

Women on the radio 100 years on

SÍLVIA ESPINOSA MIRABET

Universitat de Girona

silvia.espinosam@udg.eduORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8304-5882>**JORDI SERRA SIMÓN**

Universitat de Girona

jordi.serras@udg.eduORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9047-1516>**MÒNICA PUNTÍ BRUN**

Universitat de Girona

monica.punti@udg.eduORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7101-1151>*Paper received on 5 June 2024 and accepted on 30 September 2024***How to cite:**

Espinosa Mirabet, S., Puntí Brun, M., & Serra Simón, J. (2024). Women on the radio 100 years on. *Quaderns del CAC*, 50, 19-31.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.60940/qcac50id431850>

Abstract

The article shows the important presence of women in Catalan radio one hundred years after its birth. Using a quantitative methodology, the trend of females in the sector has been traced. A notable presence of female directors has been discovered in Catalan generalist radio (12 women directing non-local radio stations), with RAC1 standing out. An important quantitative change has been detected in the technical department. At Ràdio 4 there are currently 5 women working as sound technicians, while at Catalunya Ràdio there are 6 distributed between central control technicians, studio technicians and outdoor technicians. Most women who work in generalist radio do so as writers. The evolution in the first hundred years of radio in Catalonia shows that, despite having a significant presence, women have never had the same relevance as men within this medium.

Keywords

Women, generalist radio, female announcers, journalists, radio in Catalonia.

Resum

L'article evidencia la presència important de dones a la ràdio catalana cent anys després del naixement del mitjà. A partir d'una metodologia quantitativa, s'ha rastrejat la tendència femenina al sector. S'ha descobert una presència remarcable de dones directives a la ràdio generalista catalana (12 dones dirigint ràdios no locals) destacant-ne RAC1. Es detecta un canvi quantitatiu important al departament tècnic. Així, a Ràdio 4 hi ha actualment 5 dones exercint de tècniques de so, mentre que a Catalunya Ràdio n'hi ha 6 de distribuïdes com a tècniques de control central, tècniques d'estudi i tècniques d'exterior. La majoria de les dones que treballen a la ràdio generalista ho fan com a redactores. L'evolució en els primers cents anys de la ràdio a Catalunya posa en evidència que malgrat tenir una presència significativa, les dones no han tingut mai la mateixa rellevància que els homes dins d'aquest mitjà.

Paraules clau

Dones, ràdio generalista, locutores, periodistes, ràdio a Catalunya.

1. Introduction

The last radio announcer in Catalonia from the Republic, Maria Tera,¹ explained in an interview that the radio station of her time had a healthy female contingent. The argument can be placed into some context because before the Spanish Civil War there were 22 women working in the 11 professional radio stations that could be heard in Catalonia. There were not just

female announcers, but also female artists, administrators and translators.

Both male and female announcers did a perfectly defined job: they played and presented records, read advertisements, announced artists, lecturers, musicians and poetry readers and presented programmes that we would now term as being segmented by target audience. The female announcers handled the women's programmes and the male announcers handled

the more sports-based programmes and the stock market news, and both male and female announcers read stories and shared the slot dedicated to children. Neither group wrote the texts they delivered on air. That was not their job. It was their job to read them with perfect diction, in any language, breathing life into the scripts (Pérez Pujol, 1936).

This distribution of roles worked both in the initial programming ideas, designed for a small wealthy audience (1920s), and also when radio grew in the number of stations and in broadcast hours (1931, 2nd Republic) and became more popular. Announcers gained prominence after the Spanish Civil War and during the Franco dictatorship and it would not be until the Transition to Democracy that female journalists again have a presence as active and independent subjects on the airwaves.²

The history of women and radio is not, however, a history of feminism (Espinosa, 2020). It would become more like that following the appearance of independent radio stations that dealt with topics with a marked gender perspective, or the most current podcasts with a feminist perspective, such as *Deforme Semanal*, *Estirando el chicle* or, in a different tone, *Sangre Fucsia*, among others.

The ongoing and erroneous idea that women in radio were historically in the background aligned with Karpf's idea (1987) that men occupy the public spheres and women occupy the private spheres. But it turns out that when in 1926 the women at Ràdio Barcelona opened the microphones to the female listeners, they showed that they not only have weight in the public sphere but that they flipped over the passivity that was expected from the audience (who only listened to the messages) and converted radio into a two-way medium. Therefore, radio has been and remains a medium where female voices have broken the dominant trends. For Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004), radio helped women to challenge male or patriarchal prevalence.

Where women have had the least presence in these 100 years of radio has been in management at the highest level, as has occurred in most economic areas. The report by the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia) on gender perspective in the management of Catalan companies (2024) shows that women hold only 20% of management positions in Catalan companies.

That is why it makes sense to highlight the way the roles of women in this medium have grown and been shaped in order to understand the current weight of women in radio.³

2. Chronology of women in Catalan generalist radio

2.1 The early years

The first women who worked in radio did so before radio had started broadcasting. They were secretaries, translators and stenographers who took care of the magazines that would first introduce the radio medium, and then reveal the secrets and facial features of the voices that would be heard over the air. "In

this regard, the pioneers Maria Queralt, general secretary of Radio Barcelona, and Maria Sabaté, the first female EAJ-1 official and secretary to director Sánchez Cordovés in the 1920s, stand out at Radio Barcelona; while at Ràdio Associació de Catalunya, two administrative staff members were imprisoned in 1939: Rosa Trias and Teresa Elias" (Espinosa-Mirabet, 2020, p.22).

The female audience was one of the first segments of listeners to get hooked on the *medium* since the sparse, musical and cultured programming of Ràdio Barcelona and Radio Catalana during the 1920s had lunchtime and evening schedules (they coincided with mealtimes and it was the women who were at home). For this reason, the proliferation of female programmes presented by female announcers "sent messages to women and therefore, and to a certain extent, influenced the construction, projection and circulation of different gender roles in each historical context" (Pérez Martínez, 2016, p. 36). This programme included advice and choral programmes, of various nature and formats, offered by young female announcers who broke the monotony of the conferences of the early years.

Announcing artists or music was the job of announcers who presented content and advertising, both from the station and also "facing the public". They made broadcasts of inaugurations or special programmes from theatres, thus achieving the popularisation of the *medium* and income through sponsorships.

"In 1932, Bayer sponsored the broadcasts of the 'Concurs Infantil de Ràdio Associació' (Children's Contest). The advertising department was also the architect of the creation of programmes such as those put on air by Francina Boris and Teodor Garriga, travelling with the broadcaster's Mobile Unit through different towns in Catalonia to interview their authorities. This programme was not motivated by an informative or journalistic desire, but had a carefully designed commercial purpose" (Espinosa, 2008, p. 261).

Of the 22 female professional announcers who worked in different Catalan towns up until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Maria Cinta Balagué, the first female radio announcer in Spain, stands out. She headed the women's broadcasts of Ràdio Barcelona with the women's literature programme called *Sección Literaria Femenina* in 1926. At the same station, in the 1930s, one could also find Maria Carme Nicolau, the only female journalist who worked on the radio in those years as part of the Catalan edition of the news programme *La Paraula* (Balsebre, 2010), and Rosalia Rovira, the announcer who debuted the broadcasts on Ràdio Associació de Catalunya.⁴

2.2 The Spanish Civil War and the post-war period

During the Spanish Civil War, female radio announcers from both Ràdio Barcelona and Ràdio Associació travelled in turns to the Palau de la Generalitat to read out government announcements (propaganda).

After the conflict, many of the female announcers suffered repression, prison and exile, and some were forced to change jobs as punishment. In some cases, they were able to return to broadcasting under the new regime and reach retirement from

a career in radio, but in many others, they were not. They went from being announcers to being managers of discotheques, which is what happened to Antolina Boda, of the new Radio Tarrasa, for a while. Others were forced to be secretaries, such as Francina Boris at the recently reconverted Radio España de Barcelona (she returned to presenting on Radio España de Gerona) or others, such as Maria Carme Nicolau, who after their exile became not announcers, but scriptwriters. One of the most egregious cases of repression was that of Rosalia Rovira, who after coming out of prison was never able to work again in any media outlet.

Neither women nor the Catalan language would play a prominent role on the radio again until many years later. Once the new regime has been installed and the former personnel of the broadcasters are purged, a new stage began that was marked by strict control of content, heavy censorship and *El Parte*. There was a male slant to the medium and the new female announcers were relegated to a decorative role, except in female programming. They were responsible for presenting and supporting the announcer-presenter of the programmes in charity shows, programmes with a live audience or contests, reading out commercials and call signs and telling the time (Altés, 2020).

After the military announcers and the early female announcers linked to some of the new political leaders, competitive exams were called and new professional female voices appeared. On Radio Barcelona and Radio España de Barcelona, there was success for Enriqueta Teixidó, Pilar Montero, Mercè Carbonell, Mercedes Laspra (the voice of *Consultorio de Doña Montserrat Fortuny*), Carmen Brito and María Dolores Tejedo.

During the 1950s, they were responsible for presenting –not writing– the legendary women's advice programmes. These shows promoted the Franco regime's ideology, based on such innocent topics as beauty tips, home and family, fashion, or childcare (Pérez Martínez, 2016).

According to Altés (2020), in the 1950s there was a notable presence of female scriptwriters, such as Cecília A. Mantua, who gained prominence by writing radio dramas, which were very popular with the audience. Women also took on responsibilities linked to the administration of the radio stations.

The regime awarded new radio licences to people close to the regime and to the Church, and this led to the birth of the Red de Emisoras del Movimiento (REM), Cadena de Emisoras Sindicales (CES) and Cadena Azul de Radiodifusión (CAR).

2.3 From the 1960s to the Transition

The 1960s were characterised by “desarrollismo” (a focus on development) and an apparent openness and modernisation of Francoist society. At that time, women were the main audience for radio (Pérez Martínez, 2016) and the *Consultorio de la Mujer Elena Francis* was one of the star programmes. Its origin goes back to Radio Barcelona and its first scriptwriter was Ángela Castells, responsible for the broadcast of the Women's Section of the Falange. The first voice of the fictional character

of Elena Francis in 1962 was that of Maruja Fernández. Initially the show was designed to sell beauty products from the *Instituto de Belleza Elena Francis* (Pérez Martínez, 2016). It ended up being a showcase for the indoctrination of women towards the Catholic nationalist mentality of the regime.

In the 1960s, some Catalan female announcers once again played a leading role on the air, but always in a programming sphere based around accompaniment and emotional entertainment. Notable among these were the successful programmes by María Matilde Almendros on Radio Nacional de España, Odette Pinto on Radio España de Barcelona and Encarna Sánchez on COPE.

By the end of the decade, the programming was still full of serials, but radio drama had lost importance because of the rise of television (Altés, 2016). The 1966 Fraga Law eliminated prior censorship of content and the programming was hollowed out.

The Transition saw the creation of Ràdio 4 (1976), the territorial channel of RNE. It started broadcasts to explain the reality of the country in Catalan. There was a young team with many female journalists, such as Montserrat Minobis, or announcers such as Cèlia Motis, famous for being the witch on the programme *Jovenívol*.

1977 saw the end of the news monopoly of Radio Nacional de España and radio stations could now produce their own newscasts (Balsebre, 2002), so they would no longer have to broadcast *El Parte*, the spoken news magazine of RNE. Consequently, it was necessary to hire University-trained journalists to organise the newsrooms. Journalists would now write, not just announce, as had been the case previously.

Radio Juventud de Barcelona was set up in 1970 and served as a “radio school for an entire generation”. It was a CAR that had numerous women making programmes. Elisenda Roca started out there. Maribel Álvarez also worked there, making *Punto y aparte*, a programme that was broadcast on weekends and mornings that was on air until 1977, or Inés Mir, who made an afternoon programme entitled *Colorín-colorado*. These were not isolated cases.

At this time, some female announcers also took on the hosting and the direction of the programmes, especially on Ràdio 4, in addition to acting as editors on them (Altés, 2020). Others start working on news magazines, but there was still a lot of programming with a rather traditional air in which women perpetuated patriarchal stereotypes. On late-night shows, for example, female announcers recreated clichés linked to sensuality when they introduced music. However, the 1970s and 1980s were also characterised by the appearance of a feminist radio that advocated laws for gender equality (Altés, 2020).

Radio news reports explained reality through a social lens. It was new content, in a new media landscape that could incorporate a woman as head of the news department at Radio Barcelona: Mari Cruz Hernández Alvarino directed the newsroom between 1976 and 1978 (Balsebre, 2002).

The 1980s was important due to the appearance of many local stations, some new radio channels and for the birth of Catalunya Ràdio, “the national radio of Catalonia” (1983), thus responding to a political need of the Pujol Government and to a social demand (Vidal, 2024). Women were not greatly represented; some of the pioneers were Adelina Castillejo, Carme Anglada or Eva Algarra, the first female correspondent.

Local broadcasters were in the vanguard when it came to the hiring of female directors. This is a trend that is still ongoing (Altés, 2020).

Cadena 13 was created on 12 December 1983, bringing together 13 radio stations from different parts of Catalonia, with the aim of creating a commercial private radio channel in Catalan. They wanted to compete with Ràdio 4 and Catalunya Ràdio, and for this reason they opted for generalist programming. Cadena 13 had a brief existence (7 years) and featured an important team of women, notably the journalist Marta Balletbó or the comedian Mary Santpere.

In the 1980s, the presence of Catalan journalists occupying significant roles in state broadcasters stands out. For example, Concha García Campoy at RNE directed the programme *Las mañanas de Radio 1* (1986) and, later at SER, she created the magazine *A vivir que son dos días*, which was directed a few seasons later by the journalist Àngels Barceló before she took up the management of *Hora 25* (Espinosa, 2020), becoming its first director.

Ona Catalana was born in 2000, a new attempt to create a commercial radio channel in Catalan. It had premiered in 1998 in the province of Girona and went on to have stations in Andorra. In 2005, it was acquired by PRISA group, leading to the creation of ONA FM. In 2012, the broadcasters ended up forming SER Catalunya. Some of the female voices on these stations were Rita Marzoa, Neus Bonet and even Pilar Rahola hosted an interview programme there.

2.4 Women on today's generalist radio

From 2012, two women, the journalists Pepa Bueno and Gemma Nierga,⁵ ran the radio show with the largest audience in Spain, *Hoy por Hoy*, currently hosted by Àngels Barceló.

At Catalunya Ràdio, Mònica Terribas was in charge of the morning show for 7 years (2013-2020) and Laura Rosel took over the primetime show in 2020-2023.

In Catalonia, in the 2018-2019 season women occupied only 36% of airtime and directed and presented only 30% of sports, entertainment and news programmes, according to a study by Xavier Solà (Niqui Espinosa and Segarra Moreno, 2021). The research showed that Ràdio 4 was the station that came closest to parity, while RAC1 was the one that had the lowest female presence.

A report by the Sindicat de Periodistes de Catalunya (SPC, 2022) to take a snapshot of the staff recognises wage differences between genders and in publicly and privately owned companies, the latter having comparatively lower salaries. «All the media outlets, except one (which has one underway), claim

to have an equality plan. While most of them consider the issue of gender to be important, there are those who qualify that it is ‘important, but not primary’, ‘there is the will and the real facts’, or ‘it depends on the type of programme’» (SPC, 2022, p.14). This trend is corroborated by the data from the *Informe anual de la profesión periodística* (Annual report on the journalism profession) (2022):

“[...] But as one moves up the professional ladder (editors-in-chief, deputy editors, news directors, etc.), the balance disappears and these positions are mostly occupied by men” (*Informe anual de la profesión periodística*, 2022, p. 11).

The data also state that the majority (60%) of journalism graduates are women (between 2011 and 2017), but that they are still only responsible for 20% of the sources of published news (Vargas in CSW68, 2024). Female journalists lose their jobs more often than male journalists do.

In Spain, on average, around a thousand more female journalists graduate (Orús, 2020). According to the Col·legi de Periodistes (Association of Journalists), in Catalonia there are 2,400 female journalists.

In today's *audified* society (Ormaechea, 2024), most listeners wear headphones for a large part of the day. There is surely a cause and effect with the fact that radio consumption is remaining fairly stable (EGM, 2023). We know from the same source that the current female listeners of generalist radio in Catalonia represent 51.8% of the audience. Most of them are married, university-educated, working women, aged between 45 and 54, and with a high average income.

3. Objectives and methodology

The principal objective (PO) of this work is to be able to ascertain the presence and role of women who work in Catalan generalist radio broadcasters, 100 years after the birth of the medium. The aim is to make an initial approach to the subject being studied, in order to understand to what extent female participation has varied in non-specialised radio broadcasts, with Catalan territorial coverage. Thus the secondary objectives (SO) are:

- SO 1: Identify the female executives at Catalan radio stations.
- SO 2: Determine the female directors of programmes.
- SO 3: Count the women who are part of the programmes' staff.
- SO 4: Highlight the women working in technical departments.

To achieve this, 158 radio programmes from the selected stations were analysed, making a content analysis based on the websites, during the week in question of 17-23 February (table 1). In addition, talks were held with editors, managers or journalists (10 people) from the stations under study to verify or expand the information that was available. The duration of prime time programmes conditions the volume of shows in

Table 1. Generalist broadcasters and radio programmes analysed in this study

Broadcaster	Media group	Number of programmes analysed
RAC1	Grup Godó	16
Catalunya Ràdio	CCMA	34
SER Catalunya	PRISA RADIO	39
Onda Cero Catalunya	Atresmedia Radio	19
COPE Catalunya	Ábside Media	19
Ràdio 4	RTVE	31
Total programmes analysed		158

Source: Own work.

the programming. The disparity in the number of programmes analysed lies in the fact that the reruns of the programmes have not been included (which are particularly numerous at the weekend in some channels, as is the case of RAC1) and that only those programmes produced in Catalonia have been considered (at SER Catalunya there is a lot of local short-duration offerings).

To ensure the analysis goes more in-depth, two programmes have been randomly selected from each channel: one news programme and the other an entertainment or sports programme. The purpose of this selection has been to study the composition and tasks of the members of the teams,⁶ thus allowing the role of women to be determined as directors, editors, scriptwriters, producers or sound technicians.

4. Presence of women on the radio 100 years on: roles and profiles

4.1. Female executives (SO1)

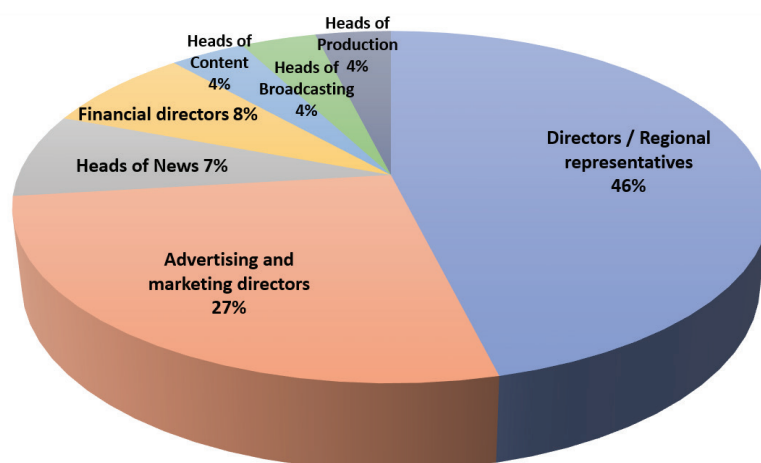
Responding to Secondary Objective 1, this research has been able to determine the women in managerial positions who work in the companies under study. Directors of broadcasters or

regional representatives and women occupying high positions in commercial, administrative or financial departments have been identified (table 2).

Table 2. Managerial positions of women in the studied broadcasters

Position	Number of female executives
Regional representatives / radio station director	12*
Managers / sales, advertising and/or marketing directors	7**
Manager / Head of News	2
Administration / financial director	2
Head of Content	1
Head of Broadcasting	1
Head of Production	1

Source: Own work. *RAC1 has a deputy station director, a position held by a woman. **RAC1 has a director with a deputy director in this area, both held by women.

Figure 1. Female managerial positions

Source: Own work.

RAC1, for the first time in its history, has a female director, Eulàlia Carbonell, who took up the position in April 2023. She has a female assistant director, Georgina Colom, a female administration manager, Elisabeth Sabanés, and two women heading the marketing area, Emma Martínez and Ana Amat. This means the management of the leading broadcaster in terms of audience is made up of 8 men and 5 women. Never before has the station had so many women on its staff.

Figure 1 shows the very high volume of women working in management positions.⁷ This is an unusual fact, not comparable in volume to men, but if we look at the historical chronology of the medium, 2024 marks an important qualitative difference. The data also show that, unlike RAC1, which has a significant female presence in the management of the head office, in the rest of the stations, female executives are not directors of their companies' headquarters, but rather are regional representatives or executives in financial or marketing departments, who always report to a male general manager.

The channels that work on local news with stable branch offices and regional stations that include teams (of very different sizes) of journalists and staff in the administration and sales area in 2024 are as follows: SER Catalunya, Catalunya Ràdio, Ràdio 4 and, to a lesser extent and with local programming only in Lleida,⁸ Onda Cero and COPE. While COPE does not have any women working in Lleida, Onda Cero does. In this regard, Núria Mora stands out, who presents and directs the daily magazine *La ciutat Lleida*. Mora also works as the representative of Onda Cero in the region.

The female representation of these two stations on tasks linked to central sales or administrative management is significant. The Advertising director of COPE in Catalonia and Cadena 100 is Cristina Montori. At Onda Cero, the sales manager is Ana Rotes.

At SER Catalunya there are female station directors in the three Catalan constituencies. Until 2024, this had never happened before. They are Carme Martínez, director of Ràdio Girona, Míriam Lorca, director of Ràdio Reus-Tarragona and Núria Camps, director of Ràdio Lleida. At this station, there is also another managerial profile that is not found in the other stations of the group outside Barcelona: the figure of head of Content, which is filled by the journalist Mercè March. The territorial director of SER Catalunya, however, is a man, as is the position of head of Content for Catalonia. Where the maximum responsibility falls on a woman is in the News division. The journalist Mònica Peinado is the head of News at SER Catalunya. Another noteworthy fact of this broadcaster is the incorporation of female professionals in management and executive tasks: Carolina Pérez, sales director of SER Catalunya; Laia Balastegui, marketing director of PRISA Media Catalunya; Maria Jesús Campoy, financial director of SER Catalunya, and Bàrbara Aspas, project manager of the Ràdio Barcelona Centenary.

At Ràdio 4, the presence of women is much higher than that of men in occupations where decisions are made about content. Its regional representatives are all women, including the head

of News for Barcelona-Catalonia, Sonia Urbano. At Ràdio 4, in Girona they have Gemma Esteba; in Lleida, Pepa Sangerís, and in Tarragona, Pilar Ribas. It should be noted that these journalists, who are representatives of Ràdio 4 in the regions, hold dual positions and are responsible for the radio and the RTVE television representation in their territory. Out of the broadcasters being researched, Ràdio 4 is, also in terms of management, the channel with the most female executives.

At Catalunya Ràdio, regional management have moved from single management (Catalunya Ràdio and TV3) to an independent governance model, both for the regional offices and the newsrooms. It is worth saying that in the integrated model of the CCMA there was always the figure of the representative and the deputy representative who shared out the management of television and radio respectively. Currently, Catalunya Ràdio has two female journalists holding the positions of representatives of the stations in Girona, Clara Jordán, and in Lleida, Noèlia Casellas, with the latter also being the station's representative for the Aran Valley. In these two demarcations, the representatives of TV3 are also female journalists: Mercè Sibina in Girona and Teresa Macià in Lleida. At the head office, in Barcelona, the following stand out in major managerial positions: Laura Marín, head of Broadcasting, Montse Ollé, head of Production, and Neus Comellas, Sales director.

Not all the stations studied have regional offices or local stations where content is produced. RAC1 maintains sales teams, but content production is performed from the head office in Barcelona or with correspondents. This is the case of RAC1 in Girona, with the journalist Bàrbara Julbe, the only female correspondent in Catalonia, according to the data published by the radio company itself.

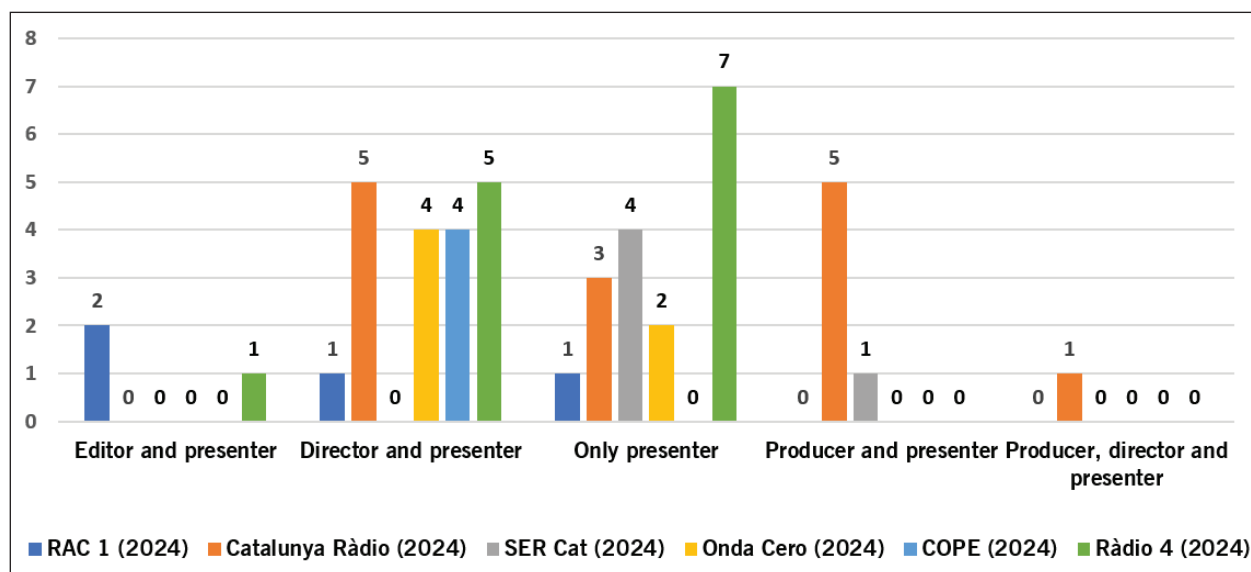
4.2 Female programme directors or editors (S02)

One of the prominent roles of female journalists at generalist stations is that of programme presenter. However, the analysis of the 158 programmes broadcast in the week in question by all the radio stations in the sample, shows that the majority of them are presented by men. The function of directing and presenting the same programme often falls to the same person (figure 2). The study also shows how common co-presentations are. Women present only 29.11% of programmes.

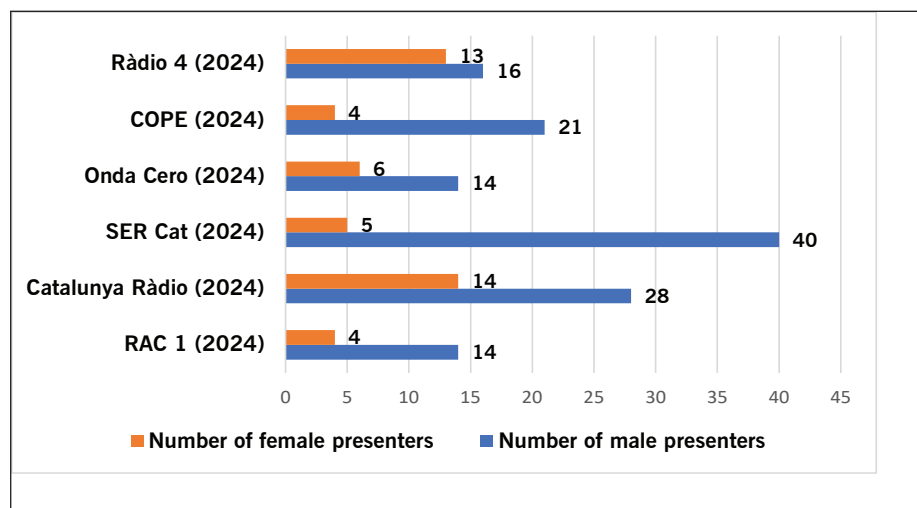
The following women stand out in RAC1: Núria Travesa, presenter of the lunchtime programme *RAC1 Migdia*; Anna Vallhonestà, editor and presenter of *No ho sé*; Noemí Polls, editor and presenter of *La primera pedra*; and Esther Muñoz, director and presenter of the programme *Viatja bé*.

Catalunya Ràdio features, among others, Neus Bonet and Maria Guixà, with the weekend lunchtime news programme *Catalunya migdia cap de setmana*; Sílvia Còppulo, with *El divan*; Xantal Llavina, with *Revolució 4.0*; and Sònia Gelmà, co-presenter of the sports news programme *Tot costa*.

At SER, Mara Torres, with *El faró*;⁹ Àngels Barceló, with *Hoy por Hoy*; Anna Puigbolas, with *El balcó* (at SER Catalunya), and Pepa Blanes, with *El cine en la SER*.

Figure 2. Roles assumed by the female presenters of programmes at generalist broadcasters

Source: Own work.

Figure 3. Proportion of female and male presenters in the 158 programmes on generalist broadcasters

Source: Own work.

Onda Cero (Catalonia) features Míriam Franch, with *La Ciutat*, and Ariadna Belver, with *Lideratges*, while Elena Gijón, with *Notícies Mediodía*, and Julia Otero, with *Julia en la onda*, lead programmes with coverage all over Spain.

On the other hand, at COPE, the following women direct programmes: Pilar García Muñoz, with *Mediodía COPE*; Pilar Cisneros, with *La Tarde*; Irene Pozo, with *La Linterna de la Iglesia* - COPE.es; and Cristina López Schlichting, with *Fin de Semana*.

Finally, on Radio 4 Marga Lluch directs *Més que esport*; Pilar Sampietro Colom, *Vida verda*; Rosa de Diego, *Llibres, píxels i valors*; Consol Saenz, *Territori clandestí*; Conxita Casanova, *Va de cine*, and Gemma Nierga, *Cafè d'idees*, both on radio and television.

The data show (figure 3) that in 2024, in SER Catalunya, as well as in RAC1, COPE, Onda Cero and Catalunya Ràdio, the number of male programme presenters far exceeds the number of female presenters. In the case of Ràdio 4, the gender difference in roles is the least disproportionate in the series. The most significant imbalance between men and women presenting/directing/editing programmes is in SER Catalunya and COPE.

By working with the data obtained from the week in question (figure 3) we can see the disproportion between male and female presenters on the various radio stations in 2024.

4.3 Women on the staff of the 12 programmes analysed (S03)

The results obtained from the analysis of the 2 programmes of each radio station studied randomly reveal that in 2024, women have a prominent presence, particularly at public broadcasters. According to the figures, however, in no case does the female presence reach 50% of the total staff.

The resulting panorama illustrates the deep involvement of women in various operational and creative strata within the Catalan radio ecosystem, carrying out everything from presentation tasks to working at the highest levels of decision-making and management within their programme. Nevertheless, the data (table 3) also highlight the fact that the roles with the most women are those of writer, producer and editor/director of their programme.

In detail, at Ràdio 4 and Catalunya Ràdio, women represent 45.45% and 34.88% respectively of the teams that carry out their programming. These two stations have a substantial proportion of the total number of women identified in this study (57.14%). From the count of the 12 programmes analysed in the week in question, the percentages of female and male workers in the companies are deduced (figure 4).

Private broadcasters show a more varied scenario. SER Catalunya registers 41.67%, indicating notable support for female inclusion. However, Onda Cero and RAC1 have lower figures, with 25% of female presence, and COPE, with 23.08%.

A total of 35 women work in the 12 randomly selected programmes (table 5). These professionals mainly occupy writing positions in the newsroom (11 women), which reflects

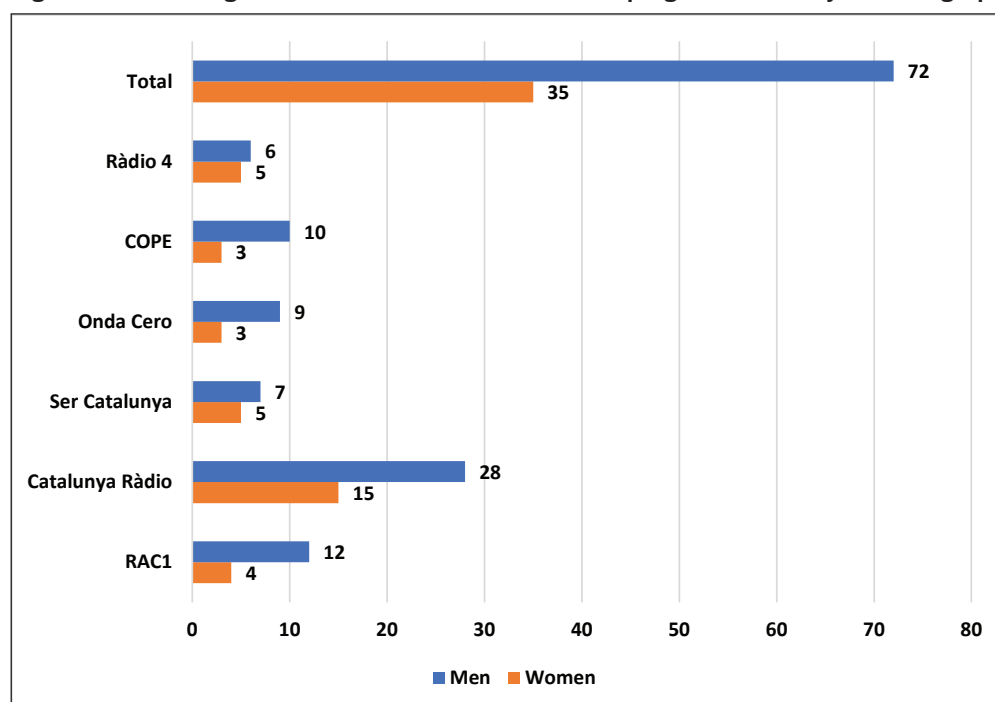
their importance in the creation of content. In addition, they actively participate in production, with a significant presence as scriptwriters, production coordinators, programme directors or handling top-level sports broadcasts, as is the case of Helena Condis at COPE (Barcelona).

Table 3. Jobs held by female journalists from the news and programme teams

Female roles	Number of women
Writer	11
Producer	5
Director / editor	3
Writer and producer	2
Scriptwriter	2
Coordinator and producer	2
Writer / editor / presenter	2
Writer and scriptwriter	1
Presenter and scriptwriter	1
Coordination of regional offices	1
Networks	1
Second presenter	1
Presenter	1
Deputy director	1
Head of production	1
Total	35

Source: Own work.

Figure 4. Percentage of women in the staff of the 12 programmes analysed (bar graph by programme)



Source: Own work.

Table 4. Proportion of staff by gender in the 12 programmes analysed

Broadcasters	Women	Men	Total	Percentage women / men	Percentage of women out of the total
RAC1	4	12	16	33,33%	25,00%
Catalunya Ràdio	15	28	43	53,57%	34,88%
SER Catalunya	5	7	12	71,43%	41,67%
Onda Cero	3	9	12	33,33%	25,00%
COPE	3	10	13	30,00%	23,08%
Ràdio 4	5	6	11	83,33%	45,45%
Total	35	72	107	48,61%	32,71%

Source: Own work.

Table 5. Roles and female presence in generalist Catalan radio in 2024

Name of programme	Women participants	Men participants	Name of women participants	Role of women participants
RAC1				
<i>El món a RAC1</i>	3	9	Marina Arbós	Writer and producer
			Marga Ortuño	Writer and producer
			Montse Girona	Producer
<i>Vostè primer</i>	1	3	Esther Romagosa	Writer
Total	4	12		
Catalunya Ràdio				
<i>El búnquer</i>	2	8	Neus Rosell	Presenter and scriptwriter
			Xènia Vilà	Head of production
<i>El matí de Catalunya Ràdio</i>	13	20	Alba Grifell	Coordination and production
			Gemma Tarragó	Coordination and production
			Marina Romero	Edition
			Roser Perera	Coordination of regional offices
			Herminia Massana	Writer
			Marta Viana	Writer
			Marisa Gil	Writer
			Sílvia Creus	Writer
			Berta Torrades	Scriptwriter
			Tània Tàpia	Scriptwriter
			Vanessa Carrión	Producer
			Sara Llovet	Producer
			Raquel Mateos	Networks
Total	15	28		

Source: Own work.

Table 5. Roles and female presence in generalist Catalan radio in 2024 (continuation)

Name of programme	Women participants	Men participants	Name of women participants	Role of women participants
SER Catalunya				
<i>Tot és comèdia</i>	0	2	-	-
<i>Aquí Catalunya</i>	5	5	Gisela Rodríguez	Second presenter
			Marina Fernández	Writer and editor
			Laura Estrada	Writer and scriptwriter
			Núria Barnils	Production
			Cristina García	Production and advertisement
Total	5	7		
Onda Cero				
<i>Notícies migdia</i>	2	3	Montse Valls	News presenter <i>Más de uno</i> Cataluña and writer
			Anna Utiel	Writer
<i>La ciutat</i>	1	6	Miriam Franch	Presenter and director
Total	3	9		
COPE				
<i>Migdia a COPE Catalunya i Andorra</i>	2	2	Yolanda Canales	Writer
			Mar Puerto	Writer
<i>Esports COPE</i>	1	8	Helena Condis	Writer
Total	3	10		
Ràdio 4				
<i>Cafè d'idees</i>	2	4	Gemma Nierga	Director
			Lorena del Amo	Presenter
<i>Pla B</i>	3	2	Glòria Galiano	Deputy director
			Maria Garcia-Coll	Writer
			Natàlia Sánchez	Writer
Total	5	6		

Source: Own work.

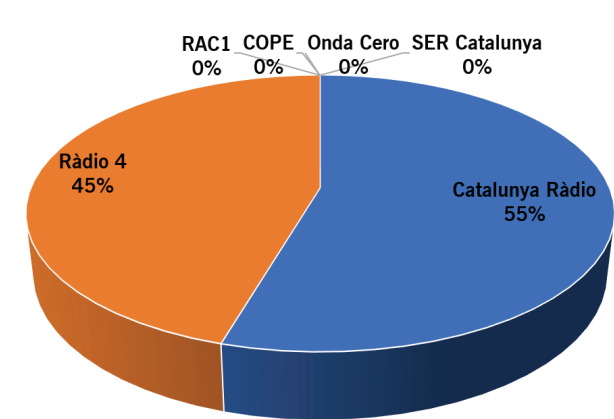
4.4 Female sound technicians (OS4)

According to the sources consulted, the majority of women working as sound technicians at the radio stations being studied do so at the public stations Ràdio 4 and Catalunya Ràdio. At private stations, men carry out this role.

Ràdio 4 currently has five women working as sound technicians, both in news and in programmes: Ester Bages, Adriana Llacay, Irene Moreno, Marta Inglés and Helena Ramos. In fact, women occupying this role is nothing new. Maria Jesús Roman Amezcua worked for many years at the Catalan branch of RNE as a sound producer, until 1992 when she retired. The public station Ràdio 4 has a parity committee within the Works council that looks after, among others, these types of issues.

At the other public broadcaster, Catalunya Ràdio, the technical department is subdivided into 3 areas, and there are women

Figure 5. Women in the technical department



Source: Own work.

Table 6. Women in the technical department

Broadcaster	Women
Catalunya Ràdio	6
Ràdio 4	5
SER Catalunya	0
Onda Cero	0
COPE	0
RAC1	0
Total	11

Source: Own work.

working in all of them. At Central Control there are 6 men and 3 women. The most veteran among them are Montse Duran, Julia Aparicio and Andrea Martínez, who, at 22, represents the next generation. The Live Studio technicians are mostly men and there are only two female technicians in charge of production, and in both cases they are also women with a long career in radio: Mariví Pérez and Rosa Sillué. And, finally, Catalunya Ràdio's Outdoor technicians come to 13 people, among whom there is only one woman, Matilde Seoane, who has been working at the station for 20 years, the last two of them as an Outdoor technician. In this regard, it is also remarkable that the technical direction of Catalunya Ràdio falls to two female engineers. The director of Digital and Technological Infrastructure at the Catalan Audiovisual Corporation (CCMA) is a woman, Natàlia Prats, and Maria Àngels Valera leads the Operations area. They are the only two high-ranking female managers in the technical organisational chart of the CCMA.

5. Conclusions

The most important conclusion in this research (PO) is the evidence that in generalist Catalan radio currently women have broken through the glass ceiling. In the absence of a more in-depth investigation, the data worked on here have revealed the existence, for the first time, of a female director at the station RAC1 and that two radio channels, one public (Ràdio 4) and one private (SER Catalunya), are managed in the regions by women (SO1). This is a significant innovation. It must be understood, however, that only at RAC1 is this management of a radio group, while in the rest of the companies the female directors are either in regional offices or are senior executives from financial or marketing departments and that in all cases they report to a male director at the head office.

Ràdio 4 is revealed as the station in the study with the most women working in managerial positions, but also in all the jobs involved in working on the radio. The rest of the stations investigated show a different gradation, with a predominant presence of women at public broadcasters.

In managerial terms, RAC1 shows, for the first time, numerous women on its management staff. Along with its first female

director, the station has a female assistant director and female heads of marketing and accounting. Even so, the station has the fewest women directing and presenting programmes (SO2), both in news and non-news programmes. Paradoxically, as is well known, RAC1, which is the leading station in terms of audience, is also the one with the fewest regional offices with their own production deployed in Catalonia (none), since regional news is covered by correspondents (the Girona correspondent is a female journalist, the rest are men). It is also the company with the fewest women on the staff of its programmes (OS3). Only 25% of the station's programming tasks being studied here are carried out by women. One conclusion that emerges from this data is that the Catalan audience, for the most part, is indifferent to whether their favourite programme is presented and directed by a man or a woman or whether the local content is produced in Barcelona or outside the capital.

Another interesting point of the study determines that only 29.11% of the presenters of the 158 programmes analysed are women. In the same way, women are identified in positions of responsibility in the sales management of the private broadcasters SER Catalunya, Onda Cero and COPE, and also at the public broadcaster Catalunya Ràdio, which has a female sales director.

The study demonstrates the strong presence of women in technical tasks (SO4) and the substantial difference in these jobs between public and private broadcasters. Neither SER Catalunya, nor Onda Cero, nor RAC1, nor COPE have female sound technicians, either high or low frequency. Meanwhile at the public broadcasters, Ràdio 4 and Catalunya Ràdio, the female figures in this department are notable, although much less numerous than their male counterparts.

In retrospect, female figures, despite having a significant presence, have never had the same importance in terms of their quantity or responsibility within the medium as men. But a certain upward trend has been noted in this regard, and this is a new development. Currently, more women are occupying positions that allow them to make decisions that affect radio programming, either within a programme, or in a department or in a regional office or in the sales field. Certainly, starting out from the basis that historically women on the radio had more of a role in communication than content creation (especially in the early years of the medium, female announcers read what was written for them by men), an important qualitative leap can now be seen. Currently, the women who work at the six generalist broadcasters that have coverage throughout Catalonia work as writers, scriptwriters or producers. Therefore, they are the ones who prepare the content that is broadcast. But, in addition, it is evident that many presenters are also the directors/editors of their programmes, meaning the female journalists are responsible for deciding and prioritising the content that will be presented on air.

Another aspect that attracts the most attention is that the primetime programming at the stations is in male hands, except at Ràdio 4, where Gemma Nierga with *Cafè d'Idees*

simultaneously does the morning show on the radio and at TVE Catalunya. Left behind is Catalunya Ràdio, which had twice chosen female journalists Mònica Terribas and Laura Rosel to headline the morning news programme, in primetime.

Finally, if in the past the female announcers provided the female voices on the radio, now this is done by female journalists. While in Catalonia before the Spanish Civil War there was only one female journalist on staff (María Carme Nicolau at Ràdio Barcelona), now the staffs of the six radio stations studied are made up of journalists, who decide, prioritise and write the content they present. In 100 years, women have gone from working on programmes for women, to gaining more of a presence in programming and in management.

Notes

1. Tera worked at Ràdio Lleida and Ràdio Girona, from the network of stations that Ràdio Associació de Catalunya had created across Catalonia since 1931.
2. This research shows the need to carry out an in-depth study on the role of women in radio during the Transition.
3. The study avoids local broadcasters, since, due to their own weight (according to the BIAC (2024), 227 local broadcasters operate in Catalonia), they demand a specific and in-depth analysis.
4. To learn more in detail about these pioneering female announcers, you can consult *Dones de ràdio. Les primeres locutores de Catalunya* (Radio women: The first female announcers in Catalonia). Espinosa Mirabet, S. (2014)
5. In a very different vein, Gemma Nierga had started out at Ràdio Barcelona, at night, with *Hablar por hablar* (1994). Years later, she directed the afternoon news magazine *La Ventana*.
6. Collaborators and talk show/debate participants have been excluded from the composition of the teams.
7. This paper is the first study that seeks to name the many and diverse tasks that women currently do in generalist radio.
8. Consulted on this issue, the cause is explained by a historical trend that has been maintained.
9. At the stations headquartered in Madrid, listeners in Catalonia can listen to dual programming, that specific to Catalonia and that being broadcast by the station throughout the whole of Spain. In these cases, with SER, COPE and Onda Cero, it has been decided to include the duplication of programming, solely in order to identify female programme directors, since all programmes broadcast in the week in question have been analysed.

References

- ACCIÓ (2024). *Perspectiva de gènere a la direcció de les empreses catalanes*. Generalitat de Catalunya. <https://www.accio.gencat.cat/web/.content/bancconeixement/documents/informes/2024/ACCIÓ-perspectiva-genere-direccio-empreses-catalanes.pdf>
- Afuera, A. (2021). *Aquí, Unión Radio: Crónica de la primera cadena española (1925-1939)*. Signo e Imagen.
- Altés, E. (2022). *Dones a les ones, La història de la ràdio en veu de les dones*. Museu d'Història de Catalunya. https://www.mhcat.cat/exposicions/exposicions_realitzades/dones_a_les_ones
- Altés, E. (2016). Periodistas radiofónicas: De la República a la Transición. Entrevista a la periodista Anna Comas. *Arenal: Revista de historia de las mujeres*, 23(1), 195-211. <https://doi.org/10.30827/arenal.v23i1.5004>
- Arias Cardona, J. (1933). *Guía de las emisoras de radio de toda España. Obra curiosa y de utilidad*. Topografía de Juan Gutsems.
- Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid (Ed.) (2022). *Informe Anual de la Profesión Periodística 2022*. https://www.apmadrid.es/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Informe-Anual-22_web_lite.pdf
- Balsebre, A. (2001-2002). *Historia de la Radio en España*. 2 vol. Cátedra.
- Bellmunt, C. (2002). *Darrere el micro. 69 anys de ràdio a Tarragona*. Arola Editors.
- Chambers, D. Steiner, L. & Fleming, C. (2004). *Women and Journalism*. Routledge.
- Espinosa, S. (2008). *Les locutores de ràdio a Catalunya 1924-1939*. [Doctoral thesis]. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/55011>
- ___ (2014). *Dones de ràdio*. Albertí editors.
- (2016). En femenino y singular. La mujer en la radio española desde los felices años veinte hasta el final de la Guerra Civil. *Arenal: Revista de historia de las mujeres*, 23(1), 5-34.
- (2020). La radio: una historia en femenino. In: I. Liberia Vayá & B. Sánchez-Gutiérrez (coords.), *Aquelarre. La emancipación de las mujeres en la cultura de masas* (pp. 103-120). Advoook. Colección Comunicación y Feminismos.
- Franquet, R. (2001). *Història de la ràdio a Catalunya al segle xx*. Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Gil, R. (2024). Dels inicis a la transició: fer ràdio en temps difícils. In: A. Font (coord.), *Cent anys de ràdio: de la ràdio de galena al telèfon intel·ligent*. Revista de Girona, núm. 346.
- Karpf, A. (1987). Radio Times: private women and public men. In: K. Davies, J. Dickey & T. Stratford (eds.), *Out of focus: Writing on women and the media* (p. 168-175). The Women's Press.

- Niqui Espinosa, C. & Segarra Moreno, L. (2021). La ràdio. In: M. Civil i Serra & B. López (eds.), *Informe de la comunicació a Catalunya 2019-2020*. Generalitat de Catalunya, Lexikon Informes, 7, p. 93-120. <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/245277>
- Ormaechea, A. (2024). ¡Bienvenidos a la era de la conversación!. *100 años de radio*, p. 238. Cadena SER. https://issuu.com/prisarevistas/docs/centenario_cadena_ser
- Orús, Abigail (2020). Principales problemas de la profesión periodística por edad. España 2018. In: *Statista* [online] <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/864335/principales-problemas-de-la-pr>
- Pérez Martínez, J.E. (2016). Mujeres en la radio española del siglo xx (1924-1989). *Arenal: Revista de historia de las mujeres*, 23(1), 35–38. <https://doi.org/10.30827/arenal.v23i1.4996>
- Pérez Pujol, R. (director) (1936). *Anuario de la radio*. Ediciones Barcelona.
- Sindicat de Periodistes de Catalunya / Sindicat de Professionals de la Comunicació (SPC) (2023). *Radiografia dels mitjans de comunicació a Catalunya*. https://sindicatperiodistes.cat/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Radiografia_mitjans_Informe_finalOK.pdf
- Vargas, M.S. (2024). *Digital Communication Rights: Empowering women for the digital age* [Conference]. CSW Forum 68, New York, USA. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw68-2024>
- Vidal, M. (2024). *El naixement de Catalunya Ràdio: Gènesi, crisi i reorientació del primer projecte de ràdio de la Generalitat (1975- 1985)*. [Doctoral thesis]. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/293280>