processing scenario and their implications for construction of citizenship. Due to the proliferation of analysis tools, data has an increasing weight on how decisions affecting citizens' lives are made. However, data surveillance, the authors argue, makes us more visible to those who control information flows, while at the same time keeping them in an increasingly obscure position, so that we no longer know who can see what about us and ourselves.

The third chapter, *Regulating Datafication*, analyses how the legal and political frameworks that define the dimensions of digital citizenship are forged, focusing on the (unequal) influence of the different parties involved. This section also reflects on how the content of legal texts and recent trends in this field affect the shaping of a particular form of digital citizenship.

The fourth chapter, *Mediating Digital Citizenship*, examines the role of media discourses in generating certain debates on datafication, data exploitation practices and related public policies. It explains how while certain discourses and visions of reality are ignored, others, which normalise abusive data exploitation practices, emerge strongly in the public imagination, thanks to a privileged treatment in the media. The authors highlight, to the contrary, the role of new digital social media in disseminating more critical perspectives on the impact of datafication.

The fifth chapter, *Understanding and Negotiating Digital Environments*, investigates public opinion and reception of these media discourses. Hintz, Dencik and Wahl-Jorgensen observe signs of resistance to datafication, but also the start of a "sociology of digital resignation". Due to a "chilling effect" produced by the extent of surveillance and feelings of inadequacy, people resign themselves to current data exploitation practices, considering them a new and inevitable "way of life". This is what they call the "realism of surveillance".

The last chapter, *Challenging Datafication*, highlights that this scenario has unleashed new practices of contestation and resistance to sophisticated forms of control and surveillance by individuals and civil society. The authors, however, emphasise that the structural limitations identified throughout the book make it difficult for them to succeed in a decisive way. In particular, they highlight the obstacle posed by disconnection between social rights agendas and political and legislative actions with respect to data exploitation technologies.

To conclude the essential discussion that they propose in this book, Hintz, Dencik and Wahl-Jorgensen point to the need to rethink digital citizenship, from an approach that takes into account the practices, infrastructures and consequences of datafication, and also the political dimensions of big data technologies, not only as a technical instrument, but also as a

process that is at the heart of the different power structures that make up society.

Further information:

DATA JUSTICE LAB [website]. <https://datajusticelab.org/>.

Books Review

IRETON, C.; POSETTI, J.

Periodismo, “noticias falsas” & desinformación: manual de educación y capacitación en periodismo.

Paris: UNESCO, 2018. 128 pages.

ISBN: 9789233001312



UNESCO has released this publication to foster international exchanges of good practices in journalism education. It is part of the Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education, which is a focus of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The handbook is designed to be an internationally relevant model curriculum, which responds to the emerging global problem of disinformation.

The handbook is divided into seven modules. The first looks at why truth and journalism matter. The second reviews the variety of formats and structures of disinformation, while the third focuses on news industry transformation in the digital context. It then addresses the issue of Media and International Literacy (MIL) followed by a module on fact-checking. Finally, social media verification and online targeting of journalists are discussed. The lessons are contextual, theoretical and, in the case of online verification, extremely practical. Used together as a course or independently, they can help refresh existing teaching modules or create new offerings.

The handbook draws together the input of leading international journalism educators, researchers and thinkers who are helping to update journalism methods and practice to deal with the challenges of disinformation. It is addressed to both journalism educators and trainers and is also intended to be a useful guide for practising journalists.

The publication comes on the heels of two earlier UNESCO works on journalism education, namely "Model Curriculum for Journalism Education" (2013) and "Teaching Journalism for Sustainable Development: New Syllabi" (2015)..

Available [here](#).

ADRIA, M.

Using new media for citizen engagement and participation.

Alberta (Canada): IGI Global, 2019. 347 pages.

ISBN: 9781799818281

In this book Marco Adria examines the new possibilities of discussion threads on social media and how to use them for issues involving citizens. Adria starts from the idea that using the new communication tools devised to achieve public involvement has led to concern about how to apply them. The book explores how to implement these methods properly to achieve strategic goals.

Using New Media for Citizen Engagement and Participation reviews emerging research exploring the theoretical and practical aspects of how social media should be added to public-involvement activities such as citizen juries, public deliberation, and citizen panels. It provides insights into the critical design considerations for planning, carrying out and assessing public-involvement initiatives.

The book's fifteen chapters look at a range of issues which intersect with very broad and distinctive research areas based on citizen journalism, online activism, and public discourse. For example, the first chapter analyses the work of platforms such as Uber and Deliveroo and their participatory potential, while the second chapter talks about citizen engagement in local environmental issues as a result of the conjunction between online and offline media. The risks and potential of integrating democratic participation channels and the role of social media in public health are also discussed, using the example of the anti-vaccination movements. One of the sections is about audiences' growing news gatekeeper role in issues where the mainstream media are virtually absent such as genetically modified organisms.



GUTIÉRREZ-RUBÍ, A.; PONT SORRIBES, C. (COORD.).
Comunicación política en tiempos de coronavirus.
 Barcelona: Cátedra Ideograma–UPF de Comunicación Política y Democracia. April 2020. 169 pages.
 ISBN: 9798637554812



Amid the COVID-19 crisis, the Ideograma-UPF Chair, a benchmark in the study of political communication which blends the academic and business perspectives, has published a compilation of thoughts on the impact of the pandemic in this arena. The book includes 26 essays by authorities in the field including university professors, experts from

the consulting industry and journalists specialising in political communication. It looks at both Spain and Latin America.

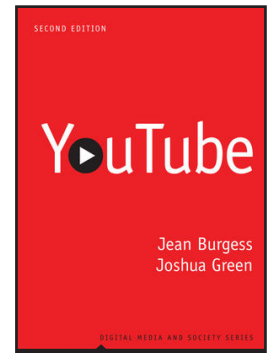
The book's publishers argue that the coronavirus crisis is shaped on a global scale by the acceleration and overabundance of information and so rethinking institutional communication models is warranted. However, the need for clear communication is crucial in managing this crisis. So, it includes proposals for communication by governments, recommendations for political appearances in front of the media, examples of news running and good social media management models.

One of the key issues discussed is the need for crisis communication, the importance of reputation and the role of the spokesperson. There is also a contribution about framing in crises. Some particular cases in the reactions of states and regions are also studied such as *El caso de Italia: Lecciones globales desde el epicentro de Europa* (*The case of Italy: global lessons from the epicentre of Europe*), *Coronaboris*, *La doble crisis de África* (*Africa's twofold crisis*) and the comparison between populist leaders in *Bolsonaro, Trump, AMLO y Johnson, el liderazgo negligente* (*Bolsonaro, Trump, AMLO and Johnson; negligent leadership*). It also presents impacts on election campaigns, on the role of traditional media and on *infodemics*, which is an excessive amount of information. Another section explores the role of social media such as the study of influencer lockdown. A final block of articles takes a more theoretical perspective to examine aspects such as the transformation of work, crises in the knowledge society and the border between global and national agendas.

Available [here](#).

BURGESS, J.; GREEN, J.
YouTube: online video and participatory culture.
 Cambridge: Polity Press editions. Digital media and society Series. 2018. Segunda edición. 180 pages.
 ISBN: 9780745660189

Polity Press has published the second part of this book after the first systematic investigation into the cultural and political impacts of YouTube came out in 2009. With a special focus on the tensions between its commercial media logic and amateur community rhetoric, the book explores in six chapters how the portal has evolved over this decade and highlights the transformations in business model, interface, options, cultural role and content regulation which have led it to become one of the most powerful digital platforms. They also take the opportunity to review some of the forecasts and conclusions set out in the first edition by adding fresh theoretical perspectives.



Burgess and Green emphasise the thesis that YouTube's core business is participatory culture since its logic of openness, community and authenticity is built into the platform at all levels. However, the evolution of the commercial enterprise policy conflicts at times with this culture, which the authors call dual logics. The establishment of the business model has had to coordinate the interests of content creators, audiences, and advertisers to extract value. The emerging competition from new social media and video-on-demand platforms have been added to these balances. At the same time, new audiovisual and cultural genres have appeared such as vlogging, gamer streaming and unboxing, which have also led to new professional identities and new platform governance challenges.

Finally, the book also includes two contributions by Henry Jenkins and John Hartley which seek to reach beyond the contemporary YouTube moment. The final essays point out the challenges and opportunities which this network represents for some of the main concerns in cultural and media studies.

Preview [available](#).

JACKSON, S.; BAILEY, M.; FOUCAULT WELLES, B.
#Hashtag activism. Networks of race and gender justice.
 Cambridge, Massachusetts and Londres: The MIT Press,
 2020. 296 pages.
 ISBN: 9780262043373



This publication addresses the emancipatory use of Twitter by oppressed political communities. It seeks to capture the tweeting dynamics by which social groups use Twitter hashtags to advance counter-narratives, pre-empt political spin and build diverse networks of dissent.

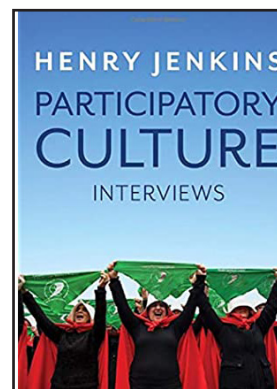
The authors contend that the Iranian election in 2011 and the hashtag #IranElection were a turning point in hashtag activism as it became an organising tool for protesting in front of a global audience. Since then, activists have used a variety of hashtags including #JusticeForTrayvon, #BlackLivesMatter, #YesAllWomen and #MeToo to advocate, communicate and mobilise. Jackson, Bailey and Foucault explore how and why Twitter has become an important platform for historically disenfranchised groups such as Black Americans, women and transgender people. The authors argue that Twitter hashtags have broadcast narratives which were excluded from elite media venues.

They describe how the hashtags #MeToo, #SurvivorPrivilege and #WhyIStayed have challenged the conventional understanding of gendered violence; examine the voices and narratives of Black feminism enabled by #FastTailedGirls, #YouOKSis and #SayHerName, and the network of transgender women coming out of #GirlsLikeUs. They investigate the digital footprint of the new civil rights movement and how the response to police violence against Black people has been shaped by #BlackLivesMatter and its narratives and strategy building. Finally, they consider hashtags created by allies including #AllMenCan and #CrimingWhileWhite.

Preview [available](#).

JENKINS, H.
Participatory culture: interviews.
 Cambridge and Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2019. 240
 pages.
 ISBN: 9781509538461

Henry Jenkins is a leading international analyst in transmedia narrative and participatory culture. His latest book is a collection of interviews the author has conducted with thinkers in media, education and politics which he has run from 2006 to 2017 on his blog [Confessions of an Aca-Fan](#) (a combination of *academic* and *fan*).



The book is divided into three parts. They all open with an introduction by Jenkins followed by interviews and rounded off with suggestions for further reading. The first part focuses on participatory culture and features the thoughts of the Wu Ming Foundation, heir to the Luther Blissett movement, on the cultural revolution and collective writing, followed by an interview with sociologist and media theorist David Gauntlett on creativity in the digital age. The section closes with a 2014 conversation with Ethan Zuckerman, Director of the Center for Civic Media at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Jenkins devotes the second part of the book to participatory learning and includes interviews with the MacArthur Foundation's Digital Youth Project main researchers. He also interviews Sonia Livingstone, a leading authority on media literacy and a professor at the London School of Economics, and S. Craig Watkins, an expert on interactions between youth culture and the digital age, in an exchange of ideas about the notion of Facebook as a private community. The last two interviews are with education, videogames and media experts James Paul Gee and Antero Garcia.

The last part is about participatory politics. Here Jenkins discusses the creation of discontent with Stephen Duncombe, a political activism and media expert. Also the political life of black youth with political scientist Cathy J. Cohen; transmedia activism with Lina Srivastava, founder of the Creative Impact and Experience Lab (CIEL); and gender remixing culture with critic Jonathan McIntosh. The section closes with a conversation on documentaries with William Uricchio, co-founder of MIT's Comparative Media Studies.

Preview [available](#).

Journals Review

Media and Communication

Lisboa: Cogitatio Press
Volume 8, part 2 (2020)
ISSN: 2183-2439

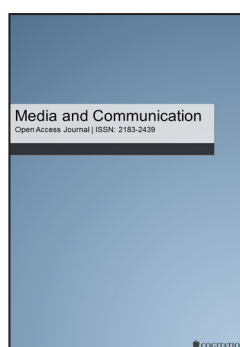
Youth Digital Participation: Opportunities, Challenges, Contexts, and What's at Stake

The eighth volume of *Media and Communication* includes a section on youth digital participation. It addresses the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the screen time of younger generations in areas such as online education, identity formation and political participation.

The first article by Vissenberg and Haenens studies the online resilience of children to potential hazards on the web and is based on data from the *EU Kids Online* study. Next, Reinikainen, Kari and Luoma-aho look at the relationship between young citizens and organisations and brands on social media. Their research concludes that organisations with listening skills earn higher levels of trust among Generation Z.

In *Following Politicians on Social Media*, Marquart, Ohme and Möller argue that following political actors on social media increases the likelihood of campaign engagement, but it is young people's friends and followers who are the main node in their online political networks.

The journal is rounded off with an article about the impact of global Twitter audiences on the growth of school climate change protests and research into the constraints and pressures on journalism students when publishing content online.



Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies

Newcastle: Northumbria University
Volume 17, issue 1 (2020)
ISSN 1749-8716

Participations

Journal of Audience & Reception Studies

Volume 17 of *Participations* addresses the concept of engagement. Rosenbaum and Bouvier lead the themed section of this publication and investigate the relationships between social media and protest in *Twitter, social movements, and the logic of connective action: Activism in the 21st century*. The authors start from the concept of connective action to identify the keys to how Twitter user groups interact to generate change and how narratives are built from these interactions. They also point out some problematic aspects of Twitter activism.

Along the same lines, Walker shows how activists used Twitter in a digital campaign for the rights of people with disabilities. Parisi, Comunello and Amico examine how Twitter became a tool for emergency management and networked volunteering in the 2013 Sardinian island floods. Zulli's *Evaluating hashtag activism: examining the theoretical challenges and opportunities of #BlackLivesMatter* departs from other contributions by pointing out the limits of online activism and argues that the appropriation of struggles is facilitated using these tools. In the afterword, Bouvier reviews the connections between the papers presented and asks whether online activism is really activism.

Available [here](#).

Available [here](#).

RAE-IC

Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela - Grupo Novos Medios.
Vol. 7, issue 13, February 2020.
ISSN 2341-2690.



The research focus of this *RAE-IC* release is critical audiences and the growing trend towards active participation in the media system. The publication examines the changing role of audiences in relation to democratic values, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and social and ecological justice.

The core section includes research by Ramon-Vegas and Mauri-Ríos designed to recover journalism's prestige in the eyes of public opinion. The paper points out three pillars for enhancing media accountability and news quality: information transparency, self-regulation, and public participation. It also reviews traditional and more innovative instruments for accountability and examines 12 tools to enable participation along with the public's perception of these mechanisms.

Meanwhile, Marques Gonçalves presents a discussion on the behaviour of the Roma population as an audience and looks at whether their role is critical and active or not. Twenty semi-structured interviews with members of the Roma community are used to portray the thoughts of this community about its representation in the media in Spain while the Roma's critical capacity in relation to the mainstream media and digital environments is underlined.

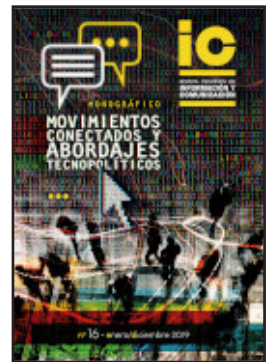
The journal also includes contributions by two guest researchers from Latin America. Sáez Baeza describes the results of the experience of the *Civil Society Councils* (*Consejos de la Sociedad Civil*) which were a consultative tool for citizen participation in telecommunications policies implemented by the Chilean government before the social upheaval in 2019. Likewise, Cogo and Ledur Alles publish research on the use of ICT by Haitian migrants in Brazil, how this use is shaped by gender, and how this reality is translated into activism projects.

Available [here](#).

IC. Revista Científica de la Información y la Comunicación

Seville: Universidad de Sevilla. Secretariado de Publicaciones
Issue 16. (2019)
ISSN: 2173-1071

This issue of *IC* looks at the political and institutional behaviour of digital native generations in *Movimientos conectados: abordajes tecnopolíticos* (*Connected movements: techno-politics approaches*). The journal seeks to bring complexity and nuance to the debate on the impact of the internet on democracy and departs from the deterministic positions of techno-utopians and techno-pessimists.



In the *Claves* (*Keys*) section, researcher Rovira Sancho argues that each wave of communication power geared towards emancipatory action using ICT has been followed by another wave of corporate interference and control. She contends that the focus should be on the means and ends of technological use.

The article by Sampedro Blanco, Nos Aldás and Farné takes the debate on digital communication and social transformation to the arena of Spanish national politics. They identify the mass texting rejecting the official version of the Atocha attack in 2004 as the starting point of a digital public sphere which has transformed Spain's bipartisan system.

Orbegozo Terradillos, Morales i Grass and Larrondo Ureta present a case study of the Twitter conversation around the trial of *La Manada*. The researchers look at the relationship between the feminist movement and the judiciary and seek to distinguish between spontaneous and strategic indignation.

Magallón Rosa, Paniagua Rojano and Chacón Peinado created a bot to analyse the information agenda. They found that there were two moments during an election campaign, namely the candidate debates and election day, when there is greater fact-checking of events and discourses.

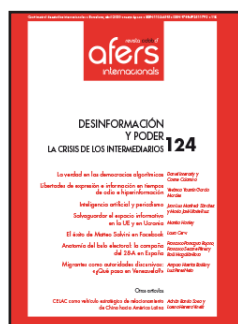
The journal also includes analysis by Fenoll and Hassler comparing the communicative style of populist parties in Spain and Germany on Facebook. They conclude that ideology makes a difference in these uses. The publication additionally features articles on the political potential of memes, the predictive capacity of engagement in election results and the views of journalists about deontology as a tool for combating fake news. Available [here](#).

Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals

Barcelona: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs

Issue 124, April 2020

ISSN: 1133-6595



This special issue of the journal *CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals* looks at disinformation and its relationship with power. In their introduction, its coordinators Innerarity and Colomina contend that the pandemic has speeded up a digital ecosystem which further complicates the need for democratic debate with rising fragmentation

and a loss of influence by gatekeepers.

The issue opens with a discussion, also by Innerarity and Colomina, on *La verdad en las democracias algorítmicas (The Truth in Algorithmic Democracies)* where they question how public debate in privately-owned technological venues impacts the democratic system and addresses the challenge of governing environments which are highly driven by datification.

García Morales's paper looks at the limits of lying in relation to freedom of speech and information. Specifically, it examines whether lies have a legitimate place in democratic public debate from the perspective of the Spanish Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights.

In *Inteligencia artificial y periodismo: una herramienta contra la desinformación (Artificial Intelligence and Journalism: a tool against disinformation)*, professors Manfredi Sánchez and Ufarte Ruiz analyse the possibilities and impact of this tool with a review of scientific literature from three perspectives: economics, ethics and journalism.

Another highlight is Cervi's article on how the Italian far-right leader Matteo Salvini uses Facebook. After digital, audiovisual and semantic analysis, the research concludes that Salvini couples the typical features of populism with perfect adaptation to the potential of social media.

Finally, in *Migrantes que se autoproclaman autoridades discursivas: «¿Qué pasa en Venezuela?» (Migrants who call themselves Discursive Authorities: "What's happening in Venezuela?")* Huertas Bailén and Peres-Neto analyse transnational communication through influencers who are also migrants. Specifically, they examine the material published on YouTube about Juan Guaidó's self-proclamation as president. . Available [here](#).

El Profesional de la Información

Seville: Secretariado de Recursos Audiovisuales y Nuevas Tecnologías, Universidad de Sevilla.

ISSN: 1133-8482. e-ISSN: 2171-7966.



As result of the COVID-19 crisis, the journal *Profesional de la Información* has stepped up the pace of review and publication of several articles exploring the pandemic's impact.

Researcher Casero-Ripollés studies the dynamics of news consumption during the pandemic to evaluate its implications for the transformation of the media system and democracy. He uses survey data from the Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel and looks at the credibility given by the public to the media and their ability to identify fake news. His findings suggest a resurgence of the role of legacy media, especially television, and that the people most out of touch with current affairs have reconnected with the news.

Salaverría *et al.*'s research addresses disinformation during lockdown. They use content analysis of 292 hoaxes identified by fact-checking sites to examine the most common formal and content features and they find that the circulation of disinformation started especially from closed social media such as WhatsApp. In terms of topics, the high levels of fake news were found on scientific, political and governmental issues. The theoretical contributions on hoaxes are reviewed and a definition of the term is provided along with a classification – joke, exaggeration, decontextualization and deception – and a proposal for a hoax severity diagram.

In *Comunicación y crisis del coronavirus en España. Primeras lecciones (Communication and the Coronavirus Crisis in Spain. First Lessons)*, Costa-Sánchez and López-García review the key literature from previous public health crises compared to institutional and media communication about the new coronavirus. They highlight how fear is heightened due to the absence of a prior announcement stage and the sudden shift towards the flare-up period of the crisis. However, the spokesperson format used meets the recommendations for

crisis communication. Numerical data are highly rated as the most valuable information resource and samples of alarmism and sensationalism in the media coverage are identified.

Rodero's article examines the adaptive capacity of radio in crises based on the health crisis in 2020. A survey of 560 radio listeners during lockdown indicates an increase in three fields: more hours of listening, more diversity of programmes and stations and more credibility. It concludes that radio is re-emerging as a leading medium, replicating a historical trend in other crises in Spain such as the attempted coup in February 1981.

Also essential is the article by members of the DIGILAB research group led by Pere Masip, which looks at changes in news consumption during lockdown along with the public's perception of media coverage of the crisis. They conclude that people have followed the news more frequently while nevertheless maintaining a critical attitude towards the media's editorial, sensationalist, and alarmist biases.

Available [here](#).

Websites Review

Associació de Consumidors de Mitjans Audiovisuals de Catalunya

<<https://consumidorsaudiovisuals.cat/>>

The Associació de Consumidors de Mitjans Audiovisuals de Catalunya (Catalan Audiovisual Consumers Association) has been championing quality in broadcasting for 35 years, previously under the name of Teleespectadors Associats de Catalunya. Its activities include its [Programa de educació audiovisual](#) (Audiovisual Education Program), addressed to families, teachers and students and which features interactive sessions and workshops. Every year the Association organises the [Premis Zapping](#), (Zapping Awards) in which Catalan audiences recognise quality broadcasting productions, and it also brings out the digital magazine and website [Contraste](#), hosting recommendations and critical reflections on broadcasting content consumption and offerings. It is a member of [Euralva](#), the European Alliance of Listeners' and Viewers' Associations.

Asociación de Usuarios de la Comunicación (AUC)

<<https://www.auc.es/>>

Set up with the aim to safeguard the interests of the public in media and communication systems, the AUC reports suspected breaches of regulations and ethical codes; takes part in consultative bodies; prepares reports and research, monitors and checks advertising campaigns in commercial communication, and sponsors actions to raise social awareness, opinion, media literacy and training.

The most significant section on its website is [News](#), where you can access its reports, press releases, statements and opinions on advertising and broadcasting regulation either with open access or through prior registration, depending on the document.

Transmedia Literacy

<<https://transmedialiteracy.org/>>

Transmedia Literacy is an international initiative led by researcher Carlos A. Scolari from Pompeu Fabra University, involving more than a dozen universities and research centres. The project examines the transmedia learning strategies and practices of today's young people. Its research addresses how young people aged 12 to 18 engage with play, socialisation, and creative production.

The website includes a [Teacher's kit](#), providing tools for teachers to arrange transmedia activities and build them into the school curriculum. It also features a [transmedia skills map](#).

eduCAC

<<https://educac.cat/>>

An initiative by the Catalan Audiovisual Council in partnership with the Catalan Government's Ministry of Education, it started out in 2017 as a media education programme for the school community and families featuring educational resources for critical and responsible media use.

The eduCAC website provides teaching materials and resources on media and broadcasting for teachers (study units, cross-cutting pathways, classroom projects, instrumental support modules, etc.) along with workshops and specialised training. The section for families includes ideas and content about children and teenagers' media consumption and their use of the internet and devices. The portal also hosts the annual call for the [CAC Schools Awards](#). The content is free access but require prior registration.

ACT Project

<<https://actproject.ca/>>

ACT is a research project on the digital inclusion of older people and experiences of ageing with the proliferation of new forms of mediated communications in networked societies. This interdisciplinary initiative, which covers the concepts of ageing, communication, and technologies, is led by Concordia University in Canada and the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) is a member of its management team.

Its website features publications, news, a media section with pictures and videos of symposiums and initiatives connected with the project. It sponsors several [research ventures](#), some of them completed and others still in progress. The latest research addresses the impact of COVID-19 on older people media behaviour, for example concerning misinformation, and also on the generational use of social media and the interaction between age stereotypes and digital platform consumption.

Open Society Foundations

<<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/>>

The Open Society Foundations are active in over 120 countries around the world working for justice, democratic governance, and human rights. Media is one of its many work strands in which is organised, based on support programmes that promote independence in journalism and enhance public discussion and critical thinking. They also uphold digital rights and the right to information with initiatives to combat the risks of new forms of discrimination in the digital society and the commitment to an open society.

AMARC International

<<https://amarc.radio>>

AMARC is the international non-governmental association that brings together the world's community radio stations. Founded in 1983, it has almost 4,000 members in 150 countries and its main goal is the development of community radio. AMARC-WIN is a group working to secure women's right to communicate through and within the community radio movement. The AMARC website includes its principles, statutes, and regional meetings by continent, although the news section is not particularly well updated.

The association has a European division, [Amarc Europe](#), its website features a map showing its members, updated information, and useful articles. Initiatives underway include an international research project with UNESCO on digital communication rights for community radio stations; the EU-funded SoundRoutes project to promote participation by professional musicians in local community radio stations; and the SMART project with resources and methods to create training schemes tailored to the needs of community radio.

InteractiveTV Today

<<https://itvt.com/>>

Interactive TV Today is a website about the position of interactive and multiplatform television. Tracy Swedlow is the founder and editor-in-chief of Interactive TV Today, and she also provides its information and analysis capsules in the form of audio and video podcasts. The latest interviews and diagnostics focus on how the interactive television industry is responding to the health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The website also has a blog, albeit not updated as the last post is from 2016.

Manuscript submissions guidelines

Presentation of the articles

The article must be presented in electronic support (PC and Word format preferred). Every page must be 30 lines approx. and **body size 12**. The maximum length is about **6.000 words**.

The cover sheet has to be provided only giving the title, the name of the author(s) and position, postal and e-mail addresses. The article has to include an **abstract of 90-100 words and five keywords**.

Articles will be accepted in **Catalan, Spanish and English**.

Submission

Articles should be addressed at: quadernsdelcac@gencat.cat

Copyright clearance

Every author whose article has passed the blind review and has been accepted for publication must send to CAC a signed letter accepting the text publication by CAC in its journals and website (<<http://www.cac.cat>>) and confirming that the article is original, unpublished and is not assessed in other publications, being the author responsible of any reclaim due to the non-fulfilment of this warranty. .

Letters should be addressed by e-mail to quadernsdelcac@gencat.cat or by post mail to:

Quaderns del CAC

Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya

Carrer dels Vergós, 36-42

08017 Barcelona

References and notes

The list of references and end notes has to be placed at the end of every article. References in the text must appear into brackets with the name of the author, the year of edition and the pages. (Name year, pages).

The model used for citing the bibliography must follow the criteria given by TERM CAT, which may be consulted at:

<<http://www.termcat.cat/docs/docs/Bibliografia.pdf>>

[in Catalan]

• Books

LAST NAME; INITIAL/INSTITUTION. TITLE. EDITION. PLACE OF EDITION: PUBLISHER, YEAR. VOLUME. (COLLECTION, NUMBER). ISBN NUMBER

• Articles in journals

LAST NAME; INITIAL. "TITLE OF THE ARTICLE". JOURNAL. VOLUME. (YEAR), ISSUE NUMBER, PAGES. ISSN (OPTIONAL)

• Contributions to books

LAST NAME; INITIAL/INSTITUTION. "TITLE OF THE CHAPTER". IN: LAST NAME; INITIAL/INSTITUTION. TITLE. EDITION. PLACE OF EDITION: PUBLISHER, YEAR. VOLUME. (COLLECTION, NUMBER). ISBN NUMBER

• Online documents

LAST NAME; INITIAL/INSTITUTION. TITLE [ONLINE]. EDITION/VERSION. PLACE OF EDITION: PUBLISHER, YEAR.

<URL ADDRESS>[CONSULTED: DATE]

Tables and figures

Tables and figures have to be provided with **short, descriptive titles** and also be numbered in Arabic numbers. All footnotes to tables and their source(s) should be placed under the tables. They must be inserted not as an image but in an **editable format** (e.g. in Excel).

Colour figures, tables and graphs are admitted and they all should have the **source well identified**.

Book reviews guidelines

1. The aim of the section 'Critical books review' is to review the most important new publications in the world of communication and particularly in the field of broadcasting.
2. Reviews must be original and previously unpublished.
3. Reviews must be adequate for readers to get a general idea of the content of the book under review, as well as providing a personal assessment of its interest. The review must therefore contain a description and analysis of the book, as well as some conclusions indicating its value and importance to readers.
4. The recommended length for reviews is around 1,000 words, not exceeding 1,300 words in any case.
5. Reviewed books must be contemporary, i.e. they must have been published during the last two full calendar years, although an earlier book may be included if duly justified.
6. The review must be given a title that summarises its content, with the bibliographical details and the author of the review below, including his or her position and the institution to which he or she belongs.
7. The model used for citing the bibliography must follow the criteria given by TERMCAT, which may be consulted at: <http://www.termcat.cat/docs/docs/Bibliografia.pdf>
[in Catalan]
LAST NAME; INITIAL/INSTITUTION. *Title*. Edition. Place of edition: Publisher, year. Volume. (Collection, number). ISBN number
8. The author should be introduced briefly by commenting on his or her background or most recent work.
9. The most important part of the review is the summary and analysis of the content. Here it is necessary to explain the field in which the book is placed, the perspective adopted by the author, the goals the author sets him or herself and the fundamental thesis of the book and how it is developed.
10. The critical evaluation should be generally positive but negative comments can also be included, in both cases suitable arguments being required. Readers must be informed regarding the value, interest and usefulness of the book under review. If relevant, other details can also be included, such as the use of sources, documentation, the bibliography used by the author, the book's formal presentation, etc.
11. Any possible references to text from the book under review must be written in inverted commas, with the page number afterwards, in brackets. "Quote" (p.XX)
12. Bibliographical references to third parties cited in the text of the book under review must use the following model: (Last name year, page number)
13. Bibliographical references from other works quoted in the review must be contained in full at the end, using the same format as the initial bibliographical reference but excluding the ISBN.
14. The review must be sent digitally, in Word or Word RTF, to the following email address: quadernsdelcac@gencat.cat
15. The book review editor will evaluate every submitted review, in order to approve its publication or ask for some modification for its definitive publication
16. Reviews may be written in Catalan, Spanish or English and will be published on these three languages on the CAC website in PDF format.
17. After a review has been accepted, the author must authorise the CAC to publish his/her review in any of its written publications and on its website (<<http://www.cac.cat>>), by means of a signed letter. In the letter the author must confirm that the article is original, unpublished and is not assessed in other publications, being the author responsible of any claim due to the non-fulfilment of this warranty. Letters should be addressed by e-mail to quadernsdelcac@gencat.cat or by post mail to:
Quaderns del CAC
Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya
Carrer dels Vergós, 36-42
08017 Barcelona

List of *Quaderns del CAC* reviewers Period 2015-2020

The journal would like to thank the invaluable contribution of the people who have collaborated with us as reviewers assessing the originals received during this period. Their participation has been essential to improving the quality of the publication.

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