

Catalunya Ràdio: Genesis, crisis and reorientation of the Generalitat's first radio project (1982-1984)

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Paper received on 23 May 2024 and accepted on 4 October 2024

How to cite:

Vidal i Juanola, M. (2024). Catalunya Ràdio: Genesis, crisis and reorientation of the Generalitat's first radio project (1982-1984). *Quaderns del CAC*, 50, 33-40. doi: <https://doi.org/10.60940/qcac50id431851>

Abstract

Catalunya Ràdio was launched in 1983 as an initiative of the first Government of the Generalitat presided over by Jordi Pujol (1980-1984). The goal was to give Catalonia its own public radio and TV that would broadcast only in Catalan in order to spread the use of the language and consolidate its own media spaces under the control of the Catalan executive and Parliament. The radio and TV stations followed different paths, and all eyes were immediately on the TV project, which absorbed most of the resources. This subordination caused precariousness and improvisation during the launch of the radio station, which culminated with the resignation of the first director. These difficulties were magnified by the fact that the initial programming model, with a succession of short programmes, never gained ground, and one year later, Catalunya Ràdio was turned into a generalist radio station with two main magazine programmes in the morning and in the afternoon.

Keywords

History of radio, radio in Catalonia, radio of the Generalitat, public media, Catalunya Ràdio.

Resum

Catalunya Ràdio va néixer el 1983 com una iniciativa del primer Govern de la Generalitat presidit per Jordi Pujol (1980-1984). Es volia dotar Catalunya d'una ràdio i una televisió públiques que emetessin només en català, per estendre l'ús de la llengua i consolidar un espai mediàtic propi, sota el control del Govern i del Parlament. Els dos nous mitjans van seguir camins diferents i totes les mirades es van posar de seguida en el projecte de televisió, on van anar a parar la majoria de recursos. Aquesta supeditació va provocar precarietat i improvisació en la posada en marxa de la ràdio, que va culminar amb la dimissió del primer director de l'emissora. A aquestes dificultats s'hi va afegir que el model de programació ideat a l'inici, amb una successió de petits espais, no es va consolidar i, un any després, Catalunya Ràdio es va reconvertir cap a una programació generalista amb dos espais magazins de matí i de tarda.

Paraules clau

Història de la ràdio, ràdio a Catalunya, ràdio de la Generalitat, mitjans públics, Catalunya Ràdio.

1. Introduction

Catalunya Ràdio was launched in the early 1980s in the midst of uncertainty about the feasibility of a Catalan radio station that depended on the Generalitat and the Parliament of Catalonia, as provided for in the 1979 Statute of autonomy. After the Franco regime, there was only one radio station solely in Catalan –Ràdio 4–, which had been created in 1976 within the organisation Radiotelevisión Española (Font, 2003). Likewise, there were few radio professionals adept in Catalan, nor was there an audience that was used to listening to the radio in this language.

This article focuses on the first stage of Catalunya Ràdio (1982-1984), when the project was in the throes of constant crisis with a succession of three directors in two years. It is proof that launching the Generalitat's new radio station was not easy, and that the broadcaster's first design never took off.

The story of this early stage is part of a broader study on the calls to create a radio station in Catalan in the late Franco regime (Vidal Juanola, 2023). It also tells how with the Statute of Autonomy, the political parties adopted it and the first Government of the Generalitat, with Jordi Pujol as the president, got down to work to make Catalonia's own radio and TV a reality (Guimerà, 2014).

In this article, we will first define the methodology used in the research. Secondly, we will outline the early driving forces behind Catalunya Ràdio and the idea they had, the difficulties they encountered, the results of their first project and how the Government of the Generalitat decided to shift course towards a conventional radio model. Finally, we will outline the findings of the research and point to other lines of research yet to be addressed.

2. Methodology

The research methodology pivoted around three main sources. The first was access to unpublished documents in the archive of the Corporació Catalana de Mitjans Audiovisuals (CCMA). They are incomplete, but they include the first minutes (1983-1984) of the Board of Directors of the former Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió (CCRTV) and the first report issued by the broadcaster (1983-1984). We have drawn information from them that is crucial in tracking the story of those early days. What are not found in the CCMA archives are materials recorded systematically since the beginning of Catalunya Ràdio.

The second source was research in the specialised literature on the history of radio broadcasting in Catalonia between the end of the Franco regime and the first legislature of the Government of the Generalitat, with a focus on regional radio (Franquet, 2001) (Balsebre, 2002) (Martí, 1996) (Peñafiel, 1994) (Díaz, 1997) (Gutiérrez, 2021). Another source is press articles; we conducted a search in the digital archive of the newspaper *Avui* between 1981 and 1984 to locate articles that contained the keywords 'radio' and 'Generalitat', and 'Catalunya Ràdio'. The articles were organised into a database, and the relevant information for the study was extracted. This newspaper was chosen because it was the closest to Jordi Pujol's circle and the mouthpiece that expressed his party's milieu.

Finally, the third source used in the research was around 20 interviews with people who were associated with the creation of the Generalitat's broadcasters. The interviews were held using an open-ended questionnaire focused on their memories of that experience, which were then checked against the information collected from other sources.

3. The launch of Catalunya Ràdio (1982-1983)

3.1 Two pioneers at the inception of the project

Jordi Costa i Riera (Vic, 1943 - Figueres, 1985) and Josep Maria Francino i Arenillas (Terrassa, 1947 - 2021) were the first ideologues behind Catalunya Ràdio. When the project was launched (1982), they directed Cadena SER's two regional (county) broadcasters in Catalonia. Costa had been at the helm of Ràdio Reus for 11 years, a broadcaster that had become a benchmark in news and innovation (Martí, 1998). Francino was a member of the management team at Ràdio Terrassa,

where in 1979 he had created one of the most successful music stations of the time: Radio Club 25.

'Jordi Costa and I were friends. We always said that we should do things together because we shared the idea of what a radio station should be. When Jaume Casajoana [*director general of Pujol's government*] was charged with finding young people with future prospects to make the Generalitat's radio, he turned to Jordi Costa. Costa accepted the proposal and immediately phoned me and said: "We can finally do things together!", and he offered me the job of assistant director of broadcasters of the Government of Catalonia.' (Interview with Josep Maria Francino)

Jordi Costa had begun his career at Radio Barcelona just after he earned his degree in Journalism from the University of Navarra, at a time when the station was beginning to experiment with new news formats as it awaited the end to censorship. Thus, in February 1970, the programme 'Minuto a minuto' was launched on Radio Barcelona, which pushed the possibilities on broadcasting news on the end of the Franco regime to the limit (Franquet, 2001). The goal was to conduct the station so it would reach what was called the 'news radio boom' coming in the ensuing years with an edge (Balsebre, 2002). The programme had reporters in 12 territories in both Spain and abroad. A total of 23 copywriters participated in this space in sections like 'reports and interviews', 'local news', 'sports' and 'culture' (Franquet, 1994). Jordi Costa coordinated and ran the programme, whose innovativeness made it take off on Barcelona's radio waves.

While Costa was making this programme, there was a vacancy in the management of Ràdio Reus, and he took the post in December 1971. Costa's arrival in Reus, with the journalistic spirit that had imbued Radio Barcelona, left a mark. He transformed a broadcaster bogged down in the more traditional structures of Cadena SER into a benchmark for citizens and advertising in the entire Camp de Tarragona region.

'Works are by people, and the person in charge of transforming a radio that was designed and dedicated solely to entertainment, because it was from Reus, was its director, Jordi Costa [...]. Shortly after he arrived, the station had changed; people were talking about its programmes, but this was mainly reflected in its contents. This was happening precisely when other radio stations had pushed record-playing and cheesy entertainment to the limit.' (Martí, 1998)

Costa brought the news to Ràdio Reus, stretching the seams of censorship with debate programmes and live interviews, as he had done at Radio Barcelona. The culmination of Jordi Costa's project in Reus came in the autumn of 1976 with the programme 'Plaça Major'. Made wholly in Catalan, it is considered the first inter-county radio news programme in Catalonia after the Franco regime and earned the radio award granted by the organisation Òmnium Cultural in 1982.

This award brought Jordi Costa visibility on Catalonia's radio scene. At that time, radio in Catalan was in the minority, with Ràdio 4 as the only station to broadcast solely in that language –its coverage limited to the Barcelona area– within the public organisation Radiotelevisión Española (Font, 2003). Some of the best-known radio professionals in Spain had roots in Catalonia, but the Franco regime had silenced radio in Catalan. In any case, when Jordi Pujol's government was seeking people to lead the launch of the Generalitat's station, they did not choose any of the famous radio announcers at the time, not even those at Ràdio 4. They were seeking young talent who had few ties with the radio model used until then, precisely the profile of Jordi Costa, a person who had no relationship with the Pujol government.

'It was quite curious that the Government of the Generalitat at that time charged Costa and Francino with moving that project forward. It was probably because nobody in the government knew much about the media, nor was the time ripe for understanding that the media could become such an essential tool as it later proved to be. It seemed like a group made expressly for a "mission impossible" like launching a new radio station in Catalan.' (Interview with Oleguer Sarsanedas)

The only connection Costa had with Jordi Pujol's circle was when he directed Radio Reus in the 1970s and Carles Sentís (a journalist who advised Pujol's government on the media) directed Radio Barcelona for a brief time, both broadcasters from Cadena SER in Catalonia. All of this was joined by the fact that when he was the director of Radio Barcelona, Carles Sentís had hired Alfons Quintà to host the programme *Dietari*, where he held social and political interviews. Shortly thereafter, Costa and Quintà both ended up becoming the directors of the Catalan government's projects to make the radio and the TV, respectively. In fact, they were hired the same day: on 1 September 1982.

3.2 The original project (1982-1983)

In late 1982, Jordi Costa and Josep Maria Francino –as he explained for this study– were asked to launch the Generalitat's radio station, with no clear instructions on what the new station was supposed to be like from the Directorate General of the Legal System, part of the Department of the Presidency led by Jaume Casajoana. This Directorate General oversaw the launch of the radio and TV projects, awaiting approval from the Parliament of the law creating the CCRTV.

Just like young professionals from Reus and Terrassa with few ties to radio in Barcelona were sought to start the Generalitat's radio station, they did not want radio announcers with long-standing careers for the day-to-day operation of the project. In fact, they were seeking the opposite. The few guidelines they were given, according to Josep Maria Francino, included that they were supposed to hire young people who could bring fresh new voices and perspectives to the radio station

being created. In fact, Costa and Francino even questioned the fact that Catalonia's public station could not look like a radio-school, as the Government was hinting. They both had the idea of making a great public radio service, comparable to the European corporations, using an innovative approach that would also be mirrored in formulas like Radio 3 and Radio Juventud, according to the testimonies collected for this study. Shortly after taking the post, Jordi Costa outlined his initial idea for the new radio station in an appearance in the Parliament (Parliament of Catalonia, 1982). The main features were:

3.2.1 In Frequency Modulation (FM)

Given the impossibility of securing a mediumwave broadcasting license because it was saturated, the new broadcaster would air on FM. In fact, in 1982, when the Directorate General of Media –at that time affiliated with the Department of Culture– draw up an initial project to create the radio and TV stations (Directorate General of Media, 1982), it stated that this frequency would be used. The sound quality was higher on FM, but a larger broadcasting network was needed because the propagation was lower. Another disadvantage was that the majority of the audience was listening to mediumwave. However, the expectation was that the shift to FM was already underway, and Costa took it on as a challenge.

'Airing on FM is a clear disadvantage for a radio station that aims to cover the services usually covered by mediumwave stations. Still, the advent of private and municipal radio stations working on FM with more interests than only musical programming has managed to break listeners' habits.' (Delclòs, 1983, May 18)

In fact, the other Catalan-language broadcaster –Ràdio 4– was already airing on FM, and new private radio stations on FM were also expected to crop up.

3.2.2 Two stations with different programming

This idea was also contained in the first study drawn up by the Generalitat's Directorate General of Media. It spoke about a first station that should take the programming of Ràdio 4 as its model, and a second station more geared at culture and education. The idea that Jordi Costa ultimately outlined to the Parliament in October of 1982 was similar: a first station with conventional programming and a second one with music, similar to what he had done at Ràdio Reus. 'One of the two stations will try to attract a broad, diverse audience, with a structure similar to what the mediumwave broadcasters have today. The other one will be more specialised and mainly air music to attract the young people's attention' (Parliament of Catalonia, 1982).

3.2.3 A broad presence throughout Catalonia

The Generalitat's radio station was envisioned as having a broad presence throughout Catalonia. The initial Directorate

General of Media project proposed that the first station air 80% of the same programming for all of Catalonia and 20% of local programming for the main provincial and/or county capitals. Specifically, it planned on having production centres in Barcelona, Olot, Girona, Tarragona, Lleida, Tortosa, Manresa, Vic, La Seu d'Urgell and Vielha.

When Costa and Francino designed the network of broadcast centres, they revived the idea of regional decentralisation: 'Broadcasting studios will be installed in some Catalan capitals and other towns that will allow us to make programmes with local audiences, and allow those centres to participate in the overall programming. From the beginning it should be clear that this is not a Barcelona radio station' (Delclòs, 1983, May 18). However, this decentralising project never materialised, and the only broadcasting centres that were actually launched were in Girona, Tarragona and Lleida, and much later in Vielha.

3.2.4 Piggybacking on the RTVE network

Jordi Costa wanted the two FM stations to be aired via the Radiotelevisión Española repeaters, following the proposals in the study by the Directorate General of Media. In Parliament, Jaume Casajoana announced that in order to start broadcasting quickly and without excessive expenditures, he would seek an agreement with RTVE to use its broadcasting centres. Even though Casajoana and Costa mentioned that, no document has been found, nor did the newspapers report on contact between the CCRTV and RTVE to make this happen. Instead, the launch of the radio and especially of the TV station unleashed a campaign against the Catalan project from the Spanish public radio and TV organisation (Guimerà, 2014; Gutiérrez, 2021).

3.2.5 A radio 'with no stars' and 'with no political clientelism'

The director of the station, Jordi Costa, had two very clear ideas of what the new broadcaster would be like. First, it would avoid programmes hosted by major radio stars, a concept that he called radio 'with no stars'. «There will be no star programmes nor star hosts; we're going to avoid "vedettisms"» (Delclòs, 1983, May 18). It should be noted that hiring well-known professionals would have also entailed salaries that the station did not have at that time. Furthermore, famous radio hosts would have had to overcome the resistance to leaving a successful station to work in a project that nobody knew about.

The second concept that Jordi Costa had in mind was that the broadcaster would seek 'professionalism beyond any political clientelism' (Delclòs, 1983, May 18). As he said, his goal was to battle any interference from the powers-that-be over the Government of Catalonia's radio project. In fact, when asked in *Avui* newspaper why Catalunya Ràdio was being created, the first director said that it was with the idea that Catalonia 'as a people and as a nation' could have their own media under the principle of independence from any 'political sway' (Riera & Lloveras, 1983, July 5).

3.3 Stumbling blocks and priorities of the political powers-that-be (1983-1984)

The Government of Catalonia's radio and TV projects were launched simultaneously, but they immediately embarked upon different paths. Back when planning the project, the company CAST was hired to develop the construction and engineering of the new TV station. However, the radio had no such planning. Neither the testimonies collected, nor the documents located nor the news in the press report on any such initiative, and we can conclude that the launch of Catalunya Ràdio was somewhat ad-hoc. These are the three main issues that were resolved as they went:

3.3.1 A radio station without frequencies

One of the first signs that the Directorate General of the Legal Regime had no clear plan about how to launch the radio station was when Costa and Francino mentioned that they had not planned on what FM frequencies it would broadcast. Frequencies could not officially be requested from the Spanish Government until the CCRTV was established, and that was still a few months away. And so, the broadcast frequencies were improvised. Josep Maria Francino and the engineer Fernando Pardo, who later set up a Galician radio-TV station, travelled around different places in Catalonia –Collsuspina, Rocacorba, Alpícat, Tibidabo and Sant Jeroni– looking for free frequencies on the dial that would not interfere with the other stations. The antenna in Alpícat in the Lleida region was never installed, and the solution was negotiated with the town hall of Miralcamp, where there was a somewhat elevated water tower where a repeater could be installed in exchange for setting up a municipal station. As Josep Maria Francino recalls, 'that was not legal, it was simply unregulated'.

3.3.2 Makeshift studios

On 28 April 1983, the Government of Catalonia purchased the ground floor of the building that was supposed to house the headquarters of Catalunya Ràdio at 614 Avinguda Diagonal in Barcelona from the publicist Víctor Sagi, whose company had gone bankrupt. However, those ground floor premises were not set up for the installation of a radio station –as the interviewees for this research recalled– such that the first studios were set up in offices that were not soundproofed and did not have any separation between the technical area and the studio. This is why –according to the testimonies gathered– recordings were prioritised over live broadcasts in the first months. The station's employees called their headquarters 'Beirut' (Sarsanedas, 1993) because of the makeshift facilities that were gradually improved on the fly, ironically reminiscent of the civil war in the capital of Lebanon. Construction to refurbish the building did not begin until late 1983, when the broadcaster had already been on the air for six months. First the construction project had to be drawn up, and the work continued until well into 1984, a period when the station's entire team had to be moved to a nearby building, which was not set up for a radio station either.

3.3.3 A project without an economic plan

Another point showing the ad-hoc way Catalunya Ràdio was launched is its lack of an economic plan, as the interviewees confirmed for this study. The first reason for this was that the company that was supposed to give the economic activity legal coverage was not created with a public deed before a notary until 7 October 1983, five months after the first broadcast. Without a legal personality, Catalunya Ràdio could not access the budgetary allocations that the Parliament was beginning to approve, nor could it hire staff, procure goods or take out debt.

In fact, the technical equipment needed for the first broadcasts (sound tables, microphones, radio links, etc.) were often acquired through Jordi Costa and Josep Maria Francino's friendship –since their time at SER– with the supply company, as Francino recalled for this research. The company ITAME, run by Jesús Pardeiro, agreed to advance all the supplies.

In that context, the interviewees for this study recall that they did not earn a salary for four months. Many of them could not work without a salary and had to leave their jobs until the funding came in. They also mention that the director general of the Legal System, Jaume Casajoana, paid for the installation of the antenna on Montserrat mountain in the summer of 1983 out of his own pocket.

The Sindicatura de Comptes (Audit Office), in its inspection report of Catalunya Ràdio in financial year 1983 to 1984 (Sindicatura de Comptes de Catalunya, 1987) reports that it took 233 days for the invoices to be paid the first year.

3.4 The radio crisis: Political powers prioritise TV

All of these circumstances led to the postponement of the definitive launch of Catalunya Ràdio, which had been announced before the summer for 5 September 1983. Regular programming did not begin that day, but a young economist, Carles Vilarrubí, with close connections to president Pujol, had just joined the station as the 'secretary-general', as he reported for this study. His goal was to officially set up the company and get its finances in order. Vilarrubí's more political profile clashed with Jordi Costa, a radio announcer with few ties to the government, according to Francino's story and other testimonies gathered.

'Jordi Costa was a person with a sweeping vision of what a radio station should be. His career had taken off at Cadena SER, and this is why he was recruited for the Government of Catalonia's radio project. But afterwards they realised that he was too independent for what the politicians wanted.' (Interview with Cristina Ferrer)

In the midst of this economic hardship and internal clashes, on 21 September 1983 Jordi Costa appeared for the first time before the Board of Directors of the CCRTV, and the meeting did not go well. There are no verbatim quotes in the minutes of that meeting, but it does say that the board members ordered different reports on 'the frequencies, advertising, programming philosophy, Ràdio Associació and Radio Cadena, launch calendar, staff and hires and presence of significant political

and social groups' (Minutes no. 10 of the Board of Directors of CCRTV). The fact that the Board would order a report on the launch calendar is significant, because Jordi Costa could not provide a specific date. Likewise, issues like frequencies and the staff were still pending. The board members had more doubts than certainties about the launch of the new station.

One week after this appearance, Jordi Costa resigned as director and the press revealed some of the arguments in the meeting on 21 September. The 29 September 1983 issue of newspaper *El Noticiero Universal* mentions the radio project's subordination to the TV. One article (Espada, 1983, September 29) talks about the 'profound discontent' that the 'subordination [to TV3] in means, materials, financing and public image' prompted in the promoters of the radio station. The text mentions 'surprise' and 'dismay' over Costa's decision and claimed that 'the people in charge of Catalunya Ràdio [...] charged that the radio budget had been postponed compared to TV3 and condemned the fact that 'the execution of the technical project of the [radio] studios (with their state-of-the-art technology and conception) had been delayed due to the budget injection given to Televisió de Catalunya for its experimental broadcast on 10 September of this year'.

A few days later, an article in the weekly *El Món* (Badia, 1983, October 7) directly accused the TV3 director, Alfons Quintà, of slowing down the development of the radio project in favour of the TV through his influence over Pere Cuxart, the director general of CCRTV: 'Pere Cuxart was first the director general of the public TV corporation, a job under the orders of the TV director, Alfons Quintà, and he was later appointed director general of the Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió. The dependency between Cuxart and Quintà, with the latter holding sway over the former, led to the belief that the directorate general prioritised the launch of TV3, while the full normalisation of the radio broadcaster was delayed to the extent possible.'

Therefore, the main reason why Jordi Costa resigned, according to the available evidence, was that money was not coming in and the CCRTV –and president Pujol's circle– was prioritising resources for TV3 and stalling the executives of Catalunya Ràdio.

'Getting started required a colossal effort. People had been working for three or four months and nobody had a contract. We had no money, and none was coming in. And we kept bugging them. Jordi Costa resigned because he could not deal with Lluís Prenafeta [secretary-general of the Presidency of the Government of Catalonia] anymore, who kept stalling him by saying "don't worry, don't worry".' (Interview with Josep Maria Francino)

The government's sights were set on the new TV station, which was more famous than the radio even before it launched, if only for breaking RTVE's monopoly.

'The TV was the "fetish", and nobody was thinking much about the radio. The radio had an issue, which

was that there was kind of already radio in Catalan. There was Ràdio 4, which had launched in 1976, but there were also many regional radio stations that aired in Catalan.' (Interview with Jordi Pujol)

With Jordi Costa's resignation, his number two, Josep Maria Francino, was appointed station director. Two weeks later, on 24 October 1983, the regular programming that he had Costa had designed finally began to air regularly. It was what they had called the 'modular formula', which combined news programmes with thematic and music programmes. The modular formula stood out for its originality and innovation, with the goals of both retaining FM listeners –who were used to listening to music– and attracting people who until then had listened to talk radio. The goal was to encourage a change of habits and accelerate listeners' shift to FM, which was already underway.

'Jordi Costa was a visionary who had extraordinarily clear ideas. He invented a kind of programming that rotated every half-hour from scratch. It was very innovative. He was a dynamic person who had seen other radio models, as if he had studied them, and had experience setting up other stations, and all of that could be clearly seen.' (Interview with Àngels Bronsoms)

Josep Maria Francino guided the radio project between late 1983 and early 1984 while trying to resolve the major unresolved issues, especially construction to set up the Catalunya Ràdio headquarters. The pressure was so strong that Francino fell ill in the spring of 1984 and left the directorship vacant.

3.5 Shift in direction: From innovative radio to traditional radio (1984-1985)

The secretary-general, Carles Vilarrubí, was put in charge of Catalunya Ràdio while it was between directors. His vision of what that radio station should be like was radically different to the vision Costa and Francino had had. According to Vilarrubí, with the modular formula the station 'did not have a defined competitive direction, it did not have a story' (interview with Carles Vilarrubí for the Catalunya Ràdio programme *Dies de ràdio*: <https://bit.ly/3ylyYwZ>) and a change was needed.

These changes came after the Parliament elections on 29 April 1984, when Jordi Pujol retained the presidency of the Government of Catalonia with an absolute majority, which gave his government a new impetus and led to changes in the CCRTV leadership to ensure political control over it. Thus, on 25 June 1984, Joan Granados, who had close ties with president Pujol's circle, became the general director and confirmed Carles Vilarrubí as his right-hand man at the radio. He was never appointed station director, but they both began to work closely together and agreed that the radio needed a reformulation. A few weeks later, the newspaper *Avui* reported that Catalunya Ràdio's 'modular programming' had 'underperformed'. 'This

programming may be very interesting on paper, but given the competition from other broadcasters in Catalan, it's not very convincing because their programming is more traditional' (Riera & Lloveras, 1984, July 28).

Carles Vilarrubí himself says that the leadership of the CCRTV had suggested the name of Josep Cuní, an emerging professional at Cadena SER at the time, to spearhead the change. Vilarrubí contacted him and Cuní agreed to take on the challenge of going to a station that audiences did not yet know about. Cuní's hire was announced at the first meeting of the CCRTV's new Board of Directors –which had been changed with the new legislature– on 25 July 1984, and he joined the station on 3 September 1984 with the title of head of Programming. The 27 July 1984 issue of the newspaper *Avui* reported that he was a 'well-known radio man' who had led 'highly successful' programmes at Radio Barcelona, and it noted the idea of launching a 'new era' with its sights set on 'commercially competitive programming'.

'Between the alternative approach and the existing programming, I find a kind of amateurism at Catalunya Ràdio which I had not experienced at Ràdio Barcelona. In fact, when I saw how Catalunya Ràdio began, I predicted that it didn't have a bright future and would be hard-pressed to find an audience. And I wasn't the only one saying it; so was everyone else in commercial radio.' (Interview with Josep Cuní)

The question of the vacant director position at the station dragged on, and it was not until 17 October 1984 that the Board of Directors of CCRTV was notified about the appointment of Agustí Farré as the director of Catalunya Ràdio. Farré already appeared before the Board, and –according to the minutes consulted for this research– he highlighted the 'outstanding technical means and professional experience' he had found at the station, as well as the 'great professionals that have recently been hired', in reference to Cuní. However, Carles Vilarrubí held onto an important share of power and was appointed deputy director to finish off the changes that had been underway for months.

The hires for the new programming continued with the name of the radio announcer Adelina Castillejo, which the press published on 1 November 1984. With a long-standing career on radio and coming directly from Radio Barcelona, Castillejo was put in charge of the afternoon magazine, while the morning magazine would be hosted by none other than Josep Cuní. On 21 November 1984, the CCRTV Board of Directors unanimously approved the programming proposal of Catalunya Ràdio for the first half of 1985. Catalunya Ràdio chose a typical mediumwave programming with large content programmes to 'compete not only with other Catalan stations but also the major Spanish stations, like Radio Nacional and Cadena Ser' (Riera & Lloveras, 1984, 24 November). Catalunya Ràdio's new programming, which was definitively launched on 7 January 1985 with the addition of the morning magazine

Sense cadenes presented by Josep Cuní, was radically different to what had been done in 1983.

The new proposal was successful, and the audience grew exponentially. According to the General Media Study (EGM) found in the CCMA's archives, between October/November 1984 –with the modular formula– and October/November 1985, the number of listeners rose 154%, going from 74,000 to 188,000. Catalunya Ràdio's leadership on FM was achieved in October/November 1987 with 264,000 listeners, outstripping other FM competitors like Radio Barcelona and Antena 3.

4. Conclusions

The fact that Catalunya Ràdio achieved audience leadership in 1987 as a broadcaster airing wholly in Catalan and on FM entailed a paradigm shift on the burgeoning Catalan radio scene and a huge step forward in reviving the language. In fact, it was a milestone for which different social and professional organisations had fought since the late Franco regime, and which had taken its first steps with Ràdio 4. There was no longer any need to ponder what a radio station in Catalan would be like, nor any need to collect signatures to make it happen or question whether listeners or advertisers would understand it. Simply put, radio in Catalan had carved a niche for itself on the dial and become the radio consumed by the most listeners. It had been a winning bet.

The political powers had taken up the demands to make a radio station in Catalan with the restoration of democracy, and they had done so viewing the creation of Catalonia's own media as yet another piece in the overarching construction that aimed to bring substance and solidity to the concept of the 'Catalan nation' (Guimerà, 2014). The Government of Catalonia threw itself headlong into the venture of having its own radio and TV stations, like the other European states' public corporations, from France to Germany and from the United Kingdom to Italy, just to cite a few.

And that is the story of how just as Jordi Pujol laid the cornerstone in the construction of the Catalan educational model and regional police, he also created the Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió, a huge step towards a Catalan media space that all the political parties in the Parliament enthusiastically applauded and approved almost unanimously.

Nonetheless, the radio had to overcome a clear favouritism that the Government of Catalonia –and consequently the CCRTV itself– had towards the TV project in the early years of operation. That was the *fetish* –in Jordi Pujol's words– while the radio was considered a second-class medium. This meant that the energy was poured into the TV station, which sought to break RTVE's monopoly and become the centre of gravity of the new Catalan media space. The TV consumed most of the resources, while the radio was barely scraping by. And the lack of planning did the rest. This prioritisation of TV meant that the first director of Catalunya Ràdio, Jordi Costa, left his

job because he was tired of the project he was leading always being pushed to the background. The vehement, authoritarian personality of the TV3 director, Alfons Quintà, further magnified this sense of grievance (Amat, 2020).

The instability and crises that marked the start of Catalunya Ràdio delayed the launch of the station's regular programming by almost two months. Once it was launched, the modular formula stood out for its originality and innovation, with the goals of both retaining FM listeners –who were used to listening to music– and attracting people who until then had listened to talk radio. The goal was to encourage a change of habits and accelerate listeners' shift to FM, which was already underway.

That first formula did not work in terms of fame and audience. And Costa's resignation and Francino's leave of absence for illness, that is, the loss of its two driving forces, meant that six months after it was launched, that entire approach was reformulated. In a radio broadcasting project, six months is not nearly enough time to allow new programming to take hold, but there was no going back once the shift in direction began. And this is how the idea of the modular formula was abandoned and conventional radio was chosen, with two large content programmes in the morning and afternoon.

However, we can conclude that the station's early years were not wasted time. First of all, the new radio, with its focus on innovation and young voices, managed to carve a niche for itself on the dial with the image of modern radio that could be an alternative to the dominant broadcasters in 1983. In the majority of interviews for this research, it is clear that the station's first human team had the talent and enthusiasm needed to launch a project whose only precedent was Ràdio 4. Many recall it as one of their best professional experiences, working with the conviction that the radio station that was being born was their country's station.

Likewise, the design of the radio links –set up broadly across Catalonia– and the structure of studios, central control and newsrooms which the station's Barcelona headquarters was given were the keys to Catalunya Ràdio's success when the station shifted directions after the autumn of 1984. Without the determination of the first management team to reach all of Catalonia and the drive to have an outstanding human team and equipment, the station's subsequent consolidation would not have been possible. The founding team of Costa and Francino even had an accurate view of the power that the new radio station should have; in fact, until quite recently, Catalunya Ràdio has survived in part from the legacy of the first infrastructure design by the original directors. They also contributed their own grain of sand –which has never been acknowledged– to the subsequent success of Catalunya Ràdio.

A success that deserves further research in the future. Indeed, Catalunya Ràdio established a radio model in Catalonia that served as a lesson to others, a model that other private stations replicated, some with professionals actually trained at the public radio station, that have gone on to be extremely successful (Espinosa, 2021). Therefore, the features of this model, which

has led radio in Catalan to be consumed at levels never before seen until now, is worth studying, along with the process of reviving radio in Catalan, which had disappeared from the dial from the arrival of the Franco regime in 1939 until the advent of Ràdio 4 (1976) and Catalunya Ràdio (1983). These are stories that have yet to be written.

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- Carles Vilarrubí, secretary-general of Catalunya Ràdio (1983)
- Cristina Ferrer, first team of News (1983-1984)
- Emili Capella, first team of technicians (1983-1984)
- Enric Frigola, radio announcer
- Joaquim Maria Puyal, journalist and media personality
- Joan Anton Ramoneda, first team of announcers (1983-1984)
- Josep Maria Francino, director of Catalunya Ràdio (1983-1984)
- Josep Maria Martí, radio announcer and college professor
- Joan Granados, Director General of CCRTV (1984-1995)
- Jordi Daroca, head of News at Catalunya Ràdio (1984-1986)
- Jordi Jordà, radio announcer
- Jordi Lucea, first team of News (1983-1984)
- Jordi Pujol, president of the Generalitat (1980-2003)
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- Lluís de Carreras, Secretary-General of the Catalan Ministry of Culture (1980-1984)
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- Miquel Calçada, first team of announcers (1983-1984)
- Oleguer Sarsanedas, first team of announcers (1983-1984)
- Santi Carreras, first team of Sports (1983-1984)