

Introduction

We have already reached issue 50 of *Quaderns del CAC*. This edition dedicates its monographic section to radio to commemorate its centenary in Catalonia. But despite this historical milestone, the aim is not to talk exclusively about the past but also –and above all– to collect theoretical and empirical works that help to understand the present and look resolutely to the future.

To talk about radio is to talk about a medium that has been able to adapt to multiple changes: political, legislative, social, economic, technological, etc. The wide thematic range of the articles collected here clearly proves this.

We open the monograph, precisely, looking ahead, with the article “Radio in 2030: A study on the crucial variables in the future of the sector in Catalonia”, by **Francesc Robert-Agell** and **Santiago Justel-Vázquez** (Universitat Internacional de Catalunya). With a prospective look, following an empirical work based on surveys of key players in the sector and having the media economy as a theoretical basis, this research identifies the critical aspects of the most immediate future of the medium. Without falling into pessimism, the authors talk about the opportunities and threats of digital transformation and warn of the tendency towards forming conglomerates, the result of the concentration of audience and advertising into certain groups and chains, and the growing weight of legislative and regulatory intervention.

In this look towards the future it is essential to reflect on the role of women and this monograph would have been incomplete without this contribution. **Silvia Espinosa Mirabet**, **Monica Puntí Brun** and **Jordi Serra Simón** (Universitat de Girona), in the article “Women on the radio 100 years on”, present a study on the evolution of the presence of women as professionals and executives on Catalan generalist radio. The research highlights very positive trends and that the situation has improved, but there are still milestones to be reached. For example, prime time programming is in male hands with one exception: Radio 4 with Gemma Nierga and her *Cafè d’idees*, a programme broadcast simultaneously on TVE Catalunya.

From a historical point of view, this monograph includes two highly significant contributions, especially because of their potential to help us understand the present. First, the journalist with a PhD in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona **Marc Vidal i Juanola** analyses the origins and evolution of the Catalunya Ràdio project. In “Catalunya Ràdio: Genesis, crisis and reorientation of the Generalitat’s first radio project (1982-1984)”, Vidal i Juanola talks about it very aptly in terms of an adventure. His conclusion is clear: this station established a successful model, but the road was tough. Secondly, **José Ignacio Wert-Moreno** (PhD in Social Communication from Universidad San Pablo-CEU) and **José María Legorburu Hortelano** (Universidad de San Pablo-CEU) published the text “Presence and influence of Grupo Godó on Spanish national radio (1982-2022)”. Their study defines two stages with disparate trends. The first (1982-1994), as a major shareholder in Antena 3 Radio, and the second (1994-2022), as a minority partner in the services company Unión Radio, later called PRISA Radio. The creation of Unión Radio meant the dismantling of Antena 3 Radio.

“Comparative analysis of music content legislation on radio and digital platforms: what is the future for quotas in the new scenario?”, by **Carlos Llorens Maluquer** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), looks at the legislative-regulatory field. Based on a documentary and comparative analysis of several countries (France, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia), where the regulation of platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music is reviewed, ideas are reflected and noted to avoid leaving excessive power in the hands of these new intermediaries.

This monograph also deals with alternative and community communication with three specific proposals. The article “Half a century of independent radio stations in Catalonia. The sustainability of the sector in the present day”, by **Núria Reguero Jiménez** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and **Eloi Camps Durban** (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), examines the current situation of Catalonia’s independent radio stations. The work concludes that the social dimension is basic for the sustainability of a sector characterised by fragility. From the forty existing radio stations in the country at the end of the 1980s, it has fallen to the current nine. **Raul Anthony Olmedo Neri** (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) reviews the situation of community radio stations in Latin America. The text, “Ten theses to (re)think Latin American community radio stations in the 21st century”, concludes that, in an adverse socio-political context, these initiatives represent counter-hegemonic projects that contribute to democratising the information. And, finally, **Nelia Del Bianco** (Universidade de Brasília), **Elton Bruno Pinheiro** (Universidade de Brasília) and **Debora Cristina Lopez** (Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto) focus their attention on university radio stations in Brazil. These types of broadcasters are

characterised by a strong social commitment: they are not only spaces for dissemination and citizen information but also contribute to the training of future professionals. The article, “Positioning of Brazilian university radio stations towards the public: tensions between the public, institutional and educational dimensions”, talks about the challenges this commitment entails, and the challenge of integrating university stations into the public sphere and the country’s institutional mechanisms.

Finally, a special issue devoted to the world of radio published in 2024 could not fail to discuss podcasts, this new way of creating and consuming radio narratives. The article by **Maria Fitó-Carreras**, **Montserrat Vidal-Mestre** and **Alfonso Freire-Sánchez** (Universitat Internacional de Catalunya and Universitat Abat Oliba CEU), “The perception of linear radio among communication students from Generation Z”, analyses the penetration of the medium among people who are studying communication at university. The sample consulted sees radio as a medium removed from their interests but given their following of podcasts, everything points to this problem being reversible. “The evolution of the dramatic genre on RNE. From radio drama to binaural sound fiction in the age of podcasting”, by **Paloma López-Villafranca** (Universidad de Málaga), presents the study of five representative cases from different stages at the public broadcaster. The results mean that audio fiction is a booming genre, thanks in great measure to the potential of the podcast, despite the need for more investment in human and financial resources. And, finally, we have the study by Ángela **Ruiz Martínez** (Universidad de Sevilla). “The narrative non-fiction podcast in Spain and its evolution over time”, analyses the characteristics and evolution of a format that could be considered the evolution of radio reports. The piece concludes that the narrative of podcasts is gaining dynamism over time.

The miscellaneous section of Issue 50 of *Quaderns del CAC* includes three articles, covering various topics and highly particular approaches. The PhD student at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona **Roger Sabà Riera** shares the results of an investigation into the perception that people with disabilities have of their representation in the media. The article, entitled “Ableism in the media in Catalonia: the perception of disabled adults”, points out that it is necessary to increase the presence of these people, with all their diversity, in the media, as well as change current ableist media representations, which tend to be limited to the pity-suffering or superhero-overcoming adversity dichotomy. “The age of blob communication: trapped within the algorithmic mesh”, by **Cristina Garde Cano** (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), is a work of an eminently theoretical and highly personal nature. The author proposes a new concept, *blob communication*, to give a name to the new hegemonic form of communication, supported by artificial intelligence algorithms. The text aims to create new ways of imagining and narrating human communities. Ultimately, the independent researcher **Ariadna Moreno Pellejero** takes a tour of revealing works by the director Chantal Akerman in “The embodiment of postmemory: encounters with a family’s past in the films of Chantal Akerman”. Moreno approaches this director’s work from a feminist perspective and is particularly interested in the spectral experience.

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