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# QUADERNS DEL CAC

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**Film, audiovisual fiction  
and linguistic diversity**



Consell  
de l'Audiovisual  
de Catalunya

2021

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 The section "Articles" consists of original and unpublished articles accepted after their submission to a double-blind peer review process, after an initial assessment of quality by the Editorial board.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

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

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

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## Introduction

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We are pleased to present issue 47 of *Quaderns del CAC*, devoted to the theme of **Cinema, audiovisual fiction and linguistic diversity**. We proposed this theme driven by the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that citizens consume a large amount of fiction, both films and TV series. We have also noted changes in the way people access these audiovisual products. This reality has trained the spotlight on the presence (or absence) of audiovisual works in minority languages in people's media diets.

This focus has amplified the voices of alarm regarding the health of the audiovisual industry in the languages of stateless nations and small nations. A set of problems has been identified which should be remedied in order to guarantee the survival of this industry and, by extension, the diversity of contents. The future of the audiovisual production sector in minority languages entails ensuring a significant supply of films and TV series for the people who speak these languages and achieving a significant level of circulation that projects the diversity of cultures.

The featured article is by this issue's guest author, **Margarita Ledo Andión**, professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, where she directs the Audiovisual Studies research group and has conducted different international research projects on the theme showcased in this issue. In addition to her significant internationally recognised scholarly contributions, she also has an extensive filmography in Galician, and her latest film, *Nación* (2020), has won different awards. Her article "Films with denomination of origin" draws from her twofold status as a researcher and director, which enables her to formalise the experience and thus make proposals that enable the complexity of the phenomenon to be interpreted from the plurality of angles involved, which range from film studies to media policies, from industry to geopolitics, from the rhetoric of diversity to cultural homogenisation, from creation to consumption, and at the core of everything language, the role of the cinemas of small nations, with or without a state of their own, as a vehicle for invigorating languages.

**Marta Pérez Pereiro, Marijo Deogracias Horrillo and María Soliña Barreiro González** address the problem of the visibility of cinema produced in minority languages in the Spanish state. In their article "Flagship films, audiovisual policies and circulation. The cases of *Pa Negre*, *Handia* and *O que arde*", they analyse the contribution of what they call *flagship films*, films projected in their original languages that garner fame by winning prizes at festivals and box-office success, to providing visibility to these cinematographies which usually come upon circulation difficulties and are forced to be dubbed in order to be projected on Spanish screens. The study seeks to identify the factors that contributed to the success of three cases of Catalan, Basque and Galician cinematography.

In their article "Positioning Alternative Voices in Audiovisual Europe: the case of Catalanian, Galician, Basque and Sámi language policies", **Enrique Castelló-Mayo, Pietari Kääpä, Kate Moffat and Antía López-Gómez** address the role of subtitling audiovisual works in non-hegemonic languages as a tool to foster interculturalism. They scrutinise the European regulations and their transpositions in relation to determining the origin of audiovisual works and promoting languages and cultural diversity. An examination of the situation in Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country gives way to an in-depth analysis of a unique case, the Sami, which evinces the multiple contradictions between the regulations' statements of intentions and the practices of markets and states.

**Håkan Casares Berg and Henrique Monteagudo Romero** focus on analysing the impact of the communicative uses brought about by the communication technologies related to audiovisual consumption on languages and identities. They address the issue that arises in communities of minoritised languages who find that communicative practices with these technologies are dominated by the hegemonic languages, while they also point to the possibility of using the capacities of these technologies to create decentralised spaces of communication and horizontal networks where the use of these languages can be encouraged. In their article "Galician Youths and Screens: A Sociolinguistic Approach", they examine the linguistic uses and attitudes of Galician youths in audiovisuals and the information and communication technologies.

**Pablo Romero Fresco** addresses the debate over the linguistic quality of subtitles of audiovisual products for both audiences who do not know the language and those who speak the language with auditory disabilities in his article “Accessibility and Standardisation: the Galician Subtitling Conundrum”. The author provides an international context for the twofold purpose of subtitles as a tool of linguistic standardisation and as a tool of access, and the complexity of reconciling these two purposes when the speech contains language errors. The analysis of a case of a minoritised language in severe danger of erosion, namely Galician, serves to underscore the complexity of the debate.

In the article section, **Cristina Sanchez-Sanchez** analyses the discourses on happiness in the political debate in her article “Happiness where it is not: a comparative study of well-being indexes and the Spanish electoral discourse”. The article presents the results of a content study of the happiness indicators that have become popular in some countries as a tool for measuring social welfare, and the presence of these indicators in the political discourses formulated in the television adverts of the Spanish political parties in the 2021 general election campaign.

**Emili Prado i Pico**  
Director

## Films with denomination of origin

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#### Abstract

*When assessing the films that were candidates for the Best International Feature Film, the unimpeachable system of the Oscars rejected the film chosen by Portugal because most of the dialogue was in English. It had to be quickly replaced, and a gem was chosen: a film spoken in Cape Verdean crioulo, Vitalina Varela (2020) by Pedro Costa, which premiered in cinemas with subtitles in Galician and Catalan. This is the perfect historical irony of the subaltern language rising above the former colonising language while also representing it. After all, languages are not passive bystanders in the geopolitics within which they are embedded.*

#### Keywords

*Film, minoritised languages, diversity, subtitling, public aid.*

#### Resum

*El gens sospitós sistema dels Oscar, quan va valorar les obres candidates a la millor pel·lícula en llengua estrangera, va rebutjar el film seleccionat per Portugal perquè estava parlat majoritàriament en anglès. La seva substitució precipitada va recaure en una joia, en una pel·lícula en crioulo capverdès, Vitalina Varela, 2020, de Pedro Costa, estrenada en sales amb subtítols en gallec i en català. Ironia històrica perfecta de la llengua subalterna passant per damunt de la del —un dia— colonitzador, al mateix temps que la representa. Perquè les llengües tampoc es poden mantenir al marge de la geopolítica en què s'insereixen.*

#### Paraules clau

*Cinema, llengües minoritzades, diversitat, subtitulat, ajuts públics.*

*Vitalina Varela* hovers over this text, as a symptom of both enjoyment and unease, like a masterpiece that enables us to fit together the two sides of a paradoxical reality which stands out uniquely in the relationship among minoritised languages, or as representation, in films and audiovisuals. The entry we suggest runs through the production of different types of works, but it attempts to reach the shadowy zone of the audience, of those of us who want to see works in our own language and by doing so give it existence. The screen—in all its variations—is the site where this encounter goes from idea to projection; it becomes an event. And if we are concerned with the visibility of the films we produce, it is because of their contribution to acting like a new research variable and social operator to redefine the role of film in minoritised languages in the fields of both film studies and communication policies.<sup>1</sup>

From where we are speaking, albeit with specific situations, minoritised languages in film and audiovisuals are those local languages that are co-official with Spanish, those languages of the nations within the Spanish state: Catalan, Euskara (Basque) and Galician. This is why we draw from an article by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1985, p. 35-58), based on a survey—via Russell, Wittgenstein and Derrida; after asserting the equality

of all languages, they note that even though ‘...all languages are created equals, some are made “more equal than others”’. Inscribed within the play of power, languages are caught up in artificial hierarchies rooted in cultural hegemonies’. Or simply, because they have mechanisms that discriminate.

#### Eppur si muove...

Some time ago, Philippe Meers, a professor at the University of Antwerp and a touchstone in Flemish film analysis, warned of the need for new clichés, in addition to other approaches to national cinemas, to avoid a kind of standardisation from limiting both the creative freedom of the auteurs and the inclusive power of languages. He mentioned this yet again in the debate at the closing session of the international symposium ‘As linguas e o cinema’ (Santiago de Compostela, 12-13 December 2019). We were discussing what are called ‘small cinematographies’ or, in a more explicit variation, the cinema of small nations, with or without a state, and their different forms of institutionalisation, yet with language as a distinctive feature. Therefore, we were discussing rights and belonging, from the

filming to the showing, to talk about cinema in the original version, in OV. Not hiding the language. We debated the role of OV as a cog in the gears of diversity; its status as 'tangible and intangible heritage'; the right to see and the need for policies that guarantee access to European works in different languages in permanent spaces —beyond the event circuit; and policies that come with the articulation of public networks of cinemas or the design of assistance programmes for independent cinemas, whose goal encompass films 'with an accent' (Naficy: 2001), which are grouped under the label 'Europa Cinemas'.

We were summoned by the RDI project 'Eu\_Vos. Intangible cultural heritage. For a European programme for subtitling in non-hegemonic languages', a research project that continued and incorporated the results of two previous inquiries and ten years of studies and proposals around cinema 'with a denomination of origin' as a topic of interest for public policies, for the field of the creative industries and for intercultural action, a cinema that goes beyond its role as a 'case' to work towards a new model under construction.

Thus, from small cinematographies in minoritised languages as a place of enunciation, beyond some indicators to identify them proposed by Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie (2007), following qualitative criteria, with the cinema presented by what are called small nations because of their population, geographic size or gross domestic product, we retained the reference to what was once called 'Third Cinema'—with echoes of the seminal text by the Cuban García Escudero, 'Por un cine imperfecto' (For an Imperfect Cinema), of 'Cine Liberación' (Liberation cinema) from Argentina, of Sanjinés and his 'Cine del pueblo' (People's cinema) and of Brazil's 'Cinema Novo' (New Cinema)—which the aforementioned authors conjoin with the cinema of European stateless nations, those nations, they say, which have been subjugated by a dominant nation for such a long time that the power relation turned into a structural issue for both sides. In a previous compilation (Hjort & MacKenzie: 2000), different authors set out to update the definition of 'national cinema' beyond the state apparatus, precisely through the role of cinema in constructing culture, which is not unrelated to what are occasionally called new-new cinemas to distinguish yet connect them to the movements from the 1960s and 1970s.

For this journey, we also include as material the EU's 'Agenda 2020' because it situates us before a pleasant landscape defined by the conjunction between linguistic and audiovisual diversity, just what we set out to observe through cinema as the product which is attributed a substantive role in education—from film literacy programmes to the use of film for learning languages or identities—and especially which is acknowledged to have a transitive role, in the act, not so much as a result of national culture(s) but as an operator so these cultures express themselves, that is, exist. In short, cinema will be a product among other products that creates culture while also being a place that interlinks creativity, economic profitability and social consensus. We are viewing, as a dynamic for imagining

the nation with a purpose similar to other media products, always with echoes of Benedict Anderson (1993) and Martín-Barbero (2014, 15-33), the cinema as a medium yet also as a mediation to leave proof, in the words of the Colombian author, of the long temporality of the cultural in what it means as a permanent contradiction with the increasingly short temporality of the market.

The discursive power of the term *nation*—which is no longer equated with the coercive, conventional state apparatus and has adopted its historical-political meaning as a communal construction, as a social-communicative space—fosters new entries in the classification of films, in addition to stabilising a critical apparatus which we are interested in revisiting.

In terms of the definition of *diversity* as we are applying it in this series of projects between 2009 and 2019, namely 'Cinema, Diversity and Networks', 'Towards the European Digital Space. The role of small cinemas in original version' and 'EU-VOS' encompasses and updates the advice of the Brazilian professor Muniz Sodré when he warned of the need to precisely delineate the term: "Sometimes *diversity* is understood as recognition of the plurality of customs, ways of life and things like that, but to me," he stressed in an interview with *Grupo de Estudos Audiovisuais* of the USC,<sup>2</sup> "it is the occupation of different territories; it is the acknowledgement of one's possession of a place. Diversity is allowing agency; training for action; adopting different communication, economic, financial resources; in short, everything needed to not merely be an object of someone else's gaze". In cinema, for example, it is the capacity for autonomous production, he says.

The cornerstone of this process, the capacity for social intervention with diversity as a reference, is uniquely harnessed through pronouncements and associations, and it can be glimpsed in future programmes that are beginning to bear fruit, as we shall describe below.

### About diversity, distortion and formal declarations

On 17 December 2016, warning that no approved instrument fully recognised or protected language rights in Europe as a whole, civil society organisations like ELEN (European Language Equality Network), UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation) and others signed the 'Protocol to Ensure Language Rights' (henceforth, the Protocol) in Donosti, Euskadi (the Spanish Basque Country), an action that links up with the state of need in which a reflection like this one is situated by establishing ties between language and identity, and language and reality (society), while attempting to relate it to other realities and distinguish the application of which and what type of measures proposed in each context.

With echoes of UNESCO's position (2009, p. 37) and its decision to go beyond considering languages a mere means of communication to instead think of them in plural as the fabric of cultural expressions and the vehicle of identities,

value systems and worldviews, and drawing from the 2003 report 'Language Vitality and Endangerment', which provides the analysis indicators applied by the Protocol, the idea of 'democratic management of diversity' as an asset of 'a fairer and more equality-based Europe', its introduction is based on considerations like the following:

'All languages are the expression of a collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must therefore be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development in all functions. [...] For that reason the signatories of this document think that all language communities have the right to organise and manage their own resources so as to ensure the use of their language in all functions within society, and that they are also entitled to have at their disposal whatever means are necessary to ensure the transmission and continuity of their language.'

However, it would also have to grapple with a political scenario which is also what we detected in an earlier study (Ledo-Andión, López-Gómez & Pérez-Pereiro: 2016, p. 309-331), when we concluded that:

"Between 1996 and 2016 it is possible to discern a certain drift away from the model of a network of interconnected peripheral systems, a model of economic development underwritten by the EU authorities at the beginning of this period, towards a new model of tributaries twenty years later feeding a central European artery of a commercial nature. It is in this variant of the model –and the consequent change of perspective from reconciliation of interests of economic development with interests of sociocultural development to the implementation of a purely economic perspective– that we can find a response to the commercial dysfunctionality (as expressed in EU terms) of the films distributed and exhibited in original version originating in small- and medium-sized countries."

Thus, one of the questions that requires an answer is concealed in the effective sense of what Tristan Mattelart (2013, p. 755-772) calls 'the deconstruction of the notions of national culture and identity which were at the core of the theoretical edifice of the critical political economics of communication' to present them as 'asphyxiators of cultural diversity' by positions which range, according to this author, from the drift of a certain interpretative apparatus from Cultural Studies (CS) to neoliberal think tanks. This which entails a theoretical turn from 'the defence [in the 1970s] of national cultures as the guarantee of cultural diversity', which is precisely where we are situated in the cinema, and role of institutions, to guaranteeing this and countering the utter dominance of the transnational flows which, in short, are captured in the unequal exchange binomial.

Without delving into the dilemmas with regard to certain texts from CS since the 1980s that the text points out, we cannot fail to mention something that is wholly relevant in the sphere of our research and in the sense and urgency of calling

for political measures—ensuring and guaranteeing a subtitling programme—for cinema in non-hegemonic languages like the two dissimilar cases we present here. In line with the Protocol (article 3.2), we believe that the only way to promote linguistic diversity is by facilitating social, political and economic conditions that are favourable to the development of languages.

### A few theoretical notes

With the goal of locating certain contradictions in the latent state pollinating academic thinking, our reference-source on the meaning of the national is the phase that Anderson provides in *Imagined Communities* (1993, p. 25), the critical essay that hovers over the thinking about the construction of the nation in the historical process and in different geopolitical spaces: regardless of the inequality and exploitation that may actually prevail in each case, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal community. And we take up a wish that the Quebecois ethnographer, poet and filmmaker Pierre Perrault made when he said that nations are born from memory, but memory is not lacking in imagination. We thus activate the value of this new fragment for a loving discourse which crosses the experience of cinema in minoritised languages to set our attention on what we call the 'State of the Art', in all its intimacy and essential variations, which we capture in this snapshot anchored in the conclusions of the aforementioned research projects, the indicators of a new discourse which does not exclude the political from the analysis of cinematography or, if you will, institutional responsibility in cultural production, access and consumption.

1. **New notations in the field of thinking** which, with the nation-state as the sole territory of analysis, separates itself from this dominant institutional framework and works its way towards other notions, like stateless nations, to consider it a social-communicative space that, if needed, will use language as the hallmark of a millenary identity. Worth citing in this regard is the work of Schlesinger (2000) and the opening of a logic that contemplates the use of a local language in film and the right to maintain it in all the places where films are exhibited and circulated, a logic which leads us directly to subtitling policies, which have been avoided in European programmes until quite recently.
2. **Changes in scholarly production**, which give rise to classifications like the one by Stephen Crofts (2006, p. 44-58), which is sometimes contested from conservative positions because it includes a section for 'regional or national cinemas whose culture and/or language distance themselves from the nation-states which enclose them', and which points towards a qualitative methodological change by highlighting small nations (with or without a state) in a situation of conflict and summons the (ideological and political) reasons for their denial or concealment.

3. **Stabilisation of a critical apparatus** which, as Philippe Meers comments regarding the book *The Cinema of Small Nations* (2007), a summary of the first two decades since this position was taken, calls for a more nuanced analysis of a series of small national cinematographies. The emergence of what Meers calls 'sub-national', alongside standard adjectives like *international*, *regional* or *global*, is complemented with visions-sources such as those of Higson (1989) and his paper 'The Concept of National Cinema' to Elsaesser (2015), who calls for national cinema to be part of the political-cultural process, and Christie (2013), who points out that cinema can become national 'in the sense of speaking by and for the nation at times of political crisis and liberation'.
4. **The audience as subject** in the assemblage between formation, production, distribution and exhibition. And thus emerges what in the short term has to do with the construction—at home and abroad—of an audience, an aspect that Andrew Higson questions in the aforementioned article. When examining the parameters for national cinema he focuses 'on the activity of national audiences and the conditions under which they make sense of and use the films they watch' and concludes with this question: 'For what is a national cinema if it doesn't have a national audience?'

### Declarations and mediation framework

Obviously, all of the above runs parallel to, if not intertwined with, changes in mediation institutions mentioned above, such as UNESCO, which we choose as a manifestation of the power relations between different interests, which translates into both progress and regression. Thus, Jacques Guyot, a professor at the University of Paris 8 and a contributor to the Grupo de Estudos Audiovisuais (GEA), presents a diachronic interpretation of UNESCO's position in an article published in *Quaderns del CAC* by comparing the content of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention on the Promotion and Protection of Diversity with Cultural Expressions (2005). He cautions about a regression in the latter compared to the text from the dawn of the millennium, in addition to the (self-interested) omission of communication policies or explicit references to the hegemony of certain languages in the media system, including the social media.

'The preamble to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions states that "linguistic diversity is a fundamental element of cultural diversity" and emphasises the vital role of education in promoting the languages of the world. This reminder is surely beneficial and would be even more so if the recommendation in question (which on the whole seems rather laconic, since it is never once repeated in the 100-page document) was on the one hand explicitly defined (what is meant by "linguistic

diversity"?) and, on the other hand, led to concrete measures.'

(Guyot: 2017, p. 29-35)

We shall now focus on the guiding principles and vicissitudes of the consequent measures to be implemented which are contained in certain European documents. After all, in order to become a programme with an official implementation date, significant progress is needed on visibilisation, possibilities of exchange and recognition of the cinematographies which we are spotlighting.

Ever since the Council of Europe member states ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) in Strasbourg in 1992, an array of international, state and local initiatives have all highlighted the structural role played by non-hegemonic languages in the development and preservation of cultural diversity. One example is the aforementioned 2009 UNESCO World Report, which associates plurilingualism and translation with fostering intercultural dialogue, and it calls for the formation of national policies on the functional use of all the languages in a given society. Another example is the Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on protecting and developing historical linguistic minorities under the Lisbon Treaty.

On a practical level, in 2013 the European Parliament added a provision to the Erasmus+ and Creative Europe programmes that includes financial assistance for subtitling as a way of facilitating the accessibility and circulation of European works. In September of that same year, the Parliament approved a Resolution on endangered European languages and linguistic diversity in the European Union. Likewise, in a qualitative turn in the sphere of political responsibilities, this document suggests considering linguistic diversity a fundamental right.

However, in its implementation in certain areas which only complete the process with their circulation and exhibition, like cinematography, this cumulus of position-taking tends to become mere routine, if not mere description. This is attested by the EU itself in the recent 'Conference on Language Technologies and Digital Equality in a Multilingual Europe' (27/09/2018). Sponsored by the Greens and the European Free Alliance, with the Euro MP Ana Miranda from the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG) as one of the organisers, the participants on the digital equality panel criticised the lack of a regulatory framework and specifically the non-binding nature of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages for the member states. In this sense, the constant calls for attention directed to Spain—and the regional government (Xunta) of Galicia—were outlined in the reports on noncompliance with the commitments stemming from this charter written by the Council of Europe expert committees.

### A bedevilled decade of regression

Convinced that the interstices of the official structure always offer a more open playing field, to provide an overview of the issue we will look back at an initiative—we believe it is the only

one—that enlisted the support of a president of the government, Rodríguez Zapatero. We shall do so via the press:

‘...yesterday, Wednesday, was a historic day in the Senate. After two intense hours of debate, the plenary of the upper chamber definitively approved the expansion of the use of the co-official languages with 134 votes in favour, 115 against and no abstentions. Starting 1 January 2011, Catalan, Galician and Basque—and Spanish, of course—may be used when discussion motions in the Parliamentary chamber.

‘The cornerstone was laid on 28 April when PSOE agreed to take the proposal signed by 34 nationalist senators into consideration.’

Juanma Romero, *Público*, 22/07/2010

One year later, the regional chamber approved a motion to promote cultural diversity and guarantee citizens’ right to access film and audiovisual contents in their original version, with an explicit reference underscoring the promotion of measures to develop the range of products available in their original version in the official languages of the autonomous communities, in addition to an emphasis on incorporating these contents into education in order to improve language learning, once again specifically mentioning the official languages of the autonomous communities.

One decade later it is paradoxical—and a paradox cannot be solved; instead, an alternative must be offered, as Walter Benjamin said—that the practical indicators turned into a dead letter of the declarations of this—shall we say touching—motion.

Once again in a public context, in early April 2021, an array of organisations—A Mesa pola Normalización Lingüística (Galicia), Kontseilua (Basque Country), Ciemen and Plataforma per la Llengua (Catalonia), Escola Valenciana and Acció Cultural del País Valencià (Valencia) and Iniciativa pel Asturianu (Asturias)—managed to get the Congress of Deputies to approve a resolution on the multilingual reality and linguistic equality.

Comings and goings, precarity and urgency... instability is still the term that defines the fond yearnings of language, cinema and audiovisuals, fond yearnings which, to differing degrees, afflict specific language, cultural and communication policies of the governments of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, which are qualitatively very different. They take advantage of the juncture of elections and reappear through social entities, in the case of the Plataforma per la Llengua in 2021, which is calling for the law on cinema approved by the Parliament to be fulfilled, while also looking at other platforms to demand that the government ‘promote the supply of TV series and films dubbed and subtitled in Catalan on online platforms, while condemning the fact that in late 2019 there were only four titles in Catalan on Netflix’.<sup>3</sup>

These fond yearnings are also what can be heard in those thumps behind the door when the Galician writer and translator María Reimóndez and the musician Éric Dopazo, based on the

experience of audiovisual consumption during the pandemic, wondered: ‘why do some people do it in their own language and others don’t? (*por que algunas [persoas] poden facelo na súa lingua e outras non?*)’ They said this in a Change.org campaign for the catalogues of HBO, Netflix, Movistar+, etc. to include contents in the Galician language. In addition to highlighting the passiveness of the Galician regional government, the petition described having these services in Galician as vital and lists reasons like job creation, the international community’s familiarisation with Galician and the contribution to global linguistic diversity.

### The profession and academia are in cahoots

And in this diffuse map, a new temporality emerges which comes to occupy specific spaces through well-defined practices and objectives called to embed the pieces that remain institutionally separated, either purposefully or randomly. We are referring to the appearance of associations like Próxima Cine, established on 15 May 2000, which brings together more than 100 distributors, and Promio, a network of independent cinemas whose founding act dates from 29/09/2020.

In its bylaws—articles 4.1 and 4.2—Próxima Cine states one of its objectives is ‘to strengthen the visibility and trajectory [of independent cinema] nationally and internationally, as well as to defend cinema in the co-official languages of the state in original version subtitled in Spanish’. It also points to the audience as the common task of each and every sector, both creation and exhibition, which are called to collaborate to ‘increase the number of film spectators we defend, with the clear intention of integrating and working together with all parties involved in the film industry to project quality cinema that defends cinema as culture’.

In a similar vein, objectives 1, 2 and 3 in Promio’s approach mention screen quotes for the sake of ‘promoting diversity in films shown’, of ‘facilitating access to a cinema showcase for films that represent our cultural richness and the different realities and languages of the state’ and of promoting original version and/or subtitling. Thus, in the public presentation that this association made as part of the European Film Festival of Seville in November 2020, when comparing the situation with other nearby countries, in which we are included by number of screens, revenues and attendance (France, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy), after underscoring their work in favour of cultural diversity, they drew attention to the lack of any protective measure similar ‘to what our European colleagues enjoy’.

Similarly, just a few days later, Promio took a series of steps in this regard towards the institutions with responsibilities for cinema policies, beginning with the Institute of Cinematography and the Audiovisual Arts (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, ICAA), to which it applied for a specific assistance programme for cinemas. Its arguments describe

the specificity and general state of independent cinemas and the difficulty of the situation because of the pandemic, while recalling its efforts to distribute that other cinema. Finally, it calls for 'recognition by the Administration on par with our European peers' and formulates three specific proposals. The first refers to the timeliness of a call for funding for diversity in programming, which would not only increase the number of cinemas in the Europa Cinemas network, Promio explained, but would be 'designed so that those cinemas that already receive some type of regional aid [Basque Country, Catalonia] can also consider slightly increasing the diversification of the programming in order to reach the European standards, and for those autonomous communities that do not have stimulus measures to be able to design them based on the existing models'. The second proposal cites the urgency of completing the digitalisation of the cinemas, and the third one looks towards the figure of a mediator to 'regulate and settle potential conflicts among the different cinematographic activities'.

Finally, distribution and exhibition, the most forgotten links in the chain, are revealed to be fundamental in everything related to cinema.

In order for the potential audiences for the films in veiled languages, that audience long subjected to modes of spatial distribution and a temporal sequencing based on 'day and date' which define the industry and the constant appearance of new titles that quickly become obsolescent (Verhoeven: 2011); that public which was segregated in hierarchical circles which classified the zones from the centre to the outskirts, from the home countries to the diasporas and peripheries, from the places inhabited towards the spaces of consumption—large shopping centres, captive in circles that did not break with digital distribution—simultaneously—which are accentuated with the selection of works and languages by the hegemonic platforms; in order for that public to also have the opportunity to be one with the same rights as any other audience, but to do so the institutions acting on their behalf need to support both original and subtitled versions as the step from participation in festival circuits to independent cinemas, to places of encounter and a substantive part of the resources and functions that give body to the cinema. Because we cannot forget that the distribution and exhibition are what make the screens light up.

And we've saved for last an extract of the results of the EU-VOS project as a pleasant symptom. The standard portrait of experts who contributed to these results from academic (34.7%), professional (57.1%) and institutional (8.2%) fields is a person aged 48.16 years, most of them male (67.3% versus 32.7% women), 79.3% of whom live in Spain (Catalonia: 14.3%; Basque Country: 24.5%; Galicia: 24.5%, other: 16.3%) and 20.4% in the rest of Europe.

We have extracted the themes with the most consensus—over 90%—in the responses to the 49-item Delphi questionnaire organised around five main thematic areas: 1) Demand for film productions in non-hegemonic languages and programmes to support creation and dissemination; 2) Dubbing, subtitling and

preservation of European linguistic diversity; 3) Subtitling from/to non-hegemonic languages; 4) Other forms of audiovisual content distribution in non-hegemonic languages, and 5) Status of translating and subtitling in non-hegemonic languages in Spain.

Of the opinions worth highlighting as both recommendations and possibilities, we chose five that condense factors examined in this article and solely depend on political will:

1. The promotion and support of film productions in non-hegemonic languages should be addressed at a state, not regional, level.
2. The EU should guarantee funds for the development of programmes to stimulate the subtitling of films from/to non-hegemonic languages.
3. The public financing of subtitling in non-hegemonic languages should include transferring the operating rights in order to foster their distribution/exploitation on multiple platforms (cinemas, festivals, TV stations, etc.).
4. The subtitles financed or created under the aegis of public financing should be done and evaluated according to quality criteria agreed upon by expert committees made up of experts in linguistics and audiovisual translation. And it is worthwhile highlighting the dominant opinion that subtitles should be a public responsibility (departments of cultures in the administration, cinémathèques and libraries, public television, etc.).
5. The distribution of subtitled contents in non-hegemonic languages by OVD platforms might improve the status and/or use of those languages.

## Coda

We began this text with *Vitalina Varela* as a pleasant symptom and yet a kind of ailment afflicting the film-language binomial. Why, we ask? Because in its two sides, as a repressed meaning (symptom), as a problem, or as a pleasure (*sinthom*), as *jouissance*, to maintain the term with what Lacan explains and which I know through the application of the realist Slavoj Žižek (2006) in 'Alfred Hitchcock, or is there a right way to remake a film?', I presage that only by revealing what has been rendered invisible, in our case, cinema in minoritised languages, will we be able to work on the diversity-cinema relation like that Lacanian 'enjoyment that becomes real, like that story which we tell ourselves which, adapting the lyrics and music of Reimóndez and Dopazo, is in our way of speaking, thinking, feeling, deciding.

## Notes

1. With this common thread, in [www.estudiosaudiovisuais.org](http://www.estudiosaudiovisuais.org) you can see our three latest projects: *Cine, diversidad y redes* (Cinema, diversity and networks). (2009-PN119); *eDCINEMA: Hacia el Espacio Digital Europeo. El papel de las cinematografías pequeñas en versión original* (eDCINEMA: Towards the European Digital Space. The role of small cinematographies in original version). (2012- PN071) and *EU-VOS: Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial. Para un programa de subtítulo en lenguas no hegemónicas* (EU-VOS: Intangible cultural heritage. For a European programme for subtitling in non-hegemonic languages). (CSO2016-76014-R).
2. Held on 30 May 2013 at the conference Ibercom: Comunicación, cultura e esferas de poder. Santiago de Compostela, 29-31 May 2013.
3. See Ara. *Cultura*, 21 January 2021, Xavi Serra, "El cinema entra en campanya".

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# Flagship films, audiovisual policies and circulation. The cases of *Pa negre*, *Handia* and *O que arde*

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### Abstract

*Cinema in minority languages in Spain has remained invisible due to the difficulties entailed in circulating small films and the need to dub them in order for their inclusion in the Spanish market, where the subtitled original version (SOV) is a minority option. The presence of what we call flagship films, which have won awards at international festivals and exhibited in their original language, contributes to bringing these films some visibility. In this essay, we analyse three cases —Pa negre (2010), Handia (2017) and O que arde (2019)—and the audiovisual policies that made it possible to produce them and give them visibility in festivals and film listings.*

### Keywords

*Cinema, subtitling, circulation, minority languages, audiovisual policies.*

### Resum

*El cinema en les llengües minoritàries de l'Estat espanyol ha estat invisibilitzat per les dificultats de circulació de films petits i per la necessitat de doblar-los per a la seva inclusió al mercat espanyol, en el qual la versió original subtitulada és una opció minoritària. La presència del que denominem films insígnia, premiats en festivals internacionals i que s'exhibeixen en llengua original, contribueix a una certa visibilitat d'aquestes cinematografies. En aquest assaig analitzem tres casos —Pa negre (2010), Handia (2017) i O que arde (2019)— i les polítiques audiovisuals que van fer possible la seva producció i visibilització en festivals i cartelleres.*

### Paraules clau

*Cinema, subtitulació, circulació, llengües minoritàries, polítiques audiovisuals.*

## 1. Introduction

In the past two decades, the European film industry has undergone profound technological changes (the onset of digital technologies and the arrival of video-on-demand platforms), economic ones (the 2008 crisis and the more recent crisis caused by COVID-19 in 2020) and legislative ones (Audiovisual Media Services Directives of 2010 and 2018). If the new reality of the single European digital market (European Commission 2015) and commercial films' difficulty carving a niche for themselves in international distribution and exhibition is already hard, the situation of films produced in minority languages is much more complex. The lexical transformation of the global to the transnational seems to have laid bare the tension between

the centre—meant as what are called the West European Big Five, namely the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Spain—and the periphery—the home of films from smaller countries, stateless nations or minority language communities. However, the geopolitical debate has been further complicated, and 'hierarchies and differences in scale still matter, perhaps matter even more than in the analogue era' (Szczepanik et al. 2020: 1).

Thus, seldom does a film in a minority language become visible both at home and in Europe, despite the protection that Europe's minority and regional languages have enjoyed since 1992 via the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and the attempts of European audiovisual financing programmes, especially via the MEDIA programme. Distribution

is the 'Achilles heel' of European cinema (European Parliament 2020), which has to vie with Hollywood films and productions by platforms like Netflix and HBO, which not only fail to comply with the European norms on screen quotas established by the European Commission, but also try to get around the audiovisual laws in each territory.

Small cinemas, a name taken from Hjort and Petrie (2007) which we shall use to define these small-scale, low-budget cinematographies often produced in minority languages, encounter difficulties being exhibited not only in international markets but also in domestic ones. In the case of stateless nations that belong to a state that regulates audiovisuals and has a dominant language, the exclusion is even more pronounced. In Spain, despite minor amendments made in subsequent legislations, such as the one contained in the Law on Cinema 55/2007 dated 28 December 2007, which establishes double-screen quotas for versions subtitled in the different official languages, the cinema of co-official and minority languages is difficult to see in the traditional film distribution and exhibition circuits. Tradition, which is firmly rooted in audiovisual dubbing, contributes even more to rendering minority languages invisible, as they disappear in forced dubbings into Spanish with the intention of competing with productions shot in this language on an equal playing field. Nonetheless, there are notable exceptions which we shall call *flagship films* in this essay; they have successful production and distribution models, meaning that they manage to carve out new circuits for small films. We chose the films *Pa negre* (2010), *Handia* (2017) and *O que arde* (2019) as flagship films not only because of their cultural significance but also because they reveal the results of different audiovisual policies and visibilisation strategies which have been decisive in transforming the distribution and exhibition networks and even the audience's relationship with their hypothetical national cinemas.

## 2. Talent, policies and film festivals

The success of small cinemas is subordinated to a series of conditions which encompass not only economic matters but also issues related to the cultural capital of the productions:

Diversity of cinematic expression; secure a more than respectable share of the domestic box-office, win numerous prizes on the international festival circuit; achieve some measures of international distribution, attract funding from various public and private sources at the national, supranational and international levels, and provide a platform for actors, directors, cinematographers and other professionals to pursue filmmaking opportunities both within and outside the national film industry (Hjort 2007: 26).

These conditions for cinema production in small nations highlight the promotion of talent and public funding. The example that Hjort provides is Denmark, which is a country with a cinematographic tradition in place since the first few decades of the twentieth century, yet it boosted its public support for talent in the late 1980s in a mixed system of public funding promoted by the Danish Film Institute (DFI) with the intention of internationalising its production. Thus, the 1989 Law on Cinema eliminated the condition of filming in the Danish language to attract international co-productions while also financing young talent through assistance which required no economic return. Although the financing of talent led to the birth of award-winning movements recognised internationally, like *Dogma95*, with prominent figures like Thomas Wintenbergh and Lars von Trier, Hjort warns that the global focus on filming in English could undermine the cultural capital of the productions, thus limiting the presence of identity features.

Both the different audiovisual policies and laws geared at protecting a national cinema and projecting this cinematographic talent can generate a visible label, essentially that of a national cinema, and entail certain dangers. The complex idea of nation, in the sense of 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983), which shifts cinema into the competitive international market, can also develop a strategy of exotification (Figuerola 2001) when it reduces the different national features to be highlighted to the most unique clichés. Elsaesser (2015) mentioned the same when he speaks about 'self-exotification', when filmmakers themselves incorporate these features, some of them picturesque, to stand out as different in both the international and domestic markets. Small cinemas' difficulties gaining visibility have been demonstrated in previous research (Ledo, López & Pérez 2016; Manias-Muñoz, Barreiro & Rodríguez 2017; Pérez Pereiro, Deogracias Horrillo 2021), which claim that stateless nations encounter even more problems developing 'the label of "national cinema" associated with their territory due to significantly lower budgets and their dependence on state policies' (Ledo, López & Pérez: 2016). Thus, these cinematographies must develop a growth and positioning strategy in their audiovisual policies, as 'there is a direct relationship between institutional investment in promotion and distribution and the impact of this investment at the box office, particularly at home' (Ibid 2016).

Precisely this presence at the national box offices is one of the conditions of success of a national cinema, as Hjort notes, yet at the same time it is one of the singular difficulties facing productions from stateless nations. In this sense, state box-office success contributes positively in the nations that are part of the state. Following Higson's (1989) argument, after questioning the possible existence of a national cinema without a national audience, it is imperative to analyse how the cinema of stateless nations behaves at state box offices and how the policies undertaken by their respective audiovisual institutions contribute to improving their presence in cinemas.

Factors external to the local audiovisual system contribute to forming the label 'national cinema'. The festival system, which has grown and developed into a global circuit, sanctions contemporary cinema, even though its importance in the creation of global success has not been acknowledged until quite recently. Thus, 'the role of festivals has been underestimated: traditional festivals like Cannes and Venice have always been the true source of the new waves of national cinema, as well as the real creators of the auteurs' (Elsaesser 2015: 187). Furthermore, due to large American companies' hegemony over distribution, festivals act as alternative circuits where linguistic and artistic diversity are guaranteed, as 'the multiple levels of cultural intervention (between the international-global and national-regional-local) have opened up room for a broader presence of films from different geographic regions with multiple languages. The international character of film festivals therefore positions these events as privileged spaces for the preservation of linguistic diversity' (López-Gómez, Vallejo, Barreiro & Alencar 2020: 241-242).

### 3. Methodology

This essay is part of the research undertaken within the project 'EUVOS: Intangible Cultural Heritage. For a European Programme for Subtitling in Non-Hegemonic Languages',<sup>1</sup> which analysed the influence of audiovisual translation, preferably subtitling, as one of the factors that facilitates the circulation of cinematographies produced in minority languages. Here, we shall explore three case studies: the production, distribution and exhibition models of the films *Pa negre* (2010), *Handia* (2017) and *O que arde* (2019), paying special attention to the policies that fostered the box-office success of these films in Spain. In addition to analysing data on the financing, distribution and box-office receipts of these films, 31 interviews were conducted with their directors, producers, distributors and cultural managers in order to ensure that these data are interpreted properly.<sup>2</sup> The comparison of the three models not only enables us to assess the transformations in the Spanish audiovisual market in the past decade due to the timing of the production of the three films, but it also enables us to see how the policies developed in each territory have contributed to the development of flagship films which can serve as a model for new productions. It will also enable us to explore the audience's acceptance of the subtitled original versions in other official languages in Spain.

### 4. *Pa Negre*, Catalan rings out at the Goya Awards

*Pa Negre* (Villaronga 2010) won the 2011 Goya award for best film. This was the first time in the then-23 years of the

Goyas that a film in an official language other than Spanish was given this distinction. Even English had appeared years before Catalan, Galician and Basque when *El sueño del mono loco* (Trueba 1989) and *Los Otros* (Amenábar 2001) had been awarded the best Spanish films. The success of *Pa Negre* spotlighted the existence of other cinemas spoken in Spain's other languages. Its recognition was both institutional and audience-driven: it earned 2,680,155 euros; 439,744 spectators in Spain saw it (ICAA 2021); it was the second highest-earning film in Catalonia in 2011 after *Midnight in Paris* (Allen: 2011) (Caballero 2013: 108); it earned 9 Goyas and 13 Gaudí Awards; and it was the film chosen to represent Spain at the Oscars.

*Pa Negre* is the outcome of public policies developed by the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia) to finance fewer films but give them more support in order to yield high-quality films with large audiences. *Pa Negre* seems to have paved the road to visibility for the Basque language and cinematography with *Loreak* (Garaño & Goenaga 2014) and *Handia* (Arregi & Garaño 2017) and for Galician with *O que arde* (Laxe 2019).

#### 4.1 From a comprehensive Law on Cinema to subsidising versions

A very low ratio of spectators per subsidy and the desire to confer visibility on cinema made in the Catalan language prompted a change in the financing of Catalonia's cinematographic production during the tripartite government of the PSC, ERC and ICV-EUiA (2006-2010): a higher budget for fewer films as a strategy to improve their circulation. According to Antoni Lladó, director of the Catalan Institute of the Cultural Industries (Institut Catalán de las Industrias Culturales, ICIC), between 2007 and 2011 this financing was 'very interesting because without harming auteur cinema, it sought to provide special support for films which were meant for more massive circulation'. Aware that cinema requires financing but that this financing has to give 'the product visibility' to make it 'socially profitable (...), the main focus was on quality and dissemination, and it worked out well. There were five or six productions of some importance' (2014). Those productions were *Pa Negre* (Villaronga 2010), *Bruc* (Benmayor 2010), *Herois* (Freixas 2010) and *Eva* (Maíllo 2011). *Pa Negre* is the one with the longest run, the highest receipts and the largest audience.<sup>3</sup>

This financing policy was part of a *Law on Cinema* which sought to reorganise and promote Catalan cinematography in all its phases, from production to exhibition. However, these aims were thwarted by political, legal and economic conflicts. The *Law on Cinema*, approved by the Parliament of Catalonia in 2010, was the first to legitimise its objectives of access to films in an 'own language' of Spain by referring to the preamble of the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity (Official State Gazette [henceforth BOE] 2011 no.191: 69175). Its basic

goals were not only to foster and promote a smaller number of local productions in OVC (original version in Catalan) yet with greater repercussions, but also to improve distribution and exhibition in Catalan; to do so, it proposed creating a network of public-private cinemas which would prioritise showing films produced in Catalonia and Europe and films of artistic and cultural interest produced outside Europe with subtitles in Catalan. It sought to guarantee that 50% of film sessions would be in Catalan within five years (BOE 2011, no. 191: 69183).

The political parties Partido Popular and Ciutadans appealed the *Law on Cinema* to the Constitutional Court,<sup>4</sup> and in 2012 the European Union deemed it 'discriminatory' for European films due to the extra cost of translation which would be needed for 50% of films to be shown in Catalan; the Commission stated that cinema is a product and that the protection of cinema in an 'own language' runs counter to free competition in Europe. The local cinema guild in Catalonia, the *Gremi d'Empresaris de Cinemes de Catalunya*, which has 81% of the screen share, also opposed it with a lockout in February 2010. This conflictive context was magnified by the economic crisis, with its drastic budgetary cut-backs in audiovisual policy—52.64% in 2011 (Barreiro 2015)—and the change from the tripartite to a right-wing government (CiU). The law soon had no operating budget and was plunged into judicial paralysis almost before it could be put into practice.

The Parliament of Catalonia reformed the law in April 2014. It removed the quotas on European films, deleted the timeframes for achieving linguistic balance in the films exhibited and let business owners choose whether or not to access films in Catalan (BOPC 2014: 27).

This new system has been implemented since 2015 with a series of annual calls for subsidies and bilateral agreements issued by the Service to Foster the Use of Catalan (*Servei de Foment de l'Ús del Català*) and geared towards both traditional cinemas and the new digital dissemination portals (VOD, online TV, etc.) (Department of Culture: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). This strategy is complemented with a series of bilateral agreements with Movistar+ and Filmin, which contributed to the founding of FilminCat. Traditional distribution also engaged in these bilateral agreements, such as Cines Texas, and it did not ignore festivals, most notably the Sitges International Film Festival, 60% of whose films were subtitled in Catalan in 2017 (Barreiro & Clares-Gavilán 2020).

A comprehensive law became direct funding for subtitling and dubbing; the constrictions in the free market were accepted; and the principles guiding the political interventions were relaxed. This strategy has proven to be useful in increasing the number of films and audiovisuals seen in the Catalan language. Since the implementation of this funding in 2015, the number of spectators in Catalonia of films subtitled in Catalan rose 500% (from 24,123 in 2014 to 133,346 in 2016 [Idescat 2020]),

but if we look at the films in OVC, we see an unrecoverable decline in spectators. The peak was 2010-2011, when the policies to support fewer films with more money began to bear fruit, the year of *Herois* (2010), *Bruc* (2010), *Eva* (2011), *Pa Negre* (2010) and their re-release after the 2011 Goyas.

The current policy increases the number of films in Catalan on different screens, but not necessarily the cinematographic diversity because the producers choose what is translated, thereby shaping the film supply in Catalan. In this sense, Ramon Castells, the director of the Area of studies of the National Council of Culture and the Arts (Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts, ConCA) suggests focusing efforts on local production if the goal is to foster the diversity of films in Catalonia's 'own language':

'If we want quality products in Catalan, it is more important for there to be local products, to relate the local production of the territory with the 'own language' of the territory, than to make a transposition of the products that reach us and adapt them to our language to make them more accessible' (Castells 2018).

## 4.2 Language, circulation, diversity

*Pa Negre* premiered at the San Sebastián Film Festival in September 2010. In October, it reached cinemas with 70 copies dubbed in Spanish and 30 in the original version in Catalan, 40 of which were shown in Catalonia. Before the end of the year, it had attracted 139,000 spectators and earned 870,000 euros (Corbella 2017). Its 14 Goya nominations prompted a second round of distribution in cinemas, when it could just be seen in Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and Balears through 36 dubbed copies and 4 in OVC. This number expanded to 100 after it earned the 9 Goyas, including best film, best director and best adapted screenplay. The awards acted as an essential form of promotion which virtually fuelled the re-release of a film that was nonetheless doing well: according to its producer, Isona Passola, speaking in February 2011, 'in all 17 weeks we have never stopped being ranked among the top 20 highest-earning films per copy' (González: 2011).

*Pa Negre* seems to have paved the way for the visibility of Spain's other languages in cinema. This film was given priority economic support by the administration in order to create an important Catalan film which would provide access not only to Catalonia's own language but also its own culture. Its budget totalled 4 million euros, of which Massa d'Or Productions provided half a million and international sales 200,000 euros, while the rest was subsidies, antenna rights or guaranteed public loans. The effort of public policies applied to a good product facilitated the visibility of a film, a cinematography, a language and a culture. The number of spectators of Catalan-language films in Catalonia has never again risen to the levels seen in 2010-2011.<sup>5</sup>

## 5. *Handia*, the biggest one

*Handia* (Garaño & Arregi 2017) premiered at the 65th edition of the San Sebastián International Film Festival and won the special audience award. It reached cinemas on 20 December, earned 750,072.15 euros and attracted 133,296 spectators (ICAA: 2021), becoming the biggest box-office hit in the Basque language to date. It was also the second Basque film to be nominated for best picture at the Goyas, after *Loreak* (Garaño & Arregi 2014). Neither won the award, but *Loreak* was chosen to compete in the 88th edition of the Oscars in the category of Best International Feature Film, and *Handia* won 10 of its 13 nominations, making it the film to have won the most awards. This was unquestionably a huge success for the two directors who repeated the formula, this time adding Jose Mari Goenaga to the directing team, in *La trinchera infinita* (*The Endless Trench*, Garaño, Arregi & Goenaga 2019) which earned 15 nominations and 4 Goyas.

The main language in *Handia* is Basque, but it is interspersed with conversations in Spanish as a second language, and English and French can even be heard, along with bits of Arabic and Portuguese, a novel fact in Basque-language cinema which breaks with the previous trend in films produced in Basque. According to Tamayo and Manterola (2019: 287), it 'paves the way for multilingualism and joins the current trend of reflecting the reality of bilingual and multilingual societies in fiction'. In this way, subtitling has become the ally of Basque. It is present from the very beginning of the film, which the directors view as natural and necessary, partly due to their culture of film festivals. They claim that 'if the spectator has to read subtitles, they seldom mind that the film is in Basque; it's not an obstacle' (Garaño 2020).

*Handia* was distributed in SOV-Basque and SOV-Spanish and dubbed into Spanish, as well as SOV-English (outside Spain). It was released with 92 copies, 30 in Basque and the others in Spanish. The directors of *Handia* recall that in their first feature film, *80 Egunean* (2010), they imagined a bilingual film but were forced to choose because at that time it was considered more difficult to schedule a film in SOV, so they finally filmed it in Basque. Ten years have gone by since *80 Egunean*, and the number of films shot in that language has increased in response to the measures and agreements taken by the Basque government and Basque public television to support cinema in the Basque language (Manias Muñoz 2015). And the figures confirm it. Garaño claims that 'the audience percentage that has seen copies in Basque with subtitles is higher than the percentage of dubbed copies. In fact, it has worked better in SOV than dubbed' (Garaño 2020). According to figures from the distributor A Contracorriente Films, 79.42% of the public saw *Handia* in SOV cinemas.

### 5.1. Policies to support films in Basque

Unlike Catalonia and Galicia, the Basque Country does not have its own law on cinema. However, the Basque Culture Plan (2013) mentioned that the 'new generation of filmmakers, with success and experience in the field of short films', working in Basque, would generate 'an opportunity to definitively address the pending issue of *Zinea Euskaraz* (cinema in Basque) (Basque Government 2003, 6). That new generation of filmmakers was associated with the Kimuak initiative promoted by the Basque administration through the Basque Institute (Etxepare Euskal Institutua-Instituto Vasco) and the Basque Cinematheque (Euskadiko Filategia-Filmoteca Vasca) to make short films in Basque. The *Zinea Euskaraz* matter refers to how to develop a stable policy to support cinema in the Basque language because filming in Basque has never been a requirement to access the subsidies offered by the Basque administration, although at first in order to receive financing, films from abroad had to be shot in the Basque Country or 75% of the technical staff and cast had to live in the Basque Autonomous Community (Roldán 1996). There were no plans to promote regular production in Basque until the audiovisual strategy was defined in a 2003 White Paper (Azpillaga 2013). Therefore, there has not been a systematic language requirement to be eligible for this assistance, except for the documentary series *Ikuska* (1970-1985) and the film versions of literary works from the 1980s, like *Ke arteko egunak* (Eceiza 1989), which had huge repercussions both in the Basque Country and all over Spain, though not the production in Basque. In fact, the topic of these films and production methods sparked a great deal of debate with regard to the identity and nature of Basque cinema (Macías 2010).

Currently, even though the call for subsidies does engage in positive discrimination on the use of Basque, this refers to the overall artistic interest of the project (in feature films, at most 10 points over 75; plus the projects in Basque have more flexible limits on funding and are free of the requirements of being the first or second film by the director applying for low-budget projects). Only when creating screenplays has there been a specific quota policy for funding to write them in Basque since 2008 (around 50%). In this sense, even more significant than the funding from the Basque government is the EITB's contributions to Basque audiovisual production, and since 2007 they have been subjected to investment quotas of productions in Basque (30%), which has translated into a minimum of two fiction feature films and one animation film in Basque per year. The EITB made an investment of 4.3 million euros in 2017 (EITB 2019: 38-39) and 5.7 million in 2019.

## 5.2 New investors

Thanks to the success of the film *Loreak*, the directors were able to film *Handia* with twice the budget, 3.7 million euros, making it the second most expensive Basque-language production in history after *Dragoi ehiztaria* (Barko 2012), (Espinell 2018) and overcoming the mean production cost of feature films from previous years (MCUD 2018: 343).

The film was given subsidies from the provincial government of Gipuzkoa (Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa, 80,000 euros), the Basque government (345,000 euros) and the Ministry of Culture via the ICAA (980,000 euros), which accounted for 37.8% of the budget (Heredero 2019: 99). It also received funding from the EITB, TVE, Euskaltel and Film Factory Entertainment, and Netflix joined in by providing around one-third of the budget (Garaño 2020). Despite the fact that Netflix's participation meant expanding or securing the budget, it also conditioned the film's distribution, which Netflix did in Europe, and it was also responsible for subtitling the film in the different languages of the countries where the platform supplies its catalogue of films. *Handia* is currently on the Netflix platform in SOV in all the countries where it operates. As Katixa Agirre (2021) noted, 'from the standpoint of Basque as a minority language, being present on a platform that reaches households all over the world gave it a huge leg up and was a first step in awareness of it', even though public entities are responsible for promoting cinema in minority languages (Agirre 2019).

It is worth noting that since *Aupa, Etxebeste!* (Asier Altuna & Telmo Esnal 2005), cinema in Basque has regularly been producing and exhibiting feature films for the first time (Agirre 2021), supported, as noted above, by the public corporation EITB and funding from the Basque government and occasionally from the new fund to finance cinema in co-official languages via the general state budget—as contained in the 2007 Law on Cinema, instated in 2009, although the PP withdrew this assistance in 2013. Although it was recently announced that the amendment of Royal Decree 1090-2020 which regulates that law plans to expand the funding limits, it should be defined in such a way that it is not subject to the chance of whatever government may be in power at any given time, because as seen above, support for public policies is not merely necessary to guarantee financing but also helps normalise both the production and consumption of cinema in minority languages. It would also be worthwhile to promote assistance for subtitling to ensure that cinemas can prioritise SOV.

## 6. *O que arde* (2019). From assistance for talent to the confirmation of a new model of auteurship

In the spring of 2019, the Une Certain Regard award from the Cannes Film Festival for *O que arde* not only confirmed Oliver Laxe as the most famous auteur in Spain today but also

reaffirmed the presence of Galician cinema as a constant fixture in the leading European film circuits. The award entailed the definitive support for Spanish audiences to go to the cinema to see a film in SOV, an experience which is becoming less and less marginal. All the copies of *O que arde* were exhibited in this version; so on the weekend it was premiered, 54 cinemas showed the film in the Galician language subtitled in Spanish. In 2019, *O que arde* attracted 71,037 spectators (ICAA: 2020) in its premiere in cinemas and another 24,394 in the first quarter of 2020 (ICAA: 2021), before the cinemas closed during the lockdown caused by COVID-19, riding the wave of its Goya for Best Cinematography and Best New Actress for Benedicta Sánchez. The box-office figures, with earnings of 530,110 euros in Spain, also brought high rankings to a small distribution company located in Galicia, Numax, and turned it into the most widely seen Galician film in history. These figures confirmed the success of an audiovisual policy devoted to supporting talent.

## 6.1 Galician audiovisual policy: Between commercial cinema and financing talent

The audiovisual policy implemented by successive Galician governments, more so since 2005, has incorporated the art vs. industry tension when financing projects. The CineGalicia event in 1989, which brought three films to cinemas, two in OV in Galician, namely *Sempre Xonxa* (Chano Piñeiro 1989) and *Urxia* (Carlos Piñeiro & Alfredo García Pinal 1989), and one dubbed in Galician, *Continental* (Xavier Villaverde: 1989), revealed the ambition for Galician films to be shown on screens in its own language. However, the next decade was particularly sterile for films made in Galician. The approval of the law *Lei 6/1999 Do Audiovisual* recognised 'the cultural, social and economic importance [of film] as an instrument for the expression of the right to promote and disseminate its culture, its history and its language, as self-identification data' (1999: 11.033), and in the period 2000-2001 the regional government of Galicia (Xunta de Galicia) allocated 2 million euros in subsidies. However, there was a shortcoming in the support for the circulation of the films, which the industry exposed in subsequent years. Thus, the Galician Association of Independent Producers (Asociación Galega de Productoras Independientes, Agapi) presented a strategic plan calling for the 'implementation of more protectionist formulas (...), fostering cooperation with distribution multinationals, assistance for promotion and dissemination' (Roca et al.: 2016, p. 163). Furthermore, the financial aid system during this period did not deem it compulsory for the production to be in the Galician language, so many of the films were made in Spanish. Thus, Galician appeared in many cases in the obligatory dubbed version to justify the support by Televisión de Galicia, which showed the film in this version several times through the cession of rights.

In the period 2005-2009, under the two-headed structure of the Audiovisual Consortium and the Galician Audiovisual Agency (Axencia Audiovisual Galega), a more determined focus on productions in Galician got underway to make this a requirement or at least scorable in some of the calls for funding. They were then widened into a model designed to administer the aforementioned art vs. industry tension and include explicit support for the promotion and circulation of the financed films. On the one hand, assistance for productions and co-productions 'with content related to Galician culture' (AGADIC 2020) was maintained, which made a distinction between those that were to be made with a budget under 1,200,000 euros, in which cinematographic diversity was primarily valued, and those with a higher budget, which have to show 'special cinematographic, cultural and social value' (AGADIC 2020). In both cases, the use of the Galician language is a positive factor inasmuch as points could be earned from its use in filming.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the use of the Galician language is obligatory in the call for 'Subsidies for audiovisual creation for the development and promotion of Galician audiovisual talent'. This system of funding, which was started in 2007 and has been offered every year except 2012,<sup>7</sup> is organised into three modalities: assistance for the screenplay, for making short films and for making feature films, which are allocated 5,000, 6,000 and 30,000 euros, respectively. Therefore, there is 'a correlation between the economic dimension of the audiovisual project and the choice of language, such that Spanish is related to higher-budget productions, while Galician is associated with smaller-budget films' (Roca et al. 2016: 174).

In terms of the direct support for the circulation of Galician audiovisuals, the 'Subsidies for the promotion, commercialisation and exhibition of Galician audiovisual products' was announced in 2014, given the urgent need for these productions to gain visibility in international markets. The main goal of this funding was for the films to be submitted to the film festivals recognised by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF), which enabled small productions with artistic potential to participate in festivals like the ones in Locarno, Rotterdam and Cannes and the Berlinale. In this sense, through the assistance for audiovisual talent, the international success of what is known as the Novo Cinema Galego (NCG) was gestated, which demonstrated for visibility purposes the greater profitability of assistance geared at more artistic and experimental films than the financing designed for more conventional productions.

The new auteurs' careers were promoted with the funding for talent, gaining international recognition for the label of Novo Cinema Galego through their films' participation in the leading festivals and markets. The triumph of *O que arde* in awards and box-office receipts is therefore not surprising; instead, policies and talent enabled the launch of a flagship film which upset this rivalry between art vs. industry for the first time by getting an auteur film to be embraced by both critics and large audiences.

## 6.2 Financing and distribution of *O que arde*

*O que arde* is organised as a Spanish (50.13%), French (30.75%) and Luxembourgish (18.9%) coproduction and therefore received financing from institutions in all three countries, while at a supranational level it received European funding. In this sense, one of the film's fundamental supports was provided by the European coproduction programme Euroimages, which gave it 200,000 euros. This public assistance, like what was donated by the French programme to finance international cinema Cinémas du Monde (CNC), bore in mind the fact that the film was part of a minority culture and was going to be shot in a European minority language.<sup>8</sup> The programme AFS CineWorld in Luxemburg also gave the film 200,000 euros. However, the largest amount of public funding came from AGADIC, which financed the film with 209,109 euros in the category of feature films with a budget under 1,200,000 euros. The film also earned the aforementioned assistance for the promotion and dissemination of Galician audiovisuals. It is significant that the ICAA is the public body that gave the film the lowest amount (103,564 euros), when the film's ultimate classification is Spanish, perhaps due to some vagueness in the 'difficult work' status which was amended in the 2015 funding.

## 7. Discussion and conclusions

The comparison of the production and distribution processes and the exhibition results of the three case studies, *Pa negre* (2010), *Handia* (2017) and *O que arde* (2019), enables us to draw conclusions on the evolution of the production and reception of films in minority languages in Spain in recent years.

First, we should highlight the importance of what we have called flagship films, which are used to pave the way for other productions in the co-official state languages. The production figures on the three films, which are medium-sized European productions, show that there is a return of spectators who are interested in seeing their cultures and languages on the big screen (Table 1).

In this sense, *Pa negre* (2010) seems to have lifted the barriers for films in minoritised languages in Spain at the Goyas, contributing to popularise these cinemas outside their territory and foster diversity. The success of the film is due to public policies designed to foster the visibility of Catalan cinematography which took the number of spectators of films in Catalan to levels which have never again been reached, and which seem to have opened up audiences less specialised in films in state languages other than Spanish.

The film about the giant Aia, *Handia* (2017), has signalled a shift in the use of Basque as the language of the film by showing it as both a local and international language; Basque is an important part of the multilingual film, where it shares space with other hegemonic languages with complete normality.

**Table 1. Figures on production and exhibition in Spain**

|                          | Production budget | Number of spectators | Earnings         |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Pa negre</i> (2010)   | 4,000,000 euros   | 439,744              | 2,680,155 euros  |
| <i>Handia</i> (2017)     | 3,700,000 euros   | 133,296              | 750,072.15 euros |
| <i>O que arde</i> (2019) | 1,219,991 euros   | 95,431               | 530,110 euros    |

Source: ICAA, 2021. Made by authors.

Thus, the subtitles become the natural ally of the consumption of cinema in Basque. Before it, *Loreak* (2014) had become a flagship film thanks to its success, which the directors harnessed to carry out a much more ambitious project like *Handia* (2017). Yet beyond what the Netflix platform was able to provide for its production, once again institutional support, in this case via the EITB, was revealed to be crucial to normalising cinema in minority languages. Therefore, this support must be consistent and regular.

The success of *O que arde* (2019) in both festivals like Cannes and at the box office turns it into a flagship film which led it to replace *Sempre Xonxa* (1989) as the emblem of Galician cinema 30 years later. In addition to showing the positive results of the funding for talent created by the Galician administration, which promoted the works of auteurs like Oliver Laxe, one of the representatives of the Novo Cinema Galego, it also demonstrated that there are audiences for films in subtitled original versions. In this sense, the film enabled the Galician language to ring out in cinemas all over Spain, which made it among the 20 most seen films in 2019.

Thus, the number of cinemas that offer SOV, as well as the number of spectators, which continues to be marginal compared to those who go to see dubbed films, leads us to believe that measures are needed to promote the subtitled original versions of films shot in minority languages in Spain. In fact, both Passola and Goenaga believed that their films had worked very well in the original version in the cinemas of Madrid, due partly to the cinephile culture in SOV and the population concentration there. This also holds true for Barcelona, which had 13 original version cinemas in early 2020.

The regional policies to promote their cinematography, which are more or less effective, are at odds with the state's apathy towards contributing to the country's film diversity to promote a cinematography in all the state languages and relative to all its cultural diversity. In fact, since 2013 the different governments of Spain have failed to fulfil their obligation to subsidise productions in co-official languages, as stipulated in Law 55/2007. The amendment of this law through Royal Decree 1090/2020, dated 9 December 2020, seeks to expand the limits of this funding: 'audiovisual works shot entirely in one of the co-official languages other than Spanish which are exhibited in Spain in this co-official language or subtitled may receive up to 80% financing' (BOE: 2020, p. 112857). This expansion of the percentage that can be subsidised may enable

acceptance of co-official languages while respecting the original version to be explored, and it may offset the complications stemming from European policies whose actions are centred on languages with a state, rendering the policies for the languages of stateless nations uncovered and validating principles like free competition over diversity. However, the Draft General Audiovisual Communication Law (Government of Spain 2021) contains no explicit indications on implementing a quota policy for productions in minority languages, despite the fact that its articles claim the importance of diversity. In any case, not only does the promotion of cinematographic productions in co-official languages befall the regional institutions, but it must be accepted that these languages are as official as the language of the nation-state.

Furthermore, bearing in mind that distribution is one of the weakest points of European cinema, we understand that a specific programme to contribute to creating subtitles in minority languages would be the next logical step after the success of the flagship films analysed. This programme could be part of the measures aimed at improving the circulation of European cinema promoted by the MEDIA sub-programme, because as supranational measures they could offer coverage to the languages contained in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. In this sense, if the ICAA offered figures on the dubbed and subtitled versions along with figures on screen quota, this would help future analyses of filmographies in minority languages and those in foreign languages.

The importance of talent and programmes that seek to promote it, along with audiovisual policies that encourage the visibility of minority productions, could contribute to ensuring that cinematographic expression is more diverse and that flagship films in minority languages cease being the exception to the rule.

## Notes

1. ERDF / Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities – State Research Agency / ref. CS00216-76014-R
2. These interviews are part of the research undertaken in the EUVOS project, in addition to those conducted just for the purposes of this essay. The bibliography only contains those from which quotations have been drawn or whose interviewees are cited in the text.
3. *Bruc* earned 1,187,515.31 euros and had 188,653 spectators; *Herois* earned 470,202.35 euros in box-office receipts, and 76,549 people went to see it; *Eva* earned 904,675.54 euros and had 142,261 spectators; and *Pa Negre* brought in 2,680,155 euros and was seen by 439,744 people.
4. As a whole or by articles, specifically those that supported this local cultural policy in the new Statute of Autonomy (2006), which the PP appealed and the Constitutional Court declared partly unconstitutional in 2010.
5. Even though the complete 2017 or 2018 data are not yet available from Idescat (as of 23/06/2021), we can assume that despite the widespread circulation of *Estiu 1993* and the awards it has won (SIMÓN: 2017), it nonetheless did not reach the 2010-2011 levels because there was no particularly prominent group of films and because of indications of smaller number of spectators in Spain as a whole (197,592 spectators, according to the ICAA).
6. We should note that the use of Galician as a language of filming accounted for 25 of the 60 points needed to secure financing in 2008, while in the 2020 it was only 10 points out of a maximum of 150.
7. The fact that the calls for funding for talent were not announced in 2012 sparked worried reactions in the industry, which were channelled into a manifesto signed by 41 of the filmmakers who had been the beneficiaries of this assistance in previous years (PÉREZ PENA 2012).
8. These figures are from an interview with the film's producer, Xavi Font, in July 2020.

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# Positioning Alternative Voices in Audiovisual Europe: the case of Catalanian, Galician, Basque and Sámi language policies

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### Abstract

One of the hypotheses on which this article is based is that the normalisation of subtitling in the audiovisual field, particularly in non-hegemonic languages, contributes to facilitating and consolidating dialogued communication and intercultural acceptance in instances as diverse as the Catalanian, Galician, Basque and Sámi cases. Simultaneously, and as the Sámi case study towards the end of the chapter suggests, these mechanisms for inclusion and diversity can also have an adverse effect and further strengthen modes of exclusion and the hegemonic normality of dominant languages where, furthermore, power is wielded through the use of subtitling and linguistic policies in dominant languages (and not only English).

### Keywords

Minoritised languages, cultural diversity, cinema, Europe, audiovisual subtitling, audiovisual content.

### Resum

Una de les hipòtesis en què es basa aquest article és que la normalització de la subtitulació en el camp audiovisual, particularment en llengües no hegemòniques, contribueix a fer més fluida i consolidar la comunicació dialogada i l'acceptació intercultural, en casos tan variats com el català, el gallec, el basc o el sami. Al mateix temps, com suggereix l'estudi del cas sami al final del capítol, aquests mecanismes per a la inclusió i la diversitat també poden tenir un efecte advers i continuar reforçant formes d'exclusió i la normalitat hegemònica de les llengües dominants, en què, a més, el poder s'exerceix mitjançant una política lingüística i de subtitulació en les llengües dominants (i no només en anglès).

### Paraules clau

Llengües minoritzades, diversitat cultural, cinema, Europa, subtitulació audiovisual.

## Introduction: "Minority" or "Minoritised" Languages?

The definition of "Minority Language" and "Minoritised Language" requires an initial clarification albeit only lexical:

- The use of the concept "Minority Language" is clearly quantitative and descriptive (almost statistical) linked to the number of speakers of a specific language within a given territory as well as their relationship with other dominant languages.
- The use of the concept "Minoritised Language" is clearly qualitative and critical (almost activist) linked to a

language that (regardless of its number of speakers) has seen its use restricted, frequently due to political or social reasons.<sup>1</sup> With the expression "Minoritised Languages", we refer to languages that are marginalised, even in danger of extinction, compared to other hegemonic languages whose use is prevalent (Williams & Williams 2016).

One of the hypotheses on which this article is founded (as well as the research project on which it is based) is that the normalisation of subtitling in the audiovisual field, particularly in non-hegemonic languages, contributes to facilitating and

consolidating dialogued communication and intercultural acceptance, at least in the long term (Baker 2018: 453-467). Although in this article (as well as the research project from which it comes) we will confine our study to the European environment, the initial cultural situation we cover could be extrapolated to a more globalised level (with due geo-cultural nuances) when considering subtitling as a palliative element for linguistic minorities. Since audiovisual subtitling respects the linguistic integrity of the original artistic work, it is possible to consider this type of non-invasive translation as an unequivocally cultural fact and for this reason as a systematic form of production and transmission of meanings between differentiated cultures (Cómitre 2015: 1).

In addition to its unequivocal cultural relevance, there are also many social effects derived from the use of audiovisual subtitling (Ogea 2020), which can be analysed at various levels:

1. *Educational level*, due to its proven effectiveness as a foreign language immersion tool.
2. *Psychosocial level*, as an inclusive social tool for groups with sensory disabilities.
3. *Cultural-identity level*, as a tool for prioritising cultural events (especially audiovisual ones) that could better define a specific society.
4. *Material-textual level*, as a tool for preserving the integrity of the original content of the work.

However, we recognise the existence of multiple difficulties (professional, ideological, political and social) in this attempt to extend the cultural potential of subtitling to the entire audiovisual universe. Without wishing to fully identify these difficulties, it is worth focusing on some forms of electronic entertainment on the rise, such as those coming from the videogame industry, where subtitling is conceived as a disruptive element with respect to diegetic becoming and to the operational management of any game (Amato et al. 2019). This is not a minor matter: we are talking about a sector whose total turnover was €133.67 billion in 2019 worldwide according to the figures of the Spanish Association of Videogames (2019: 47). In 2019, 45% of the total turnover (€60.18 billion) came from videogames installed on mobile phones or tablets.

In addition to recognising the socio-cultural role of videogames as one of the main exponents of digital culture (Aevi 2019: 12), their linguistic characteristics make them a particularly interesting object of analysis:

Los videojuegos no son solo la primera opción de ocio audiovisual en España. También se han convertido en un espectáculo de masas. Es muy destacable el auge de los e-sports, tanto en audiencias como en ingresos. Los contenidos producidos y consumidos en lengua española y las grandes competiciones internacionales auguran un esperanzador futuro (AEVI 2019: 12).

[Videogames are not only the first choice for audiovisual leisure in Spain. They have also become mass entertainment. The rise of e-sports, both in

terms of audiences and revenue, is highly significant. The content produced and consumed in Spanish and the major international competitions augur a promising future] (AEVI 2019: 12).

We are therefore in a market dominated by dubbing dynamics in hegemonic languages and extreme reluctance to use subtitles. This is why in audiovisual translation studies, specialists consider dubbers of better quality (perhaps as a lesser evil), although not the practice of dubbing itself:

Lo cierto es que en el sector de los videojuegos es posible encontrarse con grandes obras en las que participan profesionales del mundo del doblaje que realizan un trabajo digno de las mejores películas de Hollywood, pero también con obras en las que la inversión en doblaje es mínima y se lanzan al mercado trabajos de tan baja calidad como el de *Age of Pirates: Caribbean Tales* (2006), en el que los actores no actúan, se limitan a leer con prisa y sin sentimientos los diálogos, sin preocuparse tan siquiera por la sincronía labial (Méndez 2015: 74).

[The fact is that in the videogame industry there are great productions in which professional voiceover artists do a job worthy of the best Hollywood films, but also ones in which the investment in dubbing is minimal and productions of such poor quality as *Age of Pirates: Caribbean Tales* (2006), in which the actors do not act but rather just read the dialogue in a hurry and without feeling, without even worrying about lip-sync, are released on the market] (Méndez 2015: 74).

In any case, other academic or cultural interests with regard to videogames are lacking, other than the functional positions that identify videogames with entertainment without major pretensions and for that reason choose interlinguistic practices with more immediate and affordable access, regardless of the conception of the original work.<sup>2</sup>

Mindful of the importance of subtitling as a cultural fact, we propose to emphasise the need to give priority to audiovisual subtitling over other tools (mainly dubbing) in order to normalise the social uses of a non-hegemonic language, thus favouring its transition from “language of communication” to “language of culture” (Hakmon 2019). From this point of view, we underline our distance from the statement by Grève and Van Passel (1971: 173) according to which linguistic teaching itself ipso facto contains cultural teaching, since in essence language represents one of the main aspects of the culture of a community. For our part, we consider that it is necessary to overcome apriorism (also in cultural terms) to consider the context. Therefore:

- According to the *Linguistics of Communication*, we consider that command of the language implies something more than the control of a certain linguistic code (Pudélko & Tenzer 2019).

- Aspects directly related to the particular communicative act must be taken into account.

Only from these premises is it possible to assess the capacity of subtitling to transmit (without altering the original fact of the cinematographic or audiovisual work) the social, psychic, cultural, artistic and stylistic aspects of a precise socio-cultural context: in other words, subtitling guarantees the meanings of utterances and speech acts in context (Sánchez 2004: 9-17).

In fact, the proposal of “communicative competence” developed by Canale and Swain (1980: 1-47) which implied the mastery of four competences or sub-competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive and strategic) was later completed with another competence, namely socio-cultural. As Robles (2003: 720) warns, in the development of communicative competence in a certain language it is necessary to teach a whole series of social practices and cultural values that are so closely linked to the language and its uses that it is impossible to do without them.

In this respect, the media space, due to its oversizing and polarising capacity, would far exceed the capacity of regulated education to act as a decisive factor in determining linguistic options among the younger population strata (Giralt; Nagore 2019). According to the argumentation of Seosamh Ó Murchú:

Children learn a whole new “language” from television which they bring with them into formal learning situations which they use among themselves to express feelings and emotions which comply to what are often “set-piece” experiences portrayed on television. (Ó Murchú 1991: 89-90)

The incorporation of certain audiovisual codes into the social relationship is a fact that Seosamh Ó Murchú (1991) places as occurring during childhood. This assertion has unpredictable consequences, since it is the age range that embodies the promise of the durability of a language, a question that is especially difficult in the case of non-hegemonic languages.<sup>3</sup> Thus, and as a corollary to what is stated in this section, we could conclude with Arndt (2018) that the evolution from “language of communication” to “language of culture” is based on the combination of two concepts: linguistic normalisation and geo-cultural belonging.

To showcase these challenges, the complex dynamics and politics that arise in the context of Sámi film culture highlight how the use of subtitled dominant languages (whether English or nationally-hegemonic languages like Finnish or Norwegian) as a ‘universal’ language tool can also re-enact some of these power dispersions and contribute to the marginalisation of a minority within a minority – that is, the Sámi as part of Norwegian or Finnish media culture. This is a notion further reinforced by the fact that normalisation of the hegemonic language is so pervasive that the younger generations of the Sámi may not be fluent in their own Sámi dialect. As the Sámi case study towards the end of this chapter suggests, these mechanisms

for inclusion and diversity can also have an adverse effect and further strengthen modes of exclusion and hegemonic normality of dominant languages where, furthermore, power is wielded through the use of subtitling in dominant languages (and not only English).

### Cultural diversity in the European debate and political praxis

It is surprising that the recognition of subtitling as a matter of debate within EU political praxis is very recent. Like many other vindictive cultural facts, this recognition depended on the social awareness of a certain threat: the push of some hegemonic cultures that have repeatedly demonstrated an aggressive intrusive potential, frequently justified with the subterfuge of unstoppable globalisation (Shiyi 2020).

Over time, those “attacked” nations rushed to develop joint strategies for the promotion and protection of their respective cultures, first in the cultural and economic spheres and finally in the generation of specific case law based on protectionist regulations.<sup>4</sup>

In the last two decades, we would highlight the promulgation in 2003 of the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”, whose precedent lies in 1989 with UNESCO’s “Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore”. Both regulations announce the serious risks of certain dynamics of globalisation and social transformation: deterioration, partial destruction or even total disappearance of intangible cultural heritage.<sup>5</sup>

In October 2005, UNESCO adopted at its General Conference “The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”<sup>6</sup> as a continuation and extension of the “Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity”<sup>7</sup> which was approved by the same institution in 2001. The 2005 Convention is a pioneer in international law due to its promotion and protectionist commitment to the cultural and linguistic heritage of countries with respect to hostile actions by third countries (Keating 2018).

Thus, the 2005 Convention placed the cultural and creative industries among the fastest growing sectors globally: with an impact of 6.1% per year on the world economy, they represented a global contribution of \$4.3 billion. Likewise, the 2005 Convention identified cultural and creative industries as a primary pillar of “Inclusive Economic Growth” and therefore contributing to the objectives of the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.<sup>8</sup>

There are three important recognitions in order to consider this convention as a “historic milestone”:

- 1) The worldwide recognition of the twofold nature (cultural and economic) of any contemporary cultural expression.
- 2) The recognition of the sovereignty of states (but also of their citizens) in the adoption, maintenance or cancellation of protectionist policies and as promoters of cultural diversity.

- 3) As a consequence of the two previous recognitions, the 2005 Convention promotes participatory governance by citizens with respect to the management of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

In 2007, the European Union ratified the 2005 Convention while emphasising the defence of European culture seen as a diverse reality. The Council of Europe thereafter incorporated a strict protocol regarding the promotion and safeguarding of culture in all EU trade agreements (Rabinovych 2020). The new measures involved:

- A true spur for the consolidation of EU trade policy (at an inclusive and expansive level), reorienting its positioning strategy on a planetary scale.
- A challenge to US hegemony in the first instance, as well as the semi-hegemonic positioning of some emerging countries through bilateral alliances.

However, this proliferation of declarations defending a Europe united in its diversity hides a certain contradiction or paradox depending on the point of view (Sekulić 2020). It is undeniable that, with the ratification of the 2005 Convention, the member states of the European Union jointly promoted a foreign policy (intensive and expansive) to defend their culture.

So why were certain community spaces (recognised in their diverse identity, with an official or co-official language and territorially located in European confines) impelled to promulgate their own regulations (more or less successful, more or less effective) in order to protect the distribution and exhibition of audiovisual productions in their respective vernacular languages and with such different results (Pérez Pereiro; Deogracias Horrillo 2021)? To be specific, this is the case, on the one hand, of Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country in the Iberian Peninsula, and on the other also of the Scandinavian Peninsula among many other possible examples.

Starting our succinct account in Galicia, it is possible to find two regulations that are practically contemporary with European ratification: firstly, Act 4/2008 of 23 May creating the Galician Agency for Cultural Industries, and secondly Act 9/2011 of 9 November on public broadcasting media in Galicia:

- a) With respect to the first law, it is an instrumental regulation aimed at the organisation and development of the business community in the Galician cultural market. Act 4/2008 specifies that the development of the Galician cultural market is based on protection of and contribution to the consolidation of Galician cultural industries.<sup>9</sup>
- b) With regard to the second law, it is a regulation of management in the provision of the public broadcasting services over which the autonomous community of Galicia has jurisdiction. Act 9/2011 specifies two inspiring principles of management in the provision of public broadcasting services: first, the promotion and dissemination of Galician culture and language as well as the defence of the identity of Galicia; second, but by no means less important, the

promotion of local audiovisual production and broadcasts that contribute to the projection of Galicia abroad and of information to Galician communities abroad.<sup>10</sup>

Continuing our journey in Catalonia, we find several fundamental regulations which include an active recasting of the regulations that govern the operation of the Catalan Radio and Television Corporation, created in 1983, in adaptation to a changing context:

- a) Act 11/2007 of 11 October on the Catalan Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>11</sup> In this legal text, key points include the association of the public service function to the dissemination and promotion of the Catalan language together with (among the general principles of programming) the designation of Catalan as the institutional language of provision of the public broadcasting services of the Catalan Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>12</sup>
- b) Decree Act 2/2010 of 30 March, which amends Act 11/2007.
- c) Act 20/2010 of 7 July on films, which is oriented towards the development of the cinematographic offer in Catalan, whether in its original, dubbed or subtitled version.<sup>13</sup>
- d) Act 2/2012 of 22 February, which amends several laws on audiovisual issues.
- e) General Instruction of the Catalan Audiovisual Council amending the General Instruction on the presence of Catalan and Aranese language and culture in the audiovisual media, published on 12 September 2018.<sup>14</sup>

To finish off our brief legal tour, we will look at the Basque case where we find two fundamental decrees:

- a) Decree 231/2011 of 8 November on broadcasting, which includes the conditions for reserving licences for broadcasts entirely in Basque.<sup>15</sup>
- b) Decree 179/2019 of 19 November on the normalisation of the institutional and administrative use of official languages in local institutions in the Basque Country.<sup>16</sup> However, subtitling in Basque of films that are shown in commercial theatres has been banished from the screens of the Basque Country (Barambones 2011: 10).

As can be seen, in all the cases analysed there is a proliferation of regulations with a common denominator:

1. They are rules and regulations that arise as a territorial adaptation of other international proclamations.
2. They are rules and regulations that have a general scope and do not include the explicit development of certain resources (technological, cultural, language, social, educational, etc.) such as subtitling.
3. They are rules and regulations that, inexplicably, elude the explicit definition of what could be considered a Galician, Catalan or Basque audiovisual work.

Thus, we come to the heart of the question of this article: is it feasible to set criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of an audiovisual work in order to establish its origin? Or more clearly: is it possible to establish the nationality of a certain audiovisual work (and, by extrapolation, of any cultural work) considering the wide range of transnational influences that underpin most contemporary audio-visual cultural production (Kulyk 2020)?

Indeed, it is not a local and current problem (limited to the cases analysed), but rather one whose limits reach historical and world levels: the geo-cultural origin of an audiovisual work seems doomed to be diluted. On a historical level:

- Starting with the joint ventures promoted in Europe by the major US firms after World War II with their famous “blind-booking” and “block-booking” commercial actions (Biltereyst et al. 2019).
- Continuing with the European reaction (late, partial and inconsistent) in the form of co-productions, which would reach its extreme in what is called the “Euro-pudding” production formula (Hammett-Jamart et al. 2018).

On a global level, the overwhelming mainstream logic, based on the elaboration of easily digestible content designed for the lowest common denominator of broadcasting, is clear: the more “local” and “identity” the audiovisual content is, the more alien it is from the “Reader’s Encyclopaedia” (Eco 1979) and it will look strange, unfamiliar.

It is not surprising, moreover, that we find the same problem in the European audiovisual space. Thus, within the framework of institutional programmes for financial support for audiovisual industries, the European nationality of audiovisual work is lost in the intricacies of the following regulations:

- Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020).
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 COM / 2018/366 final - 2018 / 0190 (COD).

Only in Article 14 of the second regulation (about the definition of eligible entities) do we find a reference to the recognition of companies as European, but not of the audiovisual works they produce. The MEDIA sub-programme affords the status of “European” to all companies based on Community soil and owned by citizens residing in EU Member States, countries of the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) and other countries participating in the MEDIA sub-programme (De Turégano 2018). This is not a minor issue, since the recognition of a company as “European” opens up the possibility of applying for the grants envisaged in the MEDIA sub-programme.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, the “made in Europe” stamp on a certain audiovisual work depends on a true “Sudoku” of tangible percentages of territorial settlement (which involves among its variables the capital that finances the production and the team that makes

it possible), but excludes other tangible (and equally relevant) factors such as the original linguistic options of the audiovisual work and, therefore, its own cultural integrity (Betz 2001).

It is true that in some cases where European framework regulations are included in Member State law it is possible to find a few remote references to this problem. Thus, if we take into consideration the grant and aid systems for films managed by Spain, there are some preferential criteria for works which opt for co-official non-hegemonic languages in their audiovisual production (Fernández-Blanco & Gil 2018).

However, it must be emphasised that these are “preferential criteria” and not decisive, so they do not require that the original linguistic option of the audiovisual production be maintained (or that, at least, it is complemented by careful subtitling) during the subsequent distribution and exhibition process.

### Positioning Sámi media: Language and Cultural Policy

To expand on the implications of the establishment of ‘preferential criteria’ for minority languages in film cultural contexts where the politics of language continues to play out in complex ways, this part of the paper – effectively, a case study of power and politics in minority language cinema – explores the role of minority languages and audiovisual media in the Nordic countries. Our focus is on Sámi media and the ways it contributes to uncovering some of the power imbalances between hegemonic practices and minority film cultures, even in contexts that are considered marginalised or minority in themselves. The Nordic countries point to a much wider notion of minority and marginality than a national film cultural framework facilitates and how relations of power in the international film industry might operate. The starting point for us is that the five Nordic national film cultures (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland) are in themselves small and marginalised film cultures and industries largely predicated on domestic production and financing infrastructure and catering for often small domestic (or regional) audiences with their respective language and diversity policies (see Gustafsson & Kaapa 2015).<sup>18</sup> However, our focus goes beyond this ‘marginality’ and addresses Sámi film – a minority within a minority. The Sámi are an ethnic minority indigenous to the Sápmi region (the Sámi population is estimated at 164,000 globally, of whom 133,000 are resident in Sapmi), an expanse stretching across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia’s Kola Peninsula. Consequently, their political and economic livelihoods are heavily embedded in the legal systems of these much larger and hence more powerful nation states. The following analysis draws on some of the research we have conducted on the practices of Sámi filmmakers and the policies designed by the hegemonic constitution of state authorities (see also Kaapa 2014: 2017) and provides an encapsulation of their development in the past ten years.

Film and media are important vehicles for articulating the

Sámi people's rights and interests in their own language and are key outlets for expressing indigenous concerns over sovereignty, cultural erasure and misrepresentation. This has not always been the case: the autonomy of this emerging media industry is particularly significant because the Nordic countries have a long history of using media policies to re-appropriate indigenous imagery and voices in ways that commodify the Sámi. Several initiatives have helped to overcome this longstanding process of assimilation. Providing context on the historical development of Sámi media, DuBois (2020: 34-48) discusses the revitalisation of Sámi culture following a wave of protests against environmental violations in the late 1970s and 1980s Norway. Films and media culture emerged as part of this revolution to re-establish the role and influence of Sámi image-making from an indigenous perspective. Despite this, however, Sámi cinema has developed relatively independently in each of the aforementioned Nordic countries. In Sweden and Finland, and to a lesser extent Russia, Sámi film production has remained marginal with limited support from national cultural institutions. However, Sámi film and media culture has steadily grown into a more discernible industry, with Mecsei (2015) noting how Sámi in Norway have developed a foothold as global pioneers in establishing indigenous media as a recognised enterprise with a growing list of global media partnerships and collaborations with indigenous and non-indigenous actors alike.

The Norway-based International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI) in 2007 was the first push to establish Sámi media as an industry – although it effectively remains a subsidiary of the Norwegian cultural institutions, as we shall discuss here. Preceding this, the first Sámi feature film, Nils Gaup's Academy Award-nominated *Ofelaš/Pathfinder* (1987), initiated a rich and diverse film and media landscape helmed by Sámi filmmakers and producers from across the region. The ISFI is part of a reform to build a collective Sámi identity, one only previously reflected onscreen. Since then, the ISFI has developed rapidly with developments in new media production – trailing scalable streaming enterprises and platforms. Language plays an increasingly visible and complex role in shaping the development of these strategies and approaches, balancing the conventions of representational politics and themes such as spirituality with the shifting demands of new audiences (see Christensen 2013 and Fonneland & Kraft 2013).

### Sámi film histories in context

To illustrate how these power discrepancies develop in film culture, in 2012, the Finnish Film Foundation (FFF) established a funding initiative devoted to developing Sámi film production, a move marking a significant development acknowledging the marginal status of Sámi cinema within the Nordic countries. While the fund was conceptualised as part of an explicit diversity and inclusion drive by the FFF to focus on developing marginal film production practices and themes, it also reinforces many of

the unbalances it seeks to address. There are several layers to these practices that need critical analysis, ranging from matters of representation to concerns over equality of access to film production funding and infrastructure.

To start with, the infrastructural inequalities are both a cause and consequence of unequal representation of the Sámi by their dominant 'host' populations. The majority of these depictions emerge from Finland and Norway (see Mecsei 2015 for more on Norwegian film production). For example, Finnish producers have depicted the Sámi as villains or mystical forces of nature in films such as *The Curse of the Witch (Noidan kirot, Teuvo Puro, 1927)* and *The White Reindeer (Valkoinen Peura, Erik Blomberg, 1952)*, respectively. In both these cases, the focus has been on conceptualising the Sápmi as an untamed territory in typically exploitative, colonialist terms that needs taming by white masculine heroes.

In contrast to this long history of exotic depictions of the 'mythical' Sámi, documentary and fiction films by Sámi directors such as Katja Gauriloff, Ellen-Astri Lundby, Nils Gaup and Paul-Anders Simma focus on indigenous rights and the complexities of coexistence within nation-state structures. This attention is qualified, however, as both the films and their directors have been considered as distinct 'others' in relation to the dominant national cultures. To illustrate, discussion of Gaup's films, especially of internationally distributed historical epics such as *Pathfinder (Ofelaš, Norway, 1987)* and *The Kautokeino Rebellion (Kautokeino opprøret, Norway, 2008)*, have generated considerable discussion around Sámi culture and politics with interpretations positioning them as important contributions to Norwegian cinema (Iversen 2005) or as Scandinavian, politically-engaged genre productions (Nestingen 2008). These perspectives demonstrate that Gaup's films are not only 'Sámi films', but have also been incorporated into various 'canons'. Domestically, they are seen as both minority and heritage cinema, with their domestic reception and award recognition enacting incorporation into a multicultural constitution of Norwegian cinema. Despite recognition of the Sámi cause, this continues the sense of othering that has seen the Sámi caricatured as an other throughout the history of Nordic film culture.<sup>19</sup>

And indeed, these concerns extend to film policy and production. Finland's Ministry for Education and Culture established a programme in 2012 designed to revitalise the Sámi language and make the status of the Sámi more equal in Finland. According to the Constitution, it is the right of indigenous minorities to uphold and develop their native language. Consequently, it is the role of the state to facilitate this, especially as the role of the language is minor and faces the problem of migration away from the Sápmi (Opetus- ja Kulttuuriministeriö 2012). This policy initiative is revealing in its 'handout politics' practised by the institutions of dominant nations in emphasising the importance of indigenous rights. In this conundrum, the Sámi are granted special status as a threatened species of sorts. It is also clear that their cultural

expression and activity require support from 'above' to facilitate ongoing development.

Here, Sámi films and filmmakers, including their engagement with linguistic sovereignty, take part in what Charles Taylor has referred to as the "politics of recognition" (Taylor 2011), which concerns the constant striving of minority populations to claim cultural and political sovereignty from dominant populations while acknowledging the constitutive role these hegemonic majorities continue to play even in the self-determinacy of the minority – simply put, the Sámi would not be seen as a minority were it not for the acts of historical marginalisation enacted by hegemonic powers.<sup>20</sup>

Elina Kivihalmelme, the commissioner in charge of the establishment of the Finnish Film Foundation Sámi fund, highlights the more problematic aspects of the politics of recognition. According to her, the oral tradition in particular poses clear difficulties, as the traditional, often cyclic, modes of storytelling are difficult to transcribe into competitive scripts. Yet this level of difference makes the films interesting and relevant as part of the multicultural mosaic, while also categorising them as too different to be able to compete with other productions on an equal scale. While Kivihalmelme emphasises that outside this initiative, Sámi producers do not occupy a special status in attaining funding but have to offer quality projects that meet FFF standards, the notion of 'positive discrimination' remains a substantial concern. Accordingly, Sámi funds are considered earmarked funds that may be given to other disadvantaged or marginalised groups in other years, including ones engaged in much more hegemonic politics of representation and recognition, such as children or youth in Finnish cinema.

Certainly, from the perspective of the Sámi, more resources and increased recognition are beneficial. Realistically, the only way to achieve this is to adopt some of the conventions of the dominant cultural sphere, mirroring Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's strategic essentialism (Spivak 1988). This indicates an approach that seeks to play out the key constituents of Sámi identity when they are necessary, but also with the sort of critical distance that enables reflexivity. In some ways, the politics of Sámi films act as the type of rewriting of national narratives that another well-known theorist of the postcolonial, Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 1994), uncovers in many works by immigrant writers. The difference here is that the Sámi do not so much unravel dominant national narratives as pose, at the very least, parallel narratives, or even fundamental objections to most of the practices pertaining to such narratives.

The Sámi cinema production infrastructure in Finland both supports and challenges rhetorical sovereignty, a fact which filters into the international exhibition of these films. Venues such as the 'indigenous cinema' festivals Skabmagovat and the Arctic Film Festival devote their catalogues to this impression of otherness. Put simply, when many of these films are screened in such egalitarian venues, they are shown as Sámi or indigenous films, a label that creates normative assumptions about content and their expected level of participation in festival discussion. Yet

such festivals would not exist without recourse to both strategic essentialism and a chance of rewriting historical narratives, supported as they are by funds from cultural authorities such as the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland.

In a somewhat similar way, when the 2012 Sámi film funds were announced by the FFF, many of the usual suspects received funding, including Simma and Gauriloff, for projects focusing on representing Sámi politics. Through this, it seems as if Sámi cinema, at least in Finland, has been able to gain increased support and presence, but infrastructurally, many of the restrictions, not least on the level of its official state perception, remain.

### A minority within a minority: the Sámi in the EU

At the same time, the relationship of Sámi filmmakers and cultural institutes with the EU is complex. A report commissioned by the Saami Council following the Arctic Stakeholder Forum in 2017 highlights how the Sámi lack both general representation and direct negotiating positions in Brussels. As we show below, Sámi media culture is caught in the same bureaucratic systems both domestically and in the context of European cultural policy. From an EU perspective, Sámi film culture has received indirect support from projects like INDIGEE 2, funded by the European Commission. The project was designed to foster entrepreneurship and economic independence in the Sapmi region and Sámi film producers like Odd Levi Paulsen have used the funding to develop their own media ventures (2015). However, the Saami Council highlights the ongoing need for EU investment in both language training and increased support for "a Saami Film Fund that contributes to increase Saami film production" (2017: 7). The complexity of EU funding schemes is a fundamental barrier to the Sámi media industry's development. The same report claims the EU's large-scale budget frameworks are difficult to reconcile with the needs of a small-scale media enterprise like the ISFI (page 8). The Council also states how "the reporting system is also very resource demanding, and often not included in the funding" (2017: 8). Consequently, the Sámi face a labour-intensive struggle to navigate the bureaucracy of EU cultural policy because of their 'marginal' position.

Simultaneously, a report commissioned by the European Audiovisual Observatory in 2019 states "there are no quotas or other binding measures related to diversity (based on ethnic, social or religious origin) in film and audio-visual funds in the EU28" (2019: 58). In the Sámi case, national cultural institutes have taken charge of these quotas. Domestically, countries like Norway provide considerable financial support for organisations like The International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI, est. 2007), which stands as the cornerstone of northern Europe's indigenous cultural industry. But it is also increasingly evident that support for Sámi film production also plays into the diversity and inclusion mandates of their 'majority partners'.

These include Norgesfilm, dedicated to developing VOD services for the Norwegian film industry, lauding the launch of Sapmifilm.com by suggesting that it “confirms once again that Norgesfilm is a preferred partner for any Nordic film institute - this time with a global range” (2021). Here again, gains made in increasing the visibility and viability of a minority film industry are incorporated into the promotional activities of a majority partner, who uses them to espouse their own cultural credentials. Simultaneously, we have seen recognition of the Sámi cause with their incorporation into very mainstream film culture with *Frozen II* (Disney 2019), which not only addresses the Sámi on the narrative level but has also been dubbed into the Sámi language for this small but culturally vital market.

Yet despite these indications of a global reach, the incentives designed to develop and protect Sámi culture in Sweden, Norway and Finland tend to be insular, that is, Sámi media production is subsidised by respective state budgets for public broadcasting largely for domestic audiences, or in a best case scenario throughout the Nordic region. However, as most digital broadcasting rights are region- or country-specific, these do not extend outside of these very limited confines. To compound the problem, from a regional perspective, indigenous media culture is not supported by a specific or uniform mandate. These concerns also apply to subtitling as English continues to be the main language used to distribute Sámi media content transnationally (or alternatively, subtitles are provided in the respective hegemonic national language such as Norwegian or Finnish).

At the same time, the domestic broadcasters, the Norwegian NRK, Finnish YLE and Swedish SVT, do not provide Sámi subtitles to any Sámi-speaking programmes, and nor do they provide subtitling in the different Sámi languages for programmes in Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish. While there is a strong push to address these issues – particularly when it comes to reflecting the diversity of the Sámi languages in subtitling – there has been resistance from all Nordic states to supporting a transnational or regionally centralised indigenous media industry despite the ISFI’s efforts to expand outside Norway. Even as they continue to collaborate with media professionals from these different countries, the organisation has struggled to establish links in Sweden and Finland. Arguably, these issues are exaggerated by the fragmented relationship the Sámi have with EU policy.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Universities are often accused of living in an ‘ivory tower’ that, oblivious to the madding crowd, launches recommendations left and right without taking into account an audiovisual sector in permanent crisis. Everywhere and endlessly, it is often said that it is easy from a university to pontificate about maintaining the original identity of the work, but it is not so easy for European filmmakers or distributors who want their audiovisual works to

achieve the greatest possible global impact.

It may be sufficient to explore the immediate history of the European audiovisual industry to realise the fallacy of such diatribes. Europe must break away from this imposed game in which it has played the role of a recipient consumer since the middle of the 20th century while other hegemonic markets continue to wield substantial power as distributors and producers. But simultaneously, we must be mindful of the power imbalances that exist within Europe and the ways they can enact a similar politics of displacement and marginalisation, or of hegemony and alterity, where minority populations are excluded through language use policies. Here, notions like original language or the use of subtitling can reinforce a sense of internal marginality where, for example, the Sámi are ‘overwritten’ by the language policies of their host nations or by the demands of a marketplace predicated on hegemonic English.

In this respect, the conclusions that are pointed out, as the end of this paper, are intended to be respectful recommendations that contribute to a change in current European audiovisual dynamics.

1. We point to the urgent need, in the political context of the EU, for a redefinition of the nationality of audiovisual work and further consideration of post- or pre-national cultural identities like those of the Sámi.
2. Based on the above definition, it will be possible to activate a protection system for current European audiovisual heritage anchored in the establishment of solid inclusion and exclusion criteria for each audiovisual work.
3. In this protection, it will be essential to link the original linguistic choice of each audiovisual work, from its ideation and production process, in order to be eligible to apply for European audiovisual funding.
4. A redefinition of these explicit conditions for the use of non-hegemonic languages in origin and their preservation through distribution and dissemination, or screening and consumption, either in original version or subtitled, is essential and urgent.
5. It is essential and urgent to recognise in audiovisual work an unequivocal heritage value for European culture as a whole as well as its particular forms as evidence of the cultural identity of each audiovisual work.
6. Debates on Sámi language representation open up a whole legacy of colonisation. Generations of Sámi have been excluded from the language as a result of enforced assimilation policies and still experience the repercussions. Film and media can rectify these losses but it is important to understand how language has become deeply political in this context. Language revitalisation is a key target set by Nordic cultural institutions, including the respective national film bodies. However, elsewhere scholars highlight how these investments reflect a broader cultural agenda on enhancing diversity and inclusion (Moffat 2017). In one sense, while these are positive developments, the national

film bodies benefit from this arrangement as recognised investors in ‘marginal or minority cultures’. However, under the current funding arrangements, creative freedom and enterprise within the Sámi media industry are subject to regulatory and appraisal processes that arguably reproduce these marginal conditions (Moffat 2020: 2017).<sup>21</sup>

7. Language also plays a central role in access to these resources. It is both essential to the survival of Sámi culture, but also a deeply ideological part of a cultural policing used to classify or emphasise who belongs within Sámi culture and who benefits from state funding. Contemporary investment in language also contributes to a loss of historical context around the erasure of Sámi language through colonial practices. Investment in culture through language also absolves and displaces other economic and political matters. It is perhaps ironic that those without the language have more to say on the subject precisely because their lack of voice reflects the realities of colonialism past and present, especially as the Sámi continue to lack a voice literally and figuratively in EU political forums.
8. Film and media culture are essential tools for keeping languages alive. They also provide ways of challenging harmful tropes about the Sámi that continue to prevail in popular culture. However, going forward, we must establish what kind of access non-speakers have to film and media funding – how can the Sámi express themselves and their position on the margins of different cultural agendas? We must ask how the current institutions on all sides can adequately capture and reflect these exclusions in ways that hold the authorities accountable, especially when discrimination against the Sámi remains prevalent throughout the region. By being marginalised on a variety of platforms – whether these be cultural or political, economic or industrial – Sámi filmmakers navigate the boundaries and challenges of an EU media landscape that does not provide them with sufficient recognition, even as they are frequently held up as examples of positive developments in their domestic majority national film cultures, often to the benefit of these majority cultures at the expense of the Sámi’s original cultural or political agendas. Here, while the Sámi are given funding, their production modes or attempts at pooling together industrial resources are rarely protected by any kind of transregional/transnational policy – especially ones that would force Nordic cultural institutes to commit to ongoing support. This is especially visible as an imbalance when organisations like The Nordic Film Fund operate precisely for the purpose of protecting and highlighting the five Nordic film cultures in a transnational marketplace through co-production and promotional funding (in addition, of course, to the majority support received from the domestic film institutes). In comparison, any scraps that fall into the funding infrastructure for Sámi film and media are minor and piecemeal at best. These perspectives reinforce our argument that investment in

Sámi language media is part of a public diplomacy strategy where funding, in this instance, is another means of control rather than empowerment.

## Notes

1. FundéuRAE: <https://www.fundeu.es/recomendacion/lenguas-minoritarias-y-lenguas-minorizadas-52/>
2. The consequences of these trends have been analysed by some scholars of audiovisual translation, such as Panayiotis (2020), who warn that the videogame market outperforms the film industry and the music industry in gross income in addition to its undeniable penetration in First World households, especially among the younger consumer target. However, it is clear that there is a prevalence of videogames as the first option for audiovisual entertainment: if this prevalence does not involve deep (and free) thinking about videogames’ cultural and social impact, it will be the companies who will make all the decisions, both about their production and marketing chain and also on reducing a cultural fact (omnipresent among the youngest age ranges) to a mere fact of consumption, located on the margins of the most substantial culture.
3. As indicated by O’Connell: “The production and translation of written and/or audiovisual material for children is central to the development of the younger generation’s linguistic skills and is, therefore, of crucial importance to the survival of the minority language into the future.” (O’Connell 2003: 61)
4. Although this is a matter that goes beyond the objectives outlined for this article, it would also be possible to analyse what type of resources have been developed by other European nations that, since they are not recognised as states, lack the regulatory capacity to protect their respective cultural identities: this is the case of the “Stateless Nation” in Schlesinger’s definition (2000: 19-20).
5. For decades, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, better known by its acronym UNESCO (<https://en.unesco.org/>), has been calling for help from the international community in order to encourage a sense of heritage in culture. Currently, UNESCO programmes are aligned with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda, as agreed upon at the UN General Assembly in 2015..
6. <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention/texts>
7. [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000124687\\_page=67](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000124687_page=67)
8. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
9. [https://www.parlamentodegalicia.es/sitios/web/BibliotecaLeisdeGalicia/Lei\\_4\\_2008.pdf](https://www.parlamentodegalicia.es/sitios/web/BibliotecaLeisdeGalicia/Lei_4_2008.pdf)
10. [http://www.parlamentodegalicia.es/sitios/web/BibliotecaLeisdeGalicia/Lei9\\_2011.pdf](http://www.parlamentodegalicia.es/sitios/web/BibliotecaLeisdeGalicia/Lei9_2011.pdf)
11. [https://www.cac.cat/sites/default/files/2020-06/llei\\_11\\_2007.pdf](https://www.cac.cat/sites/default/files/2020-06/llei_11_2007.pdf)
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16. <https://www.iberley.es/legislacion/decreto-179-2019-19-nov-c-p-vasco-normalizacion-uso-lenguas-oficiales-instituciones-locales-26430171>
17. Linked to the aforementioned regulations, the consideration of “European audiovisual content” has been granted depending on the location and origin of the owners of the companies that are candidates for obtaining European funds, as well as the technical and artistic audiovisual production team: two factors that (regardless of other factors, such as the theme or the original language) have become the ultimate determinants of the nationality of the audiovisual work.
18. These film industries are premised on minority languages (such as Finnish and to a lesser extent the Scandinavian languages) which are protected by domestic legislation and film policy. There is, then, a clear set of considerations in place for these five national film industries to be considered as small (see Hjort & Petrie 2007) or even marginal – especially if we consider the role of Finnish films in the Nordic ‘constellation’, seen as culturally and linguistically different from its Scandinavian counterparts.
19. This is a real Catch-22 situation that structures most of the contemporary Sámi production, positioning the Sámi in a problematic role characterised by alterity and difference, a position that the very act of evoking one’s historical and sovereign identity reinforces. These contradictions are reflected at all levels of Sámi film culture. Thematically, the politics of contemporary Sámi cinema evokes transitory identities and contrasting lifestyles. Aesthetically and narratively, Sámi films combine observational and activist filmmaking practices with the type of explicit political messages that pertain to postcolonial cinema. In this, they maintain a conflicted status: their themes take issue with historical injustice and the importance of cultural and political Sámi sovereignty, but as film productions, they largely rely on the funding and distribution mechanisms of the host state, despite their small budgets and digital form.
20. The politics of “giving and withholding recognition” (Taylor 2011: 36) adopted by the democratic states of these Nordic countries structures much of the production infrastructure and thematic scope of Sámi cinema produced. But simultaneously, a politics of diversity requires that the Sámi are able to enunciate their own perspectives, though the scope and effectiveness of these strategies remain topics of debate.
21. Indeed, the funding dynamics underpinning the Sámi media industry are piecemeal, where organisations like the

ISFI have to reapply for funding annually. Consequently, the Sámi film industries are not supported by a long-term funding mechanism, especially one that would protect them and enhance their visibility on a transnational or even regional level like the EU.

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# Galician Youths and Screens: A Sociolinguistic Approach

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## Abstract

*In the audiovisual field, what impact do communicative uses have on languages and identities? This article offers an approach to the linguistic uses and attitudes of Galician youth in relation to the audiovisual sphere and ICTs. The text addresses the problems that arise in communities with minority languages and points out the possibility of creating decentralised communication spaces and horizontal networks that strengthen the use of their own languages.*

## Keywords

*Youth, screens, sociolinguistics, Galician, audiovisual, language.*

## Resum

*En l'àmbit audiovisual, quin impacte tenen els hàbits comunicatius sobre les llengües i les identitats? Aquest article ofereix una aproximació sobre els usos i les actituds lingüístiques de la joventut gallega en relació amb l'audiovisual i les TIC. El text aborda la problemàtica que se suscita en les comunitats de llengües minoritzades i apunta la possibilitat de crear espais de comunicació descentralitzats i de xarxes horitzontals que potenciïn l'ús de les llengües pròpies.*

## Paraules clau

*Joventut, pantalles, sociolingüística, gallec, audiovisual, llengua.*

The new information and communication technologies are revolutionising the media and the ways we interact, communication management and consumption habits, especially with regard to audiovisual products, and are having a decisive impact on languages and identities. Languages play a key role in all of them. Viewed from the standpoint of communities with a minoritised language, the new technologies have a contradictory effect. On the one hand, they are hegemonized by the dominant cultures and languages and contribute powerfully to reinforcing this hegemonic position. On the other hand, they offer the opportunity to create horizontal networks and decentralised spaces of communication and thus can provide new opportunities for communities with a minority language. Their future possibilities largely depend on their ability to make the most of them. This challenge primarily occurs in the younger generations, who are at the centre of the board where this game is being played out.

This article provides a quantitative sociolinguistic approach to Galician youths' language uses and attitudes in audiovisuals and the new technologies. The two main sources of data analysed for this purpose are the 'Structural Household Survey', specifically the module on the knowledge and use of the Galician language, developed by the Galician Statistical Institute (2018)<sup>1</sup> and the study on Language Practices and Attitudes of Youths in Galicia,

conducted by the Galician Culture Council, 2017.<sup>2</sup> We shall situate these data in a diachronic perspective and analyse them within the framework of the language policies developed by the Galician autonomous government in the past decade.

The case of Galician can be considered paradigmatic of linguistic minoritisation, yet also serve as a reminder of the need to promote diversity policies that preferably focus on youths and audiovisuals. The data we present show that without a steadfast, well-guided language support policy that allows the opportunities afforded by the new technologies to be harnessed, they will only help to reinforce the minoritisation of subordinate languages like Galician.

## 1. The sociolinguistic situation in Galicia and its recent evolution

The sociolinguistic context in which youths in Galicia exist can be defined by three features: a) the considerable rootedness of Galician as the language spoken by half the population and known by almost all of it (Monteagudo, Loredó, Vázquez 2016: 37-76); b) unequal bilingualism, rooted in and characterised by diglossia, with Spanish as the dominant language and Galician as the subordinate language (Monteagudo 2017: 15-19 & 23-

28); and c) contradictory evolutionary trends, with Galician gaining spaces in different social spheres, especially in public life and institutional activities, while Spanish remains dominant in decisive spheres (Ramallo 2018: 479-481; Monteagudo 2020: 33-44).

The process of language shift, which experienced extraordinary acceleration during the Franco dictatorship, did not halt during the democratic/autonomous community period, even though it did experience brief phases in which it rallied or slowed down. However, language policies issued by the different social and political stakeholders fostered the expansion of the spheres of use of Galician in the local and regional administrations, the educational system and some institutions, and contributed to improving its cultural prestige. In this sense, the founding of the Radio Television Company of Galicia was extremely important; since 1985 a TV and a radio station have operated under its aegis and, as we shall see, have a considerable audience (Monteagudo 2019: 43-44).

The language shift from Galician to Spanish is fuelled by two types of language change: a) the kind that occurs within families, with the abandonment of the transmission of Galician from parents to children (Monteagudo, Loredó, Vázquez 2016: 77-93; Loredó, Monteagudo 2017), and b) the kind that happens when individuals add Spanish to their language practices (Monteagudo, Loredó, Vázquez 2016: 103-116). That is, they occur from the rupture in intergenerational language transmission and individual language change. In the former, the individuals directly affected are members of the younger generations, as Galician is no longer their initial language learned from their parents but is instead replaced by the dominant language. In the latter, the addition of Spanish into the individual Galician-speaker's language practices entails the use of the dominant language in the spheres where it is imposed by the sociolinguistic context itself and/or by implicit norms—which are diglossic—on the use of each of the languages (Monteagudo, Loredó, Vázquez 2016: 95-102 & 117-131).

The above is a brief sketch of the sociolinguistic context in which Galician youths live, a context in which all kinds of social

pressures towards Castilianisation, both formal and informal, are particularly strong and are felt particularly keenly in younger age groups. Thus, according to the figures collected by the Galician Statistical Institute in 2018, that year 31% of the population living in Galicia always spoke Galician, 22% spoke it more frequently than Spanish, 23% spoke more Spanish than Galician and 24% were monolingual Spanish speakers.<sup>3</sup> These percentages are quite balanced in terms of the figures, but in reality, they are heavily imbalanced in their social distribution and strongly polarised, especially in the axes of the place of residence (urban – non-urban), educational level (low – medium or high), social status (wealthy – modest) and age (younger cohorts – older cohorts). In each of these axes, Spanish is predominant in the first element of the pair and Galician in the second one (Monteagudo, Loredó, Vázquez 2016: 117-131).

If we compare the data above for the entire population with those found in the younger age groups (Tables 1 and 2), according to this survey, in 2018 only 26% of the individuals between the ages of 5 and 14 only spoke Galician and 37% of the individuals between the ages of 15 and 29 did. In themselves, the data reveal the advance in the language shift process and the increasing difficulties of maintaining the language among young, adolescent or young adult speakers. These same tables provide data that give an idea of the downturn in the use of Galician in recent decades. As seen, the period with the greatest regression is the years 2008-2013. Not coincidentally, this dovetails with the most heated phase in the language debate in public opinion due to the dissemination of discourses on the 'imposition of Galician', not only from the dominant media but also from political entities within Galicia's regional government and from the Partido Popular political party, which wins majorities in Galicia and has been at the helm of the Xunta de Galicia regional government since 2009 (Monteagudo, Loredó, Vázquez 2016: 189-195; Monteagudo 2021).

The 2018 data seem to indicate that there has been a defensive reaction in the Galician linguistic community, and for the first time the IGE's macro-survey does not report a regression in the

**Table 1. Language habitually spoken by the population aged 5 to 14, in percentages**

| Year        | More or always in Galician | More or always in Spanish |
|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2003        | 40                         | 60                        |
| 2008        | 36                         | 64                        |
| 2013        | 25                         | 75                        |
| <b>2018</b> | <b>26</b>                  | <b>74</b>                 |

Source: Authors. Galician Statistical Institute.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1. Language habitually spoken by the population aged 15 to 29, in percentages**

| Any         | More or always in Galician | More or always in Spanish |
|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1992        | 49                         | 51                        |
| 2008        | 43                         | 57                        |
| 2013        | 37                         | 63                        |
| <b>2018</b> | <b>37</b>                  | <b>63</b>                 |

Source: Authors via Sociolinguistic Seminar 1994, 1995<sup>5</sup> and Galician Statistical Institute (2003, 2008, 2013, 2018).<sup>6</sup>

use of Galician but a stalemate in the language shift process. Thus, in the historical series of sociolinguistic surveys, for the first time there is an increase in the number of habitual speakers of Galician, from 51.49% (2013) to 52.29% (2018), if we add the percentages on 'always Galician' and 'more Galician than Spanish'. This is a very tenuous increase, a scant +0.80%, but it is interesting to note that this increase is primarily in the age group 5 to 14 (+0.98%) and 15 to 29 (+0.70%), and in the 30 to 49 age group to a lesser extent (+0.33%), while in the over-50 age group Galician has regressed slightly.

Might this be the first symptom of the much-awaited recovery? Time will tell, but in any case, one of the decisive battlegrounds for the future of the language, a battle being waged in the younger age groups, is precisely the new communication technologies. That is, this game is being played on screens, so we shall now turn our attention to them.

### 3. Background (1): Swan song of television (2003-2008)

To consider the background, we shall draw from two reports, the first on the population in general published under the title of *Language, Society and Media* (*Lingua, sociedade e medios de comunicación*, Lorenzo Suárez, Ramallo, Casares Berg 2008) and the second focused specifically on youth, entitled *Youths, Language and Social Media* (*Mocidade, lingua e redes sociais*, Ramallo 2012). The latter is centred on Galician youths' uses, opinions and attitudes regarding their own language in social media. The 2008 report published by the Galician Culture Council on language and the media enables us to revisit the situation prior to the social media boom.<sup>7</sup> As the authors of the study point out, in 2003 the new technologies were not yet widespread among the population, with very low penetration levels; the daily Internet consumption rate was 10% and seven out of every ten people had never browsed online. However, within four years, specifically between 2003 and 2007, the percentage of Galician households with an Internet connection had risen from 21.1% to 32.3%, yet by 2007 it had still not reached one-third of households and the percentage of broadband Internet access was barely 25% of households (Idem: 190-191).

The profile of the regular Internet user was a man under the age of 40 with higher education living in a city with more than 50,000 inhabitants. The gender gap was considerable: the percentage of male users (71%) was more than twice that of female users (29%). In terms of age, almost half the people browsing the web on a daily basis were between the ages of 26 and 40 (47%), while the other half was divided equally among the 18-25 and 41-65 age groups. But to understand this figure, we have to bear in mind the different sizes of the intervals: just eight years in the youngest group (18-25), fifteen years in the second group (26-40) and twenty-five years in the last group (41-65). Bearing this in mind, what stands out is that the most intensive group of users were the younger ones.

In terms of language, browsing the Internet in Galician was at very low percentages: just 1.4% browsed daily in Galician, another 1.3% several times a week and an additional 1.7% once a week, leading to 4.4%. The profile of the Internet user in Galician was similar to Internet users in general (idem: 208-212). These low figures can be explained by the primarily urban profile, the age and the sociocultural level of the majority of users (which fits better with the standard Spanish-speaker than with the Galician-speaker), as well as by the dearth of Internet contents in Galician.

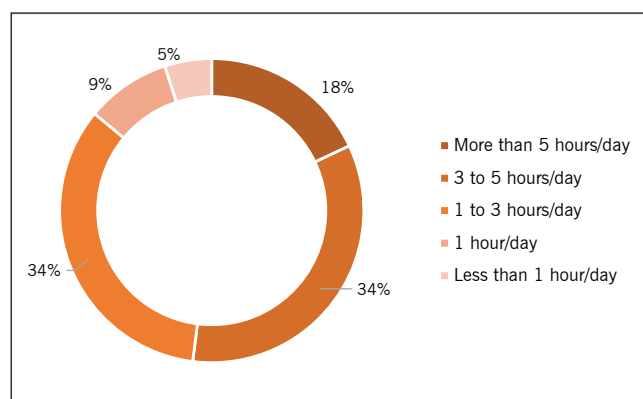
The assessments of the content available in Galician by the survey respondents was a faithful reflection of the situation, as almost three out of four believed that the presence of Galician on the Internet was scarce (73%), compared to 70% who believed its presence on TV was satisfactory.<sup>8</sup> This perception was particularly widespread among people aged 18-25 (83%), whose habitual language was Galician and who wrote it with no difficulties (79%). However, this perception had a broad majority among Spanish-speakers (69%) and bilingual speakers (73%) as well. These results reveal that there was a greater demand for Galician online than there was supply at the time, when TV was still the most important audiovisual medium, at least in Galicia.

### 4. Background (2): Youths online on laptops (2012)

Next, we shall turn to a report focused specifically on the topic at hand: *Youths, Language and Social Media* (*Mocidade, lingua e redes sociais*, Ramallo 2012).<sup>9</sup> The target population of this study is Galician youths over the age of 16 who are students. The percentages on the habitual language—the one that individuals speak on a day-to-day basis—were: 26% Galician, 54% Spanish and 20% both languages.

By 2012, virtually all the youths used the Internet on a daily basis; 86% of them spent more than one hour a day connected, and 52% spent more than three hours (see Graph 1). Seven out of ten respondents always or almost always used their laptop computers as the device they used to connect to the Internet. The second most common device was mobile phones, which 47% of the youths used. The use of desktop computers totalled 37%.

The use of Galician on social media was quite low (Ramallo 2012: 26). The report offers several arguments to explain this. The main one is a lack of knowledge of available resources, but we should also bear in mind the youths' perception of what the social media are used for. If they are only associated with global modes of communication, the difficulties of developing a network in a minority language are enormous. Thus, for the Galician speakers, the web is a domain in which they change their habitual language practices. When observing their behaviour on the three prime social media at the time (Twitter, Facebook and Tuenti) it was found that more than 50% of Galician-speakers exclusively used Galician only on the latter,

**Graph 1. Use of internet by hours per day**

Source: Ramallo 2012: 7.

with a considerable drop in the use of this language on the other two (Figures 1 and 2).

The most widespread opinion was that the presence of Galician on social media was insufficient (70.8%) (Ramallo 2012: 44), thus verifying a clear relationship between habitual language and the perception of the presence of Galician online: 83% of those who regularly spoke Galician believed that the presence of Galician on social media was insufficient, among the bilingual respondents this percentage was 74.3% and among those who habitually speak Spanish it was 63.8% (idem, p. 45). Consequently, 84% of the interviewees asked for a greater presence of the language on the Internet, and this demand was particularly widespread, as expected, among the Galician speakers and especially intense among university students (54% called for much or considerably more).

## 5. Youths and mobile screens, without reference to language (2020)

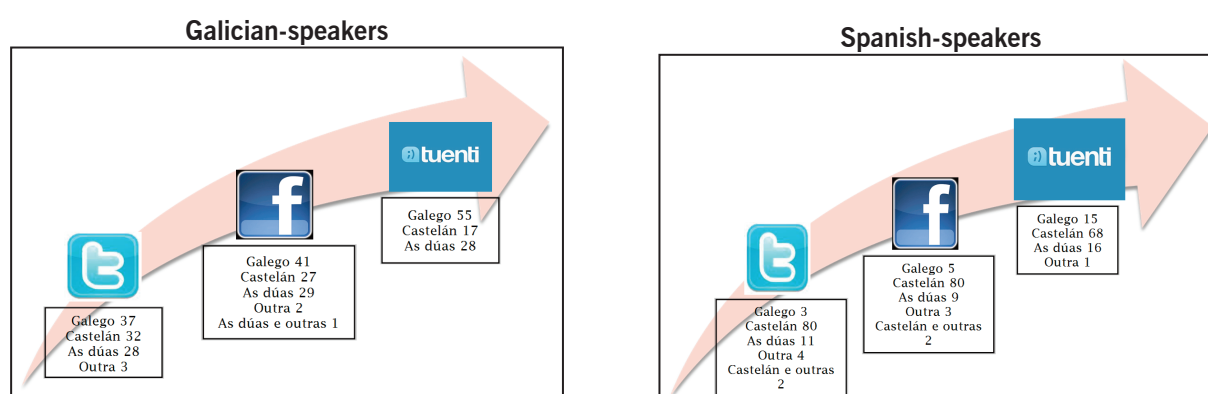
In 2020, the report on 'Youth and ICT' (La juventud y las TIC) was released by the Observatory of the Information Society and Modernisation of Galicia (OSIMGA 2020), dependent on the

Xunta de Galicia regional government. This report provides a set of data that illustrate the topic at hand, yet it surprisingly—and symptomatically—makes no mention of language.<sup>10</sup> According to this report, 99% of individuals between the ages of 16 and 34 use electronic devices, a figure that is 15 percentage points higher than the mean of the population between the ages of 35 and 74. Therefore, the level of Internet use among Galician youths between the ages of 16 and 34 is almost 100%, and 98% of them use it through mobile devices, while 97% of them participate in social media, 94% go online daily and 56% buy clothing and accessories online.

This study does not mention the youths' language practices or preferences, which, as mentioned above, is symptomatic, as this fieldwork was promoted by the Galician regional government. That is, the invisibilisation of the language question is coherent with the weakness of the policies to promote Galician, as a consequence of the turn in language policy in recent years, inspired by the neoliberal dogma of freedom of language (Monteagudo 2021).

## 6. Youths, screens and the Galician language: More demand than supply (2013/2018)

The 'Structural Household survey. Knowledge and use of Galician' (Encuesta estructural a hogares. Conocimiento y uso del gallego) conducted by the Galician Statistical Institute in 2018, offers invaluable information that enables us to relate the variables on the use of the new technologies with the variables on age and language, in addition to offering data that help analyse how they have evolved.<sup>11</sup> Beginning with the consumption of television in Galician, it reveals that it is much more popular among older people, especially people over the age of 65 (Table 3). Young people aged 16 to 29 proportionally consume much less television in Galician than the mean. Thus, while 17.65% of Galicians as a whole primarily consume television content in Galicia, among youths this percentage drops to 6.23%. In terms of the evolution between 2013 and 2018, the general trend among the population is to consume less television in

**Figures 1 and 2. Galician-speakers' and Spanish-speakers' behaviour on social media**

Source: Ramallo 2012: 29. Answers: Galician, Spanish, Both, Other languages, Both and others.

**Table 3. People according to the language they use to watch television by age, in percentages. Galicia**

| Year                              | 2013  | 2018  |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| <b>Always in Galician</b>         |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 1.25  | 1.49  |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 1.21  | 1.17  |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 2.02  | 1.40  |
| 50 to 64 years old                | 2.98  | 2.74  |
| 65 years old or more              | 5.22  | 5.67  |
| Total                             | 2.78  | 2.92  |
| <b>More Galician than Spanish</b> |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 4.21  | 4.74  |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 6.81  | 6.31  |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 11.26 | 8.96  |
| 50 to 64 years old                | 20.48 | 16.09 |
| 65 years old or more              | 33.50 | 26.51 |
| Total                             | 17.09 | 14.73 |
| <b>More Spanish than Galician</b> |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 57.65 | 51.59 |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 60.36 | 58.38 |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 58.39 | 57.92 |
| 50 to 64 years old                | 57.44 | 57.80 |
| 65 years old or more              | 49.75 | 53.11 |
| Total                             | 56.24 | 55.75 |
| <b>Always in Spanish</b>          |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 36.90 | 42.17 |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 31.62 | 34.15 |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 28.32 | 31.72 |
| 50 to 64 years old                | 19.09 | 23.37 |
| 65 years old or more              | 11.52 | 14.71 |
| Total                             | 23.90 | 26.60 |

Source: IGE, *Enquisa estrutural a fogares* [Structural Household Survey] (2018).

Galician, yet among young people it has remained steady or even increased slightly.

Similarly, the percentage of people who watch no TV contents in Galician increases as their age goes down. While this behaviour is limited to 26.6% of the general population, it rises to 42.17% of the population between the ages of 16 and 29. In terms of its evolution over time, the tendency is for there to be more consumers of television solely in Spanish, and the increase among youths and the population as a whole is proportionally similar.

In terms of Internet consumption, as shown in Table 4, only 5.42% of the youths primarily consume contents in Galician, a proportion similar to that of the population as a whole (5.07%). The percentage is low in all age groups, so no major variation

**Table 4. People according to the language they use to browse the Internet by age, in percentages. Galicia**

| Year                              | 2013  | 2018  |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| <b>Always in Galician</b>         |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 0.83  | 1.92  |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 0.66  | 1.51  |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 0.62  | 1.10  |
| 50 years old or more              | 0.59  | 0.97  |
| Total                             | 0.68  | 1.29  |
| <b>More Galician than Spanish</b> |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 2.02  | 3.50  |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 1.64  | 4.08  |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 1.87  | 3.63  |
| 50 years old or more              | 1.40  | 3.86  |
| Total                             | 1.74  | 3.78  |
| <b>More Spanish than Galician</b> |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 26.96 | 28.02 |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 25.65 | 25.98 |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 22.44 | 25.59 |
| 50 years old or more              | 18.26 | 23.65 |
| Total                             | 23.63 | 25.46 |
| <b>Always in Spanish</b>          |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old                | 70.19 | 66.56 |
| 30 to 39 years old                | 72.05 | 68.43 |
| 40 to 49 years old                | 75.07 | 69.69 |
| 50 years old or more              | 79.75 | 71.52 |
| Total                             | 73.95 | 69.47 |

Source: IGE, *Enquisa estrutural a fogares* [Structural Household Survey] (2018).

is found. The evolution over time shows an upswing in Galician, although the change is minor given the low figures. On the other hand, people who consume no content on the Internet in Galician accounted for 69.47% of the population, a percentage which is slightly lower among youths (66.56%).

As shown in Table 5, when there is the possibility of choosing one's favourite language, the proportions who choose Galician rise considerable, which is an indicator that there is a much higher demand than supply. The monolingual preference for Spanish drops to 59.24% in the population as a whole and 55.73% among youths. The difference by age is considerable, as youths are more likely to consume content in Galician when they have the choice to. If we measure the difference between those who do not consume contents in Galician on the Internet

**Table 5. People according to the language they choose to browse the Internet when it is possible to choose by age, in percentages. Galicia**

|                            | 16 to 29 years old | 30 to 39 years old | 40 to 49 years old | 50 years old or more | Total |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Always in Galician         | 8.37               | 11.16              | 8.51               | 5.79                 | 8.13  |
| More Galician than Spanish | 9.52               | 8.47               | 8.74               | 8.39                 | 8.72  |
| More Spanish than Galician | 26.38              | 22.36              | 23.17              | 23.99                | 23.91 |
| Always in Spanish          | 55.73              | 58.01              | 59.58              | 61.82                | 59.24 |
| Total                      | 100                | 100                | 100                | 100                  | 100   |

Source: IGE, *Enquisa estrutural a fogares* [Structural Household Survey] (2018).

**Table 6. People according to the language they choose to participate in social media by age, in percentages. Galicia**

|                    | 16 to 29 years old | 30 to 39 years old | 40 to 49 years old | 50 years old or more | Total |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Always in Galician | 8.84               | 11.04              | 7.83               | 6.43                 | 8.25  |
| More Galician      | 16.91              | 16.57              | 18.69              | 19.13                | 18.03 |
| More Spanish       | 23.06              | 20.71              | 21.50              | 21.53                | 21.65 |
| Always in Spanish  | 51.20              | 51.69              | 51.97              | 52.91                | 52.07 |
| Total              | 100                | 100                | 100                | 100                  | 100   |

Source: IGE, *Enquisa estrutural a fogares* [Structural Household Survey] (2018).

in general and those who do not when they have the ability to choose, almost 15% of youth access contents in Galician when they have to chance to choose.

Table 6 shows that in social media, Galician is primarily used by 24.28% of the population, with a similar percentage among young people. In fact, the variation among the different age groups is minimal, but it is worth noting that at younger ages the percentages of users in Galician and Galician speakers, in general, are more similar (compare them with the figures shown in section 1, Tables 1 and 2). People who never use Galician in social media account for a little over half, 52.07%, also with little variation among age groups.

On the other hand, we see that 60.7% of the population wants more contents in Galician on television and 54.6% on the Internet (Table 7). Plus, we can detect a positive evolution in favour of Galician but little variation by age. In any event, this positive result can be understood as an indicator of a higher demand for products in the Galician language.

**Table 7. People who would like more contents in the media in Galician by age. Galicia**

| Year               | 2013  | 2018  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| <b>Television</b>  |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old | 56.53 | 58.15 |
| 30 to 39 years old | 54.22 | 60.93 |
| 40 to 49 years old | 55.81 | 61.63 |
| 50 to 64 years old | 54.16 | 60.90 |
| Total              | 54.93 | 60.72 |
| <b>Internet</b>    |       |       |
| 16 to 29 years old | 53.35 | 54.48 |
| 30 to 39 years old | 50.52 | 56.55 |
| 40 to 49 years old | 48.33 | 53.71 |
| 50 to 64 years old | 41.75 | 46.45 |
| Total              | 50.53 | 54.58 |

Source: IGE, *Enquisa estrutural a fogares* [Structural Household Survey] (2018).

## 7. Use of Galician via ICTs among Galician youths

This section is based on a specific analysis of the data matrix from a study by the Galician Culture Observatory (OBSERVATORIO DA CULTURA GALEGA 2017).<sup>12</sup> This questionnaire has three sections which include response categories that enable the use of certain media and the consumption of audiovisual products to be determined.

### 7.1 Exposure to Galician: The Galician language on television, radio, music and the Internet-related media

To evaluate the exposure to Galician among the young survey respondents, three common contexts for them were chosen: radio and television consumption, music consumption and the use of social media, blogs and other Internet-related media. As shown by the figures in Table 8, when the respondents were asked how they would score their exposure to Galician in these fields since childhood, the highest percentage of responses over 5 were recorded in radio and television consumption: 43.9% reported a high or fairly high presence of Galician in the TV programmes they watched as children, compared to 38.6% who said that Galician was scarce or non-existent. In the two other contexts, exposure to Galician was lower, as in both cases scores under 5 predominate: 67.3% in music and 61.5% in social media, blogs and other Internet-related media. In both of them, the most common response was 'No or almost no presence of Galician'—a score from 0 to 2—which was chosen by 46.1% and 41.5%, respectively.

These figures enable us to conclude that in none of the three fields do Galician youths find a high exposure to Galician, and it is especially low in music consumption and communication via the Internet.

The analysis of these variables as quantitative indicators through statistics like the mean enable us to obtain summary values that make comparisons easier (Table 9). Thus, the level of exposure to Galician has a mean of 4.97 points over 10 in radio and television programmes, which is clearly higher than what was found in both the use of Internet-related media (3.53) and music consumption (3.12).

The mean on the youths' exposure to Galician in their radio and television consumption reached 5.30 in the 20-24 age cohort, compared to 4.58 in the younger cohort. It was also over 5 in those whose mother tongue is Galician or who were raised speaking both Galician and Spanish (5.34 and 5.56), while it drops to 4.33 among those whose mother tongue is Spanish. According to the language they use the most common, the presence of Galician in the radio and television they consumed is only under 5 among those who only speak Spanish (4.03).

In the case of the music to which they were exposed, the level of exposure to Galician in the different segments analysed was always under 4 on this 10-point scale, that is, in the low-exposure zone. The exposure to Galician in the music they listened to since they were children was higher among the respondents whose mother tongue is Galician (3.72, compared to 2.47 for those who were raised in Spanish) and shows its

**Table 8. Rate the presence of the Galician language in a normal week in the following contexts, using a scale from 0 to 10 in which 0 means 'no presence' and 10 means 'strong presence'**

|                                                                  | 0 – 2<br>(No or almost<br>no presence of<br>Galician) | 3 – 4 (Little/<br>some presence<br>of Galician) | 5<br>(Neither a lot<br>nor a little) | 6 – 7<br>(Fair presence<br>of Galician) | 8 a 10<br>(Strong presence<br>of Galician) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| The radio and TV programmes I was exposed to since I was a child | 19.1                                                  | 19.6                                            | 17.4                                 | 27.6                                    | 16.3                                       |
| The music I was exposed to since I was a child                   | 46.1                                                  | 21.2                                            | 14.8                                 | 10.9                                    | 7.0                                        |
| Social media, blogs and other Internet-related media             | 41.5                                                  | 20.0                                            | 14.5                                 | 13.5                                    | 10.6                                       |

Source: Authors, based on the Galician Culture Council, *Prácticas e actitudes lingüísticas da mocidade en Galicia*. [Linguistic Attitudes and Practices of Youths in Galicia].

**Table 9. Rate the presence of the Galician language in a normal week in the following contexts, using a scale from 0 to 10 in which 0 means 'no presence' and 10 means 'strong presence'**

|                                                                  | Mean | Standard deviation |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| The radio and TV programmes I was exposed to since I was a child | 4.97 | 2.61               |
| The music I was exposed to since I was a child                   | 3.12 | 2.64               |
| Social media, blogs and other Internet-related media             | 3.53 | 2.75               |

Source: Authors, based on the Galician Culture Council, *Prácticas e actitudes lingüísticas da mocidade en Galicia*. [Linguistic Attitudes and Practices of Youths in Galicia].

highest values according to habitual language among those who only or predominantly speak Galician (3.65 and 3.72, respectively, which contrasts with 2.07 for those who only speak Spanish). The mean exposure to Galician in Internet communication does not reach 5 in any segment in the table, and only in five of the 27 segments is it over 4; therefore, in all the response segments, the mean is also located in the low-exposure zone.

In any event, several segments show significant differences, such that exposure to Galician online is lower as the population density rises (from 4.19 to 2.87), socioeconomic status rises (from 3.9 to 2.68) and Spanish predominates in education (from 4.38 to 3). On this point, mother tongue and habitual language also bear an influence, as exposure to Galician on the Internet is much more common among the youths whose mother tongue is Galician (4.50, compared to 2.74 for those who were raised in Spanish), as well as among those who habitually speak only Galician (4.72) or more Galician than Spanish (4.26), compared to 2.43 among those who only tend to speak Spanish.

## 7.2 Rules on using Galician in bilingual situations: Language used to respond to an electronic message, text message or WhatsApp written in Galician

A full 81.8% of the Galician adolescents surveyed tend to respond in Galician to communications written in Galician that they receive electronically or by text message or WhatsApp (Table 10). Thus, apart from the 3.8% who said that they respond either way, 14.4% of the Galician youths said that they respond in Spanish to communications that were originally written in Galician.

According to the segmented analysis, the main differences occur according to the place of residence, mother tongue and habitual language. The percentage of those who respond in Spanish is higher the larger the place of residence (from 8.75% to 21%) and the more Spanish they speak in their daily lives (from 2% of the segments where the use of Galician predominates to 37.5% in those who tend to speak Spanish). It is also much higher among those whose mother tongue is Spanish (26.9%, compared to 2.8% of those who were raised in Galician). Furthermore, significant differences are also found according to sex, age and socioeconomic status, as the

percentage of female youths who tend to respond to this type of communication in Spanish is 5.1 points higher than their male counterparts, and it is almost 7 points higher among youths under the age of 20 than among those aged 20 to 24. By status levels, we found that this percentage is 22% among those with an upper middle/upper class status, compared to values for the other socioeconomic statuses, which range between 10.8% and 14.7%.

## 7.3. Willingness to use Galician in Internet-related communications

As seen in Table 11, we can see a clear positive willingness among the Galician youths surveyed to use Galician in their communication on Internet-related media, as more than 66% rate their willingness between 8 and 10 on a 10-point scale. Thus, 66.5% rate their willingness to use Galician in the email at 8 to 10, another 66.5% rate their willingness to use it in a social media like Facebook the same, while 68.9% say the same for WhatsApp. On the negative side, we should note that around 12% of the youths surveyed expressed no or almost no willingness to use Galician in these three areas (scored at 0 to 2). These percentages stand at around 19% and 20% if we also bear in mind those who assign ratings of less than 5 on a 10-point scale.

Analysing these variables not nominally but quantitatively, we find the mean that summarises this willingness (Table 12). The values obtained show a willingness to use Galician on WhatsApp of 7.16 over 10, to use it on a social media like Facebook of 7.05 and to use it in an email with a friend of 7.01. That is, the mean response is 'quite willing' to use Galician.

If we use this quantitative analysis in the segmented analysis, we find that this willingness to use Galician in communications on the Internet varies significantly according to age, place of residence, educational level, socioeconomic status, mother tongue, habitual language and presence of Galician throughout their education. The respondents ages 20 to 24 show more willingness (values around 7.6) than those aged 15 to 19 (values between 6.3 and 6.5). We also found a greater willingness the less populous the place of residence is, reaching values over 8 in sparsely-populated areas compared to values that never exceed 6.25 in densely-population areas, and the higher

**Table 10. Responses to the question: Generally speaking, what language do/did you use to respond to an electric message, text message or WhatsApp written in Galician?**

|                              | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Galician                     | 651       | 81,8       |
| Spanish                      | 115       | 14,4       |
| Either ( <i>not stated</i> ) | 30        | 3,8        |
| Total                        | 796       | 100,0      |

Source: Authors, based on the Galician Culture Council, *Prácticas e actitudes lingüísticas da mocidade en Galicia*. [Linguistic Attitudes and Practices of Youths in Galicia].

**Table 11. Please tell us how willing you would be to use Galician in the following situations, using a scale from 0 to 10 in which 0 means 'not at all willing' and 10 means 'very willing'**

|                                            | 0 – 2<br>(not or<br>seldom<br>willing) | 3 – 4<br>(a little/<br>somewhat<br>willing) | 5<br>(neither a<br>lot nor a<br>little) | 6 – 7<br>(quite willing) | 8 – 10<br>(totally<br>willing) | Total |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| In an email with a friend                  | 12.7                                   | 7.1                                         | 13.6                                    | 11.6                     | 54.9                           | 100.0 |
| In a WhatsApp                              | 12.1                                   | 7.1                                         | 11.9                                    | 11.4                     | 57.5                           | 100.0 |
| In a social media like Facebook or similar | 11.5                                   | 8.4                                         | 13.6                                    | 10.7                     | 55.8                           | 100.0 |

Source: Authors, based on the Galician Culture Council, *Prácticas e actitudes lingüísticas da mocidade en Galicia*. [Linguistic Attitudes and Practices of Youths in Galicia].

**Table 12. Please tell us how willing you would be to use Galician in the following situations, using a scale from 0 to 10 in which 0 means 'not at all willing' and 10 means 'very willing'**

|                                            | Mean | Standard<br>deviation |
|--------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| In an email with a friend                  | 7.01 | 3.37                  |
| In a WhatsApp                              | 7.16 | 3.30                  |
| In a social media like Facebook or similar | 7.05 | 3.27                  |

Source: Authors, based on the Galician Culture Council, *Prácticas e actitudes lingüísticas da mocidade en Galicia*. [Linguistic Attitudes and Practices of Youths in Galicia].

the educational level, with values at around 5.5 at the lower levels and scores around 7.8 among the respondents who had a university education. The differences are also notable with regard to socioeconomic status, with higher mean values the lower the socioeconomic status, going from mean scores of around 6 to means near or even higher than 8.

In any event, as expected, the variables related to mother tongue or habitual language are those that show the greatest differences among the different segments. Thus, the willingness to use Galician is notably higher among those whose mother tongue is Galician (scores between 8.83 and 9.01) compared to those raised in Spanish (5.44-5.58). But the greatest contrast is unquestionably related to habitual language, as those who only speak Galician show a willingness of +/-9.5, while the same values are between 4.49 and 4.66 among those who only speak Spanish. Finally, we also found that the willingness to use Galician in communications on the Internet is above 8 in those who had a stronger presence of the Galician language in their education, while the lowest means were found among the youths who were exposed the least to Galician in the classroom (+/-6.4).

## 8. Conclusions

Youths, a key sector for the future of the Galician language, are intensely Castilianised and totally integrated into the world of the new technologies; that is, their culture is fundamentally audiovisual. Spanish predominates on the screens of Galician youths even more strikingly than in their oral language practices in everyday life. However, the supply of products in Galician is far below the real and potential demand, while public policies in this field are virtually non-existent. It is crucial to implement a strategy to promote Galician among youths that pay priority attention to audiovisuals, social media and the new technologies.

## Notes

1. [http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar\\_actividade\\_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004](http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar_actividade_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004). As explained on the website of the Galician Statistical Institute (IGE), the 'Encuesta estructural a hogares' (Structural Household Survey, EEF), previously called the 'Encuesta de condiciones de vida de las familias' (Survey on Families' Living Conditions), is an annual statistical activity that the IGE has undertaken since 1999. It is a survey targeted at Galician households to get information on their socioeconomic characteristics. It contains two modules: the first general one that is repeated every year, designed to collect information on basic variables, and a second specific module voted to thematic sections. For the characteristics and methodology of this statistical too, see [http://www.ige.eu/estatico/pdfs/s3/metodoloxias/met\\_EEF\\_gl.pdf](http://www.ige.eu/estatico/pdfs/s3/metodoloxias/met_EEF_gl.pdf).
2. 'Practicas e actitudes lingüísticas da mocidade en Galicia'. [http://consellodacultura.gal/mediateca/extras/CCG\\_2017\\_Practicas-e-actitudes-linguisticas-da-mocidade-en-Galicia.pdf](http://consellodacultura.gal/mediateca/extras/CCG_2017_Practicas-e-actitudes-linguisticas-da-mocidade-en-Galicia.pdf).
3. [http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar\\_actividade\\_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004](http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar_actividade_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004).
4. [http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar\\_actividade\\_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004](http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar_actividade_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004).
5. <http://publicacions.academia.gal/index.php/rag/catalog/view/224/225/743-1>.
6. [http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar\\_actividade\\_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004](http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar_actividade_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004).
7. This study is written based on a survey conducted in 2003 to a sample of 1203 individuals representing the entire Galician population aged 18 or over (Lorenzo Suárez, Ramallo, Casares Berg 2008: 185-189).
8. About the latter, it should be borne in mind that the general channels on TVG, whose programming was entirely in Galician, were the preferred media by more than half the Galician population (51%), and, in fact, 61% of the population used it daily. However, generally speaking, TV was 'the medium with the oldest population, with a very low penetration level among the younger population' (Lorenzo Suárez, Ramallo, Casares Berg 2008: 193). Thus, the profile of the TVG audience was older viewers living in smaller population nuclei and with low educational levels, although almost half the individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 also watched it on a daily basis (Idem: 204-211).
9. For the fieldwork, a non-probabilistic sample by quotas was used, consisting of 1209 units. To create the quotas, two variables were used: educational level (baccalaureate, vocational education and university) and place where the school was located (urban, non-urban). For the description and methodology of this study, see Ramallo 2012: 6.
10. [http://www.osimga.gal/sites/w\\_osimga/files/documentos/monografico\\_mozos\\_2019\\_v1.pdf](http://www.osimga.gal/sites/w_osimga/files/documentos/monografico_mozos_2019_v1.pdf).
11. [http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar\\_actividade\\_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004](http://www.ige.eu/web/mostrar_actividade_estadistica.jsp?idioma=gl&codigo=0206004).
12. This survey was conducted on a representative sample of Galician youths (population between the ages of 15 and 24) determined proportionally by age, sex and place of residence. The age strata were two five-year groups: 15 to 19 and 20 to 24. The place of residence strata were defined by the 'Indicator of the degree of urbanization of the municipalities of Galician' applied by the Galician Statistical Institute (IGE), which classifies towns into three categories. The sample size was n=800, achieved through simple random sampling for a confidence level of 95.5% ( $2\sigma$ ), in the hypothesis of maximum variability  $p = q = 5\%$  of a variable of proportions, which provides global data with a maximum associated statistical error of  $\pm 3.5\%$ . The questionnaire was prepared by the Observatory of Galician Culture of the Galician Culture Council and the Sociolinguistic Seminar of the Royal Galician Academy. Many of the variables were designed to allow comparisons with preceding studies inside and outside Galicia. See: [http://consellodacultura.gal/mediateca/extras/CCG\\_2017\\_Practicas-e-actitudes-linguisticas-da-mocidade-en-Galicia.pdf](http://consellodacultura.gal/mediateca/extras/CCG_2017_Practicas-e-actitudes-linguisticas-da-mocidade-en-Galicia.pdf)

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# Accessibility and Standardisation: the Galician Subtitling Conundrum

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## Abstract

*In this day and age, the promotion of Galician as a minoritised language and the provision of equal access to audiovisual content for viewers with and without impairments should be compatible. Both are included within the fifteen inspiring principles of the Galician broadcaster CRTVG. However, when it comes to deciding if the errors made by speakers on TV must be corrected or reproduced in the subtitles, a conflict arises. If errors are corrected to promote good use of the language, viewers with hearing loss will be able to access the content, but they will be excluded from the fact that the speakers are making errors, which motivates this discussion in the first place. Drawing on the first model for the correction/reproduction of errors in Galician subtitling (Martínez Lorenzo 2021) and on a recent survey about this issue with hearing viewers (Suevos 2021), this article looks at the linguistic, social and political implications involved in the attempt to reconcile accessibility and standardisation in Galician subtitling.*

## Keywords

Accessibility, subtitling, Galician, language, audiovisual.

## Resum

*Actualment, la promoció del gallec com a llengua minoritzada i la facilitació d'un accés igualitari a continguts audiovisuals per a les persones espectadores amb discapacitats o sense haurien de ser compatibles. Tots dos aspectes es troben entre els quinze principis inspiradors de l'emissora gallega CRTVG. No obstant això, quan es tracta de decidir si els errors comesos pels parlants a la televisió s'han de corregir o reproduir als subtítols, es genera un conflicte. Si els errors es corregeixen per promoure un bon ús de la llengua, el públic espectador amb problemes d'audició podrà accedir als continguts però no tindrà consciència que les persones parlants cometien errors, que és la qüestió que motiva el debat en primer lloc. Prenent com a base el primer model per a la correcció/reproducció d'errors en la subtitulació en gallec (Martínez Lorenzo 2021) i un estudi recent sobre aquesta qüestió amb espectadors oients (Suevos 2021), aquest article se centra en les repercussions lingüístiques, socials i polítiques de l'intent de conciliar l'accessibilitat i l'estandardització en la subtitulació en gallec.*

## Paraules clau

Accessibilitat, subtitulació, gallec, llengua, audiovisual.

## 1. Media accessibility worldwide

Ever since it was first introduced in the US at the beginning of the 1980s in the form of captions or subtitles for viewers with hearing loss, media accessibility (MA) has evolved significantly, turning into a vibrant area of research, training and professional practice. Over the past years, it has undergone several transformations that have enabled it to become a source of critical reflection and a driver for social change. Greco (2018) refers to these transformations as the three shifts of accessibility: a shift from a particularist account to a universalist account of access, a transition from reactive to proactive models and finally a third shift from a maker-centred to a user-centred approach.

Until very recently, MA has been considered as a room within the overall audiovisual translation (AVT) building. In this

particularist account, MA is the part of AVT that is devoted to blind and deaf users of audiovisual media who may need services such as subtitles, audio description or sign language interpreting/translation. However, the evidence that most access services are actually used by users with no impairments has led to a universalist consideration of MA as concerning “access to media products, services, and environments for all persons who cannot, or cannot properly, access them in their original form” (Greco 2018: 211). Under this consideration, MA encompasses services as varied as audio description, audio narration, dubbing, subtitling, clean audio, screen reading or tactile reproductions.

The second shift identified by Greco (2018) addresses the traditional reactive consideration of MA as an afterthought: access services (and translation) are normally produced over a few days during the distribution stage, for little remuneration

and involving no contact with the creative team of the film or play. Recent initiatives such as accessible filmmaking (Romero-Fresco 2019) and integrated theatre access (Fryer 2018) are proposing new models that consider access from the production stage involving collaboration between creators and access experts.

As for the third shift mentioned by Greco (2018), it is a reminder of the fact that, until very recently, most AVT and MA guidelines were based on the experience of well-seasoned professionals (Carroll & Ivarsson 1998). This is changing too. The cognitive turn experienced by (audiovisual) translation over the past decade (Chaume 2018; O'Brien 2011) has helped to provide guidelines with an empirical and scientific basis (Orero et al. 2018), and the proliferation of audience-reception studies has added a much needed user-led dimension. In a way, guidelines have been democratised insofar as many of them now include the input of a majority of viewers, or of a group that is statistically significant enough to be considered as a majority. This may be regarded as a step in the direction of the “nothing about us without us” slogan that many disabled people have supported for the past decades.

These shifts have helped to address what is termed the maker-expert-user gap (Branson: 2018; Greco: 2018) in MA. This refers to the gaps between those making films and those producing translated and accessible versions (maker-expert gap), between those making films and those receiving translated and accessible versions (maker-user gap) and finally between those producing translated/accessible versions and those receiving them (expert-user gap). Whereas accessible filmmaking and integrated theatre access have gone a long way towards addressing the maker-expert gap, an increasing number of scholars and artists are arguing that the gaps involving users are still far from being addressed. As noted by artist Jodee Mundy (2017), accessibility (understood as a service designed by non-disabled people for a film made by non-disabled people) is not the whole story, and the concepts of inclusion and participation come to the fore:

Access is walking through the door. Inclusion is sitting at the table. Participation is eating the meal and talking about it.

According to this view, most current MA guidelines, with their emphasis on objectivity (their attempt to provide subtitles with an objective description of the sounds that deaf viewers cannot hear, or an objective description of the images that blind users cannot see), may enable users to understand the film, but not necessarily to engage with it. They reveal the non-disabled assumptions of the experts and show that despite being based on reception studies with users (such as, for instance, eye-tracking experiments), the user lens is still not built into them (Kleege 2018). As a reaction to this, an emerging wave of (mostly disabled) scholars and artists are proposing alternative and increasingly creative forms of MA not only to provide access to audiovisual media but also to contribute to a wider fight against

ableism. This can be defined as a type of discrimination against people with disabilities that is not only manifested through individual opinions, but also through forms of exclusion that are codified and naturalised in various systems of power because they are built into the structure of our societies (Elmén 2016). This view of MA reflects and challenges present hierarchical structures and cultural norms (Ugarte Chacón 2014: 2). It is, therefore, a political tool.

As seen in the work of Kleege (2016) and Thompson (2018) about audio description, Butler (2018) and Zdenek (2018) about subtitles and the recent film *Dear Hearing World* (Docker: 2019) about sign language, the case for alternative and creative MA is an example of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991). It relates not only to the fight against ableism, but also to other forms of exclusion and oppression, including racism and sexism. What remains to be seen now is how MA and its political cause relate to minoritised languages which, by definition, are also oppressed and discriminated against. Based on the development of the first-ever subtitling guidelines in the Galician language, this article is a tentative attempt to discuss the complexity involved in balancing out and making compatible the rights of Galician speakers and those of Galicians with hearing loss.

## 2. Media accessibility in Galicia

MA in Galicia is still very much in its infancy. There is relatively little provision of MA services and research on the subject is very hard to come by. Mercedes Martínez Lorenzo's doctoral thesis (2021) and the publications derived from it (2019, 2020a, 2020b) are currently the main source of information available. In her thesis, Martínez Lorenzo sets out to analyse the quantity and quality of MA provided in Galicia and to produce the first subtitling guidelines in Galician. She looks at subtitling for viewers with hearing loss (which she refers to as inclusive subtitling), audio description and sign language interpreting/translation on TV and in film festivals, cinema venues and clubs.

Under the 7/2010 Audiovisual Act, all public channels in Spain are required to subtitle 90% of their content and to provide 10 hours a week of sign language interpreting and audio description. Table 1<sup>1</sup> includes data on subtitling provision by different public Spanish channels over the past five years. Whereas RTVE and the Catalan broadcaster TV3 are meeting or are close to meeting their targets, the Basque and Galician broadcasters are lagging behind significantly.

Unfortunately, the amount of hours subtitled is not the only issue in Galicia. As noted by Martínez Lorenzo (2021, p. 98), subtitle provision is very inconsistent in terms of channel, month, timeslot, type of production, audiovisual genre and episode. Viewers are kept in the dark as to which programmes are subtitled and, within the same programme, a subtitled episode may be followed by one with no subtitles. Cartoons produced in Galicia are not subtitled, and given that live

**Table 1. Percentage of content hours subtitled a year between 2016 and 2020 by public broadcasters in Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician**

| Channel                      | Subtitling (total hours) |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>RTVE (2020)</b>           |                          |
| La 1                         | 93.13%                   |
| La 2                         | 93.59%                   |
| Clan                         | 99.83%                   |
| 24 Horas                     | 95.35%                   |
| TDP                          | 95.76%                   |
| Internacional Europa-África  | 96.90%                   |
| Internacional Asia           | 98.96%                   |
| Internacional America        | 97.45%                   |
| <b>Catalonia (2020)</b>      |                          |
| TV3                          | 70%                      |
| Super 3/33                   | 85%                      |
| Esport3                      | 42%                      |
| 3/24                         | 55%                      |
| <b>Basque Country (2019)</b> |                          |
| ETB1                         | 18%                      |
| ETB2                         | 46%                      |
| ETB3                         | 58%                      |
| ETB4                         | 19%                      |
| <b>Galicia (2016-2018)</b>   |                          |
| TVG1 and TVG2                | 40%                      |

Sources: Public broadcasters and Martínez Lorenzo (see note 1).

subtitles are still not available, chat shows, weather reports and sports are not accessible for viewers with hearing loss. Only one news report is shown with subtitles (on TVG-1 and during weekdays). There is no audio-described content on TVG and sign language interpreting amounts to five weekly hours, including a daily news programme (on TVG2 and during weekdays). The weekend news is thus not accessible. As far as film festivals, cinema venues and clubs are concerned, they are not bound by legislation on media access. Small, independent events or venues tend to provide mostly Spanish subtitles (designed for hearing viewers, rather than viewers with hearing loss) for foreign-language films. Galician subtitles are only used sporadically and the same goes for audio description, while sign language interpreting/translation is more commonly used for film presentations than to access film.

Martínez Lorenzo's (2021, 179) analysis of the quality of a sample of the subtitles provided by TVG is no more encouraging. She notes different issues that are caused either by the lack of information in the Spanish UNE subtitling guidelines (AENOR: 2012) (which until now have been the main reference for

subtitling at TVG) or by errors made by the subtitlers. This includes problems with subtitle position (subtitles obscuring important on-screen information), timings (subtitles that are shown for too long or too short for the viewers to read), punctuation and the description of sounds for viewers with hearing loss. Particularly significant here is the inconsistency found when having to subtitle language errors made by the speakers, that is, when faced with the decision of whether the speakers' errors should be kept or corrected in the subtitles. Given that this is a very language-specific issue that plays a different role in Galician (as a minoritised language) than it does in Spanish, adhering to the indications in the Spanish UNE subtitling guidelines does not seem like a viable option. This makes Martínez Lorenzo's first-ever subtitling guidelines in Galician particularly timely.

The guidelines draw on existing empirical research included in guidelines from other countries and other languages, which position MA in Galicia in a complex and unusual scenario. When it comes to quotas of access provision, MA in Galicia is now in a similar position to where other countries (including Spain) were around 10 years ago. The upside is that producing guidelines now makes it possible to skip the expert-based approach and to provide them with a scientific grounding that can also democratise them, as they can be said to reflect the views of the users who took part in the studies they are based on. Finally, the guidelines must address an issue (reproduction or correction of errors in the subtitles) that is relatively new and likely to have social and political implications that have yet to be addressed. Thus, in a way, MA in Galicia is simultaneously operating in the past as far as development and provision is concerned, in the present with the production of contemporary guidelines founded on an empirical basis, and in the future, addressing a discussion that is new and whose implications are to some extent unknown. This article looks at the latter issue, where the interests of a minority language and its users are not aligned with those of a minority with impairments (people with hearing loss), which calls for difficult decisions.

### 3. The Galician subtitling conundrum

The mission of CRTVG as the public Galician broadcaster is set out in Article 4 of the Public Audiovisual Media Services Act 9/2011, in Galicia. This article includes the 15 so-called "inspiring principles" of the broadcaster, which include the requirements to promote and disseminate Galician culture, language and identity and to guarantee equal access, not least to people with disabilities so they can have access to audiovisual content. In theory, these 15 principles should be perfectly compatible, and yet, as will be discussed in the following sections, when it comes to dealing with language errors in Galician subtitles, the need to both standardise the language and provide access to viewers with hearing loss may come into conflict.

### 3.1 Subtitling as a language standardisation tool

In the Spanish context, the concept of “normativización lingüística” (language standardisation) refers to the selection and codification of a standard language, which corresponds to the idea of corpus planning in the literature in English (O'Rourke 2017). In contrast, “normalización lingüística” (language normalisation in this article) is concerned with the use of a standardised language in all areas of public life and is thus related to the concept of status planning in English (Cooper 1989; Kloss 1969). Both are connected to language planning, which encompasses all the official actions undertaken to determine how language is used and to protect the rights of individuals or groups to use and maintain languages (Spolsky 2003). In Galicia, language normalisation measures aim at increasing the number of speakers and their language skills, as well as claiming back social functions in the areas of education, government and media. Here, the role played by the public Galician broadcaster RTVG since its creation in 1985 is critical, as it includes four TV channels and three radio stations broadcasting content in Galician 24 hours a day seven days a week.

However, as noted by Martínez Lorenzo (2021, p. 365), TVG has been criticised for not making an effort to reach young adults (unlike the older population and children, who seem to be catered for by TVG and TVG2, respectively) and for the sometimes substandard use of the Galician language. The presence of Spanish expressions in the Galician used on TVG and TVG2 is seen as very detrimental to the perception, prestige and even survival of the Galician language. Recent data show that although 88.1% of the Galician population (around 2.3 million people) can speak the language, its use is much more restricted to the eldest generation (over 65 years old), in small rural areas (less than 10,000 inhabitants) and mostly between speakers of the same condition rather than to address someone of a higher socioeconomic status. In contrast, Spanish is the prestige language used by young people in areas over 50,000 inhabitants and in a wide range of communicative situations (IGE 2014: 2019).

Against this background, using a high-quality language model in the subtitles broadcast on TV can increase the positive perception of and motivation towards Galician. Conversely, if speech errors, often influenced by Spanish, are allowed to creep into written subtitles, it could contribute to damaging the integrity of the Galician language, preventing speakers from learning the correct language standard. The correction of the speakers' errors in subtitling is thus seen as a key normalisation and standardisation measure.<sup>2</sup>

Although the need to contribute to the standardisation of the language is the main argument for the correction of language errors in subtitles, other reasons may also be put forward. One of them is the transformation of oral speech into writing, which leads to the consideration of subtitling as written language and accounts for the omission of certain oral features such as discourse markers (Hatim & Mason 1997: 79) and the correction of grammar and lexical errors in the subtitles (Díaz

Cintas & Remael 2008: 63). The rationale behind this approach is that errors in on-screen written language may be more noticeable than speech errors, which strengthens the case for correcting errors as a standardisation tool. Also, as found in the eye-tracking studies conducted by McConkie and Yang (2003) and Fernández-Torné et al. (2014), viewers may need extra time to look at non-standard language units in the subtitles, thus having less time to look at the images. However, more research is needed to assess this, as McConkie and Yang (2003) tested text reading instead of subtitling and Fernández-Torné et al. (2014) specify that their results are statistically inconclusive. In any case, should further research confirm this, it would potentially be more problematic in the case of deaf viewers with a prelingual hearing loss, who are often sign language users and are thus effectively reading subtitles in their second or even third language (Romero-Fresco 2018: 192).

Martínez-Lorenzo (2021: 71) points at another reason to justify the correction of errors in subtitles: the adaptation (or domestication, as per the term used by Venuti (1995)) of cultural references often found in the English-to-Galician translation of audiovisual material. She mentions the example of Galician fansubbing (subtitles made by fans outside the professional context) of Marvel's *Avengers: Endgame*, where the cheese dip Cheez Whiz was replaced in the Galician fansubs by “Estrella Galicia”. According to Martínez-Lorenzo (2021: 71), “if such high degree of text alteration is accepted, a few language corrections here and there for the sake of language promotion and readability should not outrage any viewer”.

These are undoubtedly powerful arguments to correct errors in the subtitles, but there is another side to this debate too.

### 3.2 Subtitling as an accessibility tool

The “standardisation argument” used to advocate the correction of errors in subtitling is very much in line with the universalist approach to MA, according to which access services concerns us all, or at least anyone who (for linguistic, sensorial or contextual reasons) does not have access to audiovisual material in its original form (Greco 2018). If access concerns almost all viewers, it makes sense to use subtitles as a standardisation tool in Galicia. This wide notion of access means that blind and deaf audiences can join forces with foreign viewers, as they are all “in the same boat” as far as access services are concerned (Romero-Fresco 2018: 194). This has proved very effective in helping to make a case to persuade streaming platforms such as Netflix to increase their access provision.

However, a growing number of artists and scholars such as Ellcessor (2015) are beginning to point at the complications brought about by this notion of access for all. Firstly, appealing to users that are not disabled may contribute to reinforcing “social hierarchies in which what really matters are the benefits that universal design brings to other (normative, able-bodied) people”. For Ellcessor, this can be seen in arguments for captioning that prioritise language learning and children's literacy skills over the benefits for deaf and hard of hearing people,

very much related to the discussion proposed in this article. Secondly, amalgamating MA and AVT (and their users) may result in the consideration of accessibility measures as “options” or “customisations”, that is, a matter of consumer choice rather than an issue of civil rights and political participation. Thirdly, Ellcessor mentions the common argument put forward under the principles of universal design that everyone is or will be disabled in one way or another, which is heavily criticised by the above-mentioned short film *Dear Hearing World* (“I am equal parts sick of your ‘oh, I’m hard of hearing too, just because you’ve been on an airplane or suffered head colds’”). For Ellcessor, this argument denies the “lived experiences of disability and the importance of a disability identity or culture for many people”. In her view, this may perpetuate ableist attitudes by failing to question, change or destroy them.

In other words, while the universal and wide notion of access may suggest that we are all in this together, reality contradicts this (ableist) assumption:

A lot of us, by default, become activists because we’ve spent a lot of our lives fighting to get and ensure our basic rights. Whereas hearing people don’t even question that right. (...) They are the ones who are looking and creating history and we are just pushed to the side. Being Deaf has always been a political thing. I don’t know if it will ever stop being political. (In Martirosyan 2020)

Seen through this lens, the correction of errors in subtitling is no longer (or not only) a standardisation tool, but also a restriction of access and, ultimately, a political issue. By correcting these errors, the subtitler provides those viewers with hearing loss who have no access to the audio with the *what* (the content) but not the *how* (the way in which this has been said, that is, with errors). Here, the two abovementioned “inspiring principles” of CRTVG clash head on: the subtitles can either help to standardise the language or to provide full and equal access. Two key questions can help elaborate on this debate: Which one of these two priorities (standardisation or full access) is more important? And who gets to decide which one is more important?

The first question may have as many answers as people asked. One hypothesis could be that hearing viewers, who normally

have access to the audio, may be happier to prioritise the standardisation function of subtitling than those viewers who are excluded from the audio and for whom access may be a greater concern. In the largest reception study conducted so far in Europe on SDH (Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) (Romero-Fresco 2015), 1365 hearing, hard of hearing and deaf people from Denmark, Poland, Italy, France and Germany, the UK and Spain replied to 81,900 questions about subtitling styles and viewing habits. One of those questions was about why they use subtitles, and it included answers such as “to understand/have access to audiovisual content” or “to improve my language skills”. As shown in Table 2, both hearing viewers and viewers with hearing loss in Europe prioritise access over language. This also applies to Spain, although here the split is different, as almost half of the hearing viewers prioritise language over access. Yet, viewers with hearing loss in Spain seem almost exclusively concerned with access rather than language.

Admittedly, although the Spanish sample included Galician respondents, it was obtained throughout the whole country and it dealt with Spanish and not Galician. However, at the very least, this table provides relevant data as to the reasons why different types of viewers may use subtitles and what they think is more important.

An argument for the correction of errors in the name of standardisation is that the correction of errors in the subtitles and the provision of access do not need to be mutually exclusive, as corrected subtitles still grant access to the key element in the speech, i.e. what is said. Following from this, why would viewers with hearing loss (who are the ones excluded here) be interested in knowing whether the Galician spoken on TV includes errors or not? Is that relevant at all? Again, there may be as many answers as people asked, but the question is relevant for me (it is the very reason why I am writing this article), perhaps for you as a reader and certainly for the 322 people who decided to take part in the survey discussed in section 3.4. Why would it not also be relevant to at least some people with hearing loss? As noted by deaf writer and artist Liza Sylvestre, if she was interested in studying the use of a minoritised language such as Galician on TV, corrected subtitles would prevent her from doing so. These subtitles would present her with a reality (the speakers use perfect Galician) that is not true and, more importantly, with no way of knowing that it is not true.

**Table 2. Reasons why viewers with and without hearing loss watch intralingual subtitles in Spain and in seven other European countries**

|                                           | Spain           |                           | Europe          |                           |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
|                                           | Hearing viewers | Viewers with hearing loss | Hearing viewers | Viewers with hearing loss |
| To have access to the original AV content | 53%             | 92%                       | 81%             | 87%                       |
| To improve language skills                | 47%             | 8%                        | 19%             | 13%                       |

Source: Personal collection.

It seems easier for hearing viewers to prioritise the language standardisation function of subtitles because, with a few exceptions (watching subtitles in contexts such as bars and hospitals, where the sound may be turned off), they have full access to audio and images. Corrected subtitles are thus ideal for these viewers, who have access to the content, can still hear that errors are being made by the speakers and can read the corrections in the subtitles. The best of both worlds – full access and language learning. In contrast, viewers with hearing loss have access to the content but are excluded from the knowledge that Galician is spoken with errors or, rather, are presented with a (non-existent) reality where Galician is spoken without errors. More specifically, we, hearing subtitlers, convey to viewers with hearing loss the linguistic reality that we would like to have (good usage of Galician on TV). It is hard not to see this as at least slightly patronising.

An equivalent situation for hearing viewers would be if there was a bleep censor (the beep sound normally used to censor profanity) for every occurrence of an error in the speakers' speech. Hearing viewers would then have access to the correct form in the subtitles, but not to the error. In this scenario, hearing viewers would still be in a more advantageous position than viewers with hearing loss reading corrected subtitles, as they would at least know that errors are being made every time they hear a beeping sound. Yet, it is hard to see how hearing viewers would accept this, even if it is for language standardisation purposes. Insofar as possible, they want to access reality as it is or, at the very least, have a say instead of having someone decide for them. In a society that promises full access to everyone, there is no reason why those viewers with hearing loss who would like to access the reality of the Galician language and participate in this debate should accept corrected subtitles.

Viewers with hearing loss may also rightfully demand to have a say, that is, to have a choice between corrected and uncorrected subtitles. Whenever demands such as this one (or others about having different sets of subtitles for different groups of viewers with hearing loss) are made, they are rejected due to their cost, as if it were (only) a financial issue. However, other factors come into play such as power, which indicates this may actually be a political issue. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when most sports competitions were held in empty stadiums, viewers were exposed to the unusually naturalistic sound of the players shouting to one another with no chants from the crowd. The Spanish streaming platform Movistar+ decided to use DJs to recreate the stadium atmosphere sound of the Spanish football league and replace the live sound from the empty stadiums (Cifuentes 2020). Although 80% of the viewers chose the recreated atmosphere, Movistar+ decided to keep offering the live sound, which entails an extra cost, as capturing the sounds from the players requires equipment and set-up that is not normally used in standard competitions. This was, however, not an issue. As long as some hearing viewers want access to the real sound, they have the right to access it.<sup>3</sup>

If the speakers' errors are corrected in the subtitles, those

viewers with hearing loss who wish to have access to the reality of the language as it is will not have the right to do so. They do not have enough power, so they do not get to decide (which answers the second question posed above). Many of them will not even get to know that this is happening at all. Considering all this, it seems difficult to reconcile the use of subtitles to both standardise and provide full and equal access to all viewers, which makes Martínez Lorenzo's proposal, discussed in the next section, all the more valuable.

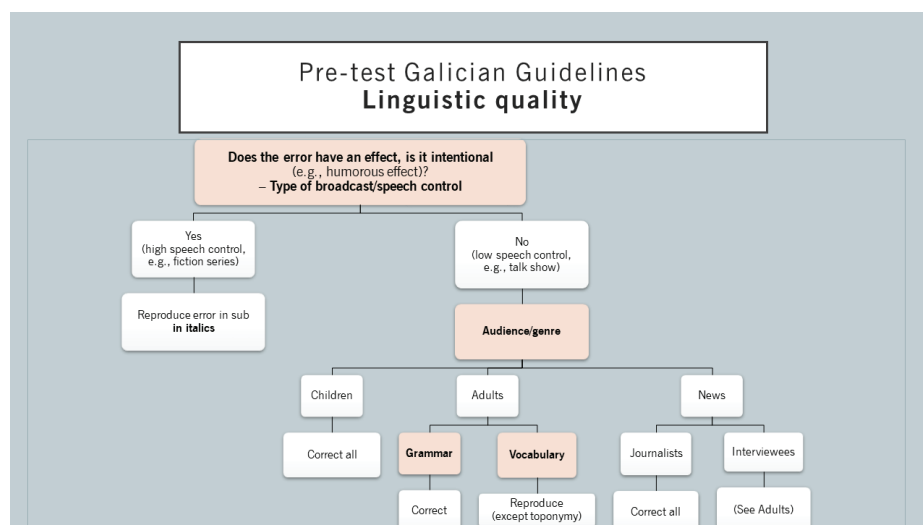
### 3.3 Martínez Lorenzo's proposal

As noted by Martínez Lorenzo (2021), subtitling guidelines take different approaches with regard to this issue. The ISO/IEC standard (2018) advises reproducing all errors, whereas other guidelines decide between error reproduction or correction depending on the genre (BBC 2019) and degree of formality of the film (Catalan guidelines) or on whether the errors are plot-related (Netflix 2018). In Galicia, TVG seems to lean towards the correction of errors in their subtitles, but there do not seem to be any consistent criteria in their subtitles, not least regarding the differentiation between correcting grammar errors and lexical errors.

In an attempt to find a middle ground between language promotion and accessibility, Martínez Lorenzo (2021: 213–229) presents a model for the reproduction or correction of language errors in same-language subtitling in Galician based on five levels. The first two levels (speech control and audience/audiovisual genre) concern the audiovisual material and the other three (intentionality/effect, type of error and formatting) are related to the errors.

Speech control refers to the speakers' "degree of control or spontaneity" in a programme. It is high in fictional films and low in interviews and other unscripted contexts. Although the final decision as to whether to correct errors or not depends on a combination of different levels, the general idea is to recommend more correction in situations of low speech control and less correction in situations of high speech control. Also related to the audiovisual material and its reception is the distinction in the model between adult and child audiences and between news and other genres. For Martínez Lorenzo (2021: 352), children "should be presented with correct language, favouring the learning of the standard" and errors in the news should also be corrected so that the programme does not lose credibility. Regarding errors, a key consideration is that of intentionality and effect. For Martínez Lorenzo (2021: 350), "an error has an effect if it is plot-related, for instance, if it causes humour or a reaction in characters, plot development or the dialogue". And she adds: "an error with an effect may be considered intentional and planned". In her view, with a few exceptions, errors in audiovisual material with high speech control, such as fictional films, are likely to be intentional and to have an effect, whereas content with low speech control is likely to have errors that are spontaneous, unintentional and unplanned.

Figure 1. Model for the reproduction or correction of oral language errors



Source: Martínez Lorenzo, 2021.

In her model, all intentional errors, or errors with an effect, should be maintained regardless of the type of programme. As for unintentional and spontaneous errors, they should all be corrected in children's programmes and in news programmes when uttered by journalists (Martínez Lorenzo 2019: 229):

Alongside toponymy, plot-unrelated, incorrect vocabulary should also be corrected in two types of broadcasts: in news programmes, when reporters speak, and in content for children and adolescents. News programmes being purely informational, the likelihood of journalists making intentional language mistakes is rather low. Journalists' speaking has been criticised for not being high-quality (Cidadanía 2002: 277; Hermida Gulías 2012: 47-48; Ramallo Fernández 2017: 463). In addition, a low linguistic quality may threaten informational rigour, that is, a piece of news delivered with language errors may lose content reliability. Consequently, Spanish words, *castelanismos*, and hybrid lexis, *hipergaleguismos*, in the speech of journalists are not to be reproduced in the subtitles but substituted by their correct Galician forms.

Finally, in adult programmes with speakers other than journalists, unintentional vocabulary errors are to be reproduced and grammar errors should be corrected. The rationale behind this distinction is that reproducing vocabulary errors can help to convey the speakers' idiolect. In contrast, leaving grammar errors in the subtitles could be detrimental to speakers learning Galician, given that, as shown in Silva-Valdivia's studies (2006: 2013), grammar is often not being learnt correctly:

This correction of vocabulary [for journalists] does not apply to interviewees or eyewitnesses in news programmes, who speak freely (low speech control) and whose idiolect should be respected.

Martínez Lorenzo's model was tested with 33 fourth-year students of the BA in Translation and Interpreting at University of Vigo, who were asked to subtitle a series of clips with the Spanish UNE subtitling standard and with that of Martínez Lorenzo's inclusive subtitling guidelines in Galician. The latter include the model for the reproduction or correction of language errors, which was refined as per the feedback provided by the students. Given that the model ultimately concerns users, it was also tested in a subsequent project as a survey whose results are included in the next section.

### 3.4 The (hearing) users' view

As part of her MA dissertation for the BA in Translation and Interpreting at University of Vigo (2021), Sabela Suevos prepared a survey to gauge viewers' take on the issue of correction versus reproduction of errors in Galician subtitling. The survey was made up of an introduction contextualising the debate and ten sentences with errors and two subtitling options (with and without corrections). In order to cover the different scenarios and levels envisaged in Martínez Lorenzo's model, the ten examples included different speakers and genres. These were a character in a short fiction film, a character in a feature-length fiction film, a character in a children's animation programme, the narrator in a documentary, the city mayor in an interview, a spontaneous on-street interviewee, a politician in a news programme, the presenter of a news programme, the presenter of a chat show and the presenter of the weather forecast. The examples had six grammar errors and four vocabulary errors, including incorrect use of pronouns and verbs and the presence of *castelanismos* (interferences from Spanish) and *hipergaleguismos* (words that are incorrectly "Galicianised" so that they look less like Spanish words). The survey ended with an open-ended question for general comments and ten demographic questions to identify respondents' profiles and viewing habits.

Given that anyone in Galicia can be regarded as a potential subtitle user, the questionnaire was disseminated online with no specific filtering regarding respondents' profiles, other than their being based in Galicia. The questionnaire was available online for ten days and was filled in by 322 respondents which, along with the comments made in the open-ended question, shows evidence of the interest that this issue has triggered amongst a wide range of viewers. As reported in figures 2-6 below, the most recurrent profile was that of a 51-to-64-year-old female Galician-speaking teacher/lecturer with a university degree. In general, approximately two thirds of the respondents were female, with a fairly even spread of age ranges (lower for under 19 and over 64) and occupations, although teachers made up one third of the whole sample. Galician is the most commonly used language, with more respondents (51%) using it more often than Spanish (36%). Another important element to add to the respondents' demographic profile is that 75% of them use subtitles regularly, mostly (in 92% of the cases) to watch foreign-language films.

The results of the survey leave very little room for doubt as to the majority view and indeed did not change once the sample reached the first 100 respondents, which attests to the statistical significance of the survey. In eight out of the ten examples, the preferred option was to correct the errors in the subtitles, with support from over 75% of the total respondents. The only exceptions were the two fiction films, where a majority of respondents opted for maintaining the speaker's dialectal trait (57% vs. 43%) or characteristic grammar error (72% vs. 28%).

The strong preference for correction over reproduction of errors found in the survey is maintained across ages, gender, education and all the other demographic aspects analysed, with one interesting exception – the distinction between teachers, on the one hand, and experts in hearing and sign language interpreters (SLI) on the other. As shown in Table 3, teachers (and experts in linguistics) show an even stronger tendency to favour correction than the overall sample, while experts in hearing and sign language interpreters seem to favour the reproduction of errors. Although their preference is not as extreme as that of teachers for the correction of errors, it is unequivocal – they would keep the errors in eight out of the ten examples.

Needless to say, the study has its limitations. As a first tentative survey on the subject conducted within the framework of a supervised MA dissertation, there are only ten sentences for the users to choose whether they would rather reproduce or correct errors in the subtitles<sup>4</sup> and, most notably, all respondents are hearing. However, the results are still worth taking into account given the size of the sample (considerably larger than the average surveys conducted in AVT and MA), the unequivocal trend towards correction of errors and the tendency shown by hearing experts and sign language interpreters to favour the reproduction of errors.

Also interesting are the open-ended comments made by some of the respondents, which echo the two stances analysed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 and can thus be divided into those that

refer to language and those that refer to viewers with hearing loss. Seventy per cent of the comments addressing the issue of language (made mostly by teachers) favour the correction of errors in all cases but fiction. The reasons provided relate to the need for language normalisation and preservation and the importance of distinguishing between errors and dialectal traits. Interestingly, 30% of the comments made about language point out that as well as in fiction, errors could be maintained in situations of live spontaneous speech as they are part of the speaker's idiolect:

For example, if a politician misplaces a pronoun, the Galician speakers who hear it will build an image of him or her as a person who does not speak much Galician or does not master it much, which carries a lot of implications from the point of view of its social meaning.

In contrast, 90% of the comments referring to deafness or viewers with hearing loss (made mainly by sign language interpreters and experts in hearing) support the reproduction of errors in all cases but fiction. The reasons provided revolve around equality and the fight against exclusion and discrimination in general:

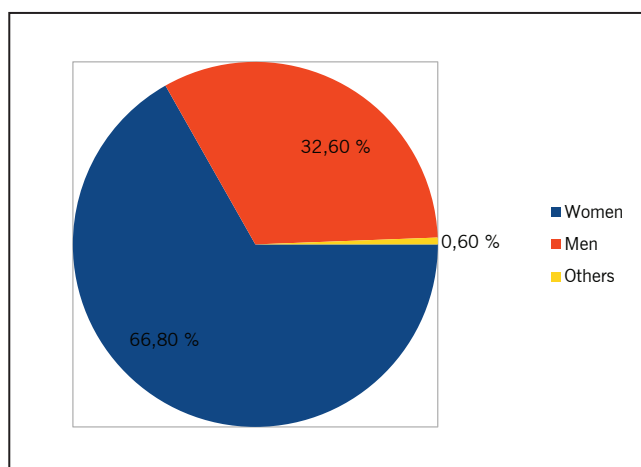
Subtitles are supposed to provide access to deaf people and, then, preserve the language. By correcting errors, we don't allow viewers with hearing loss to be part of the same reality as hearing viewers, so with the exception of fiction, it seems to me that correcting errors in other cases would be discriminatory.

In sum, only those respondents who build their arguments around deafness, equality and inclusion (mostly SLIs and hearing experts) are likely to support the reproduction of errors. The majority, though, focus mainly on language, which leads them to favour correction.

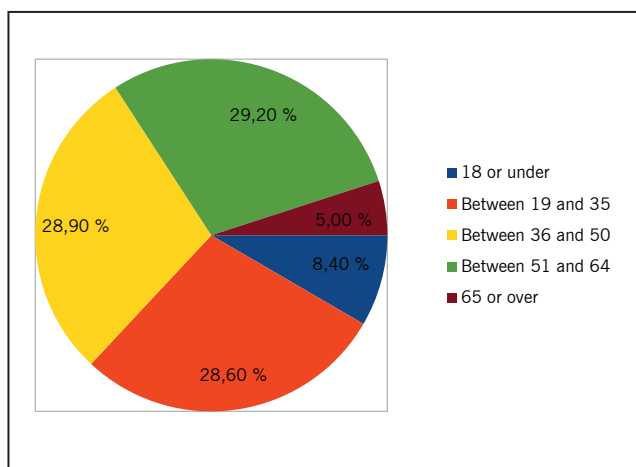
#### 4. Final thoughts

This article is a tentative attempt to discuss the complexity involved in reconciling the possibility of using subtitling both as a standardisation tool for Galician speakers and also as an access tool for viewers with hearing loss.

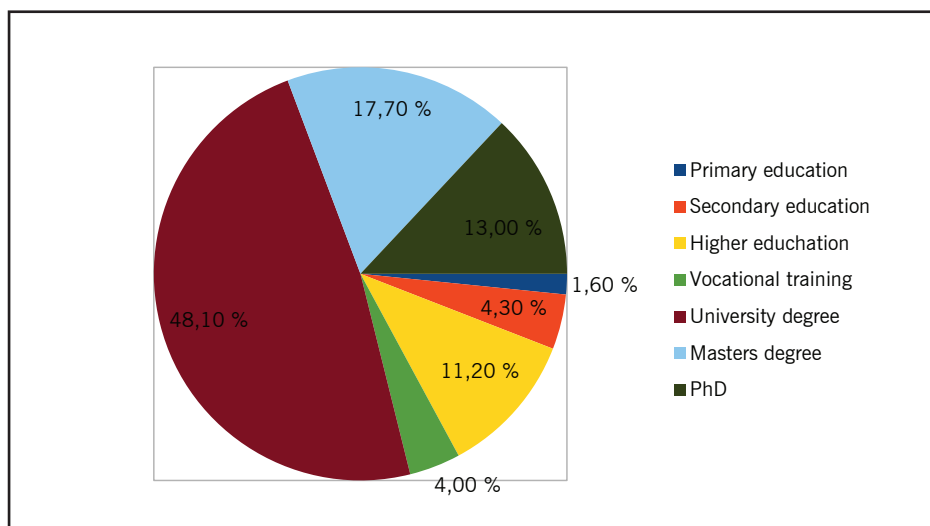
The case for using subtitles for standardisation purposes is a powerful one. Considering the low use of Galician amongst young speakers in urban areas where Spanish is dominant, the presence of errors on Galician TV can have a negative impact on the prestige, use and, eventually, preservation of the language. Subtitles, which have traditionally been shown to aid language learning (Talaván 2006), can contribute to minimising this impact by correcting these errors and boosting literacy in Galician. The complexity lies in the fact that, in doing so, access for viewers with hearing loss<sup>5</sup> is compromised. These viewers are still provided with the content of the speech in the subtitles, but they are excluded from the fact that the speakers are

**Figure 2. Respondents' gender**

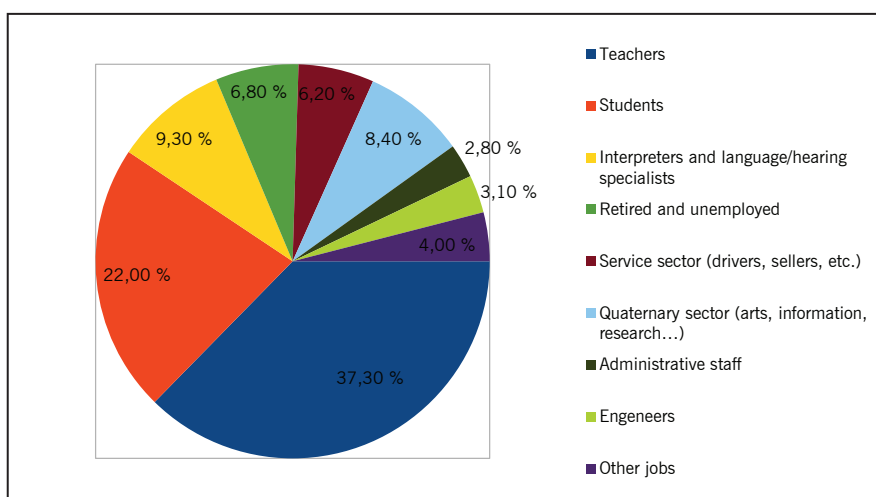
Source: Suevos, 2021.

**Figure 3. Respondents' age**

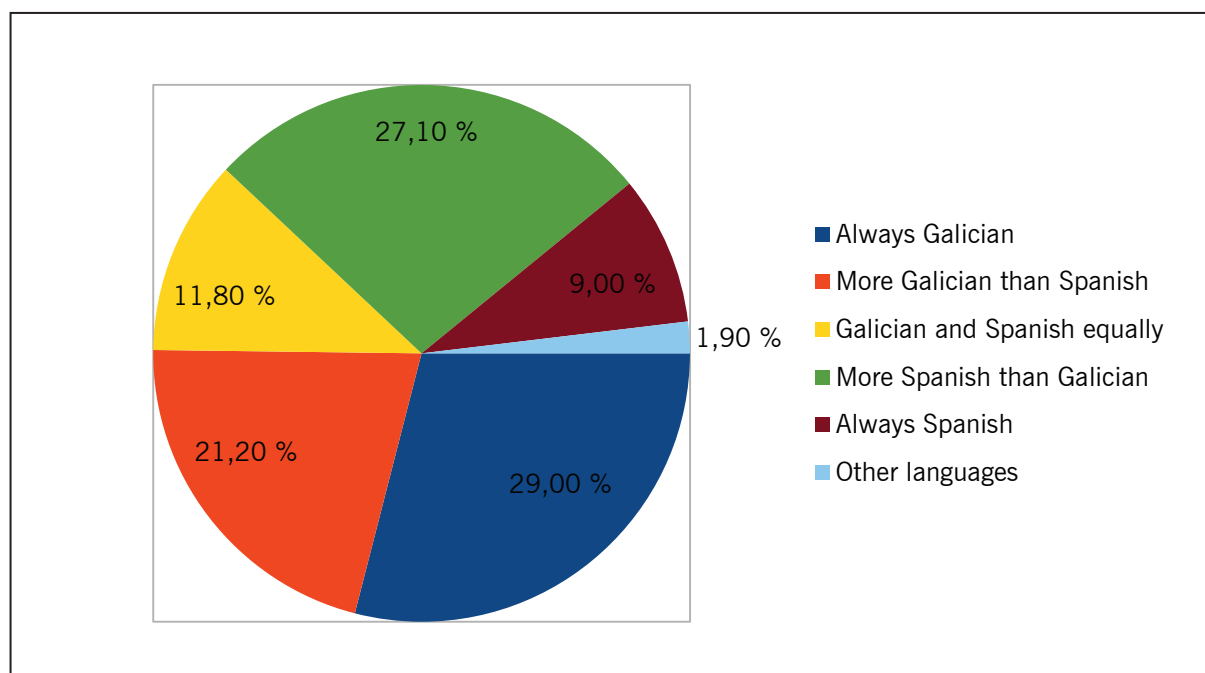
Source: Suevos, 2021.

**Figure 4. Respondents' education**

Source: Suevos, 2021.

**Figure 5. Respondents' occupation**

Source: Suevos, 2021.

**Figure 6. Respondents' use of Galician and Spanish**

Source: Suevos, 2021.

**Table 3. Results of the survey for all respondents, for the teachers and for SLIs and hearing experts**

| Context              | All respondents |         | Teachers |         | SLIs and hearing experts |         |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------|----------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
|                      | Keep            | Correct | Keep     | Correct | Keep                     | Correct |
| Political            | 18.1            | 81.9    | 15       | 85      | 73.3                     | 26.7    |
| Documentary          | 11.2            | 88.8    | 8.3      | 91.7    | 46.8                     | 53.3    |
| Fiction              | 57.5            | 42.5    | 59.2     | 40.8    | 63.3                     | 36.7    |
| Children's programme | 8.1             | 91.9    | 5        | 95      | 33.3                     | 66.7    |
| Political            | 19              | 81      | 11.7     | 88.3    | 76.7                     | 23.3    |
| Interviewee          | 20.9            | 78.8    | 15.8     | 84.2    | 83.3                     | 16.7    |
| Fiction              | 72.4            | 27.6    | 70.8     | 29.2    | 96.7                     | 3.3     |
| News                 | 17.4            | 82.6    | 12.5     | 87.5    | 63.3                     | 36.7    |
| Weather              | 22.8            | 77.2    | 17.6     | 82.4    | 56.7                     | 43.3    |
| Chat show            | 16              | 84      | 13.3     | 86.8    | 72.4                     | 27.6    |

Source: Suevos, 2021.

making errors, which is the reality that motivates this debate and the reason why subtitles are used as a standardisation tool in the first place. More importantly, this is happening at a time when the historical disability slogan “nothing about us without us” is coming into its own, as an increasing number of scholars and artists with disabilities are criticising the notion of accessibility as a process whereby a non-disabled expert grants disabled users access to a piece of work designed by a non-disabled artist. Accessibility is now being complemented with the notions of inclusion and participation in the creation and accessibility process and is becoming a political tool in a wider fight for diversity and against the discrimination of people due to their gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability or physical appearance.

Against this complex background, Martínez Lorenzo's attempt to produce a model for the reproduction/correction of oral language errors in Galician subtitles that can work as a happy medium between standardisation and access is both timely and brave. It is also very useful in that it considers different options and scenarios depending on the speech control of the speaker, the audiovisual genre and the intentionality, effect and type of error. I agree with Martínez Lorenzo's proposal that, in principle, errors should be reproduced in fiction but should be corrected in children programmes, whether or not scripted, since the latter are part of an overall learning process and children are not so likely to be interested in the fact that a few errors have made their way into a programme. The same may hold for the odd error made by a news presenter in a scripted programme.

However, errors in the spontaneous speech of an interviewee may pose a different scenario. Here, Martínez Lorenzo recommends correcting all grammar errors (although not vocabulary errors), which is backed up by most of the respondents of the above-discussed survey. In my view, though, this undermines the access provided for viewers with hearing loss. Whether or not a speaker (be they a politician or not) makes grammar mistakes is an important part of their idiolect (their idiosyncratic use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) and of how they come across to others. It is likely to provide relevant information for the hearing viewers, who hear the error, read the corrected subtitle and “build an image of him or her as a person who does not speak much Galician or does not master it much, which carries a lot of implications from the point of view of its social meaning” (see the survey above). If the speaker is a politician, this factor may even carry some weight for viewers when it comes to deciding who to vote for. If the speaker is a young, urban, Spanish-speaking professional who has decided to move to a village and set up a farm in a rural area, the grammar errors they make when interviewed in Galician are a key part of who they are, which is the reason why the interview is being conducted. This will not be accessible for viewers with hearing loss, who are excluded from this reality and exposed instead to a “linguistically photoshopped” version of a speaker using perfect grammar. I agree with the group of sign language interpreters and hearing experts in the survey who

consider that, at least in situations of unplanned speech (or low speech control), the priority must be to provide equal access to “the what” and “the how”. This would involve reproducing the grammar errors rather than correcting them. If there is a concern that viewers may end up learning incorrect Galician, the errors can be marked in the subtitles with a note or, for instance, in italics. Otherwise, if these errors are corrected, we may be replacing one type of discrimination (that of the Galician language) with another (that of viewers with hearing loss).

The Galician language has at its disposal other tools to achieve normalisation. TVG itself is a good example, as it sets out to promote and disseminate Galician culture, language and identity. Journalists can then be expected and even required to make good use of the language. Subtitles, however, are first and foremost an access tool for those who need them the most, i.e. viewers with hearing loss. If we correct the grammar errors of a politician or a spontaneous speaker, we will be presenting viewers with hearing loss with a fake reality (speakers with perfect grammar) hoping that it becomes true. As hearing viewers, we know it is not true (for we can hear the errors), but viewers with hearing loss have no way of knowing. Would we accept this type of manipulation (or modification of reality) if it were forced on us, hearing viewers, for the sake of the normalisation of a minoritised language? My guess, based on the above-mentioned analogy of the bleep censor and the examples of Movistar+, is that we would not. Then again, this is just my point of view as a hearing academic, with no more value than that.

Regardless of the different opinions and stances that may be adopted in this complex debate, some interesting lessons may be learnt. The first one is related to Elcensor's (2015) warning about the problems involved in the otherwise very useful idea of universal access, that is, the fact that access benefits all. The risk here is to prioritise the benefits that universal design brings to able-bodied people (in this case the role of subtitles as a standardisation tool) over the interests of disabled people. The second one, also drawing on Elcensor, is the failure to acknowledge the disabled experience. As seen above, all the hearing respondents who chose correction and commented on it did so taking into account issues of language, but not mentioning deaf viewers. In contrast, those who took the latter into account and commented on it (mostly sign language interpreters and hearing experts) opted for reproducing the errors of spontaneous speakers.

The reality is that even though we are using the same access services, we are not all in the same boat, and we are navigating a mediascape that has been designed by and for hearing people. MA may be still starting in Galicia, but it is doing so at a time when access is rapidly giving way to inclusion and participation. In this context, the current MA set-up in many countries where people with disabilities still play a very passive role may soon reveal itself as an anomaly. This can help us question how much “about them” we have been doing “without them” and give way to a more collaborative model for MA training (co-teaching),

research (including surveys such as the one discussed above, which is still to be disseminated amongst viewers with hearing loss) and professional practice (collaboration between access experts and consultants with disabilities).

This would be a very valuable contribution of MA to a more inclusive and diverse society and a good standpoint from which to consider how subtitles can help in the standardisation of a minoritised language such as Galician.

## Notes

1. Thanks are due to Laura Feyto, head of access services at TVE, and Marijo Deogracias (University of the Basque Country) for providing the data about RTVE and ETB. The information about Catalonia can be found in the Catalan Broadcasting Corporation's Annual Report (CCMA: 2021) and the Galician figures have been gathered by Martínez Lorenzo from direct contact, observation and official reports (CRTVG 2017a, 2017b, 2018 in Martínez Lorenzo: 2021).
2. It is worth noting here that what this involves is the correction of vocabulary and grammar errors (e.g., misplacement of atonic pronouns, wrong punctuation and accent marks, incorrect verb tenses), not of dialectal traits. TVG has often been criticised for not featuring enough of these traits, which are regarded as a sign of the richness and variety inherent to the Galician language.
3. Thanks are due to Jacobo Currais (University of Vigo) for mentioning this.
4. Two of those examples, the ones about fiction films, could have been better chosen, as one of them includes a dialectal trait, which is neither a vocabulary nor a grammar error, and the other one features a stereotypical error that may have led users to opt against correction.
5. A thorough discussion of the heterogeneity involved within the group of what are called viewers with hearing loss is beyond the scope of this article. However, suffice it to say that hard-of-hearing viewers and those who lose their hearing later in life can use their residual hearing to access some of the audio and tend to favour verbatim subtitles.

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# Happiness where it is not: a comparative study of well-being indexes and the Spanish electoral discourse

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## Abstract

*This article conducts a content analysis to shed light on how discourses on happiness as a social objective differ from other political discourses which pose different national goals. It first studies 13 happiness indexes and measures promoted by international bodies and governments. It then analyses 44 election advertisements from the Spanish political parties PP, PSOE and Unidas Podemos (UP). When comparing the two samples, we found that both discourses have a strong degree of similarity, which might indicate that far from being a political revolution, the discourse of happiness instead reflects the prevailing values of the societies from which it comes.*

## Keywords

*Happiness, well-being index, content analysis, political discourse, election advertisement.*

## Resum

*Amb l'objectiu d'aclarir en què es diferencien els discursos sobre la felicitat com a objectiu social d'altres discursos polítics en què es plantegen objectius nacionals diferents, en aquest article es fan dues anàlisis de contingut. En primer lloc, s'estudien 13 índexs i mesures de felicitat impulsats per organismes i governs internacionals. En segon lloc, s'analitzen 44 anuncis electorals de les formacions polítiques espanyoles PP, PSOE i Unides Podem. En comparar les dues mostres, s'observa que tots dos discursos tenen un grau elevat de similitud, la qual cosa apuntaria al fet que el discurs de la felicitat, lluny de ser una revolució política, és un discurs més que reflecteix els valors imperants de les societats des de les quals es pensa.*

## Paraules clau

*Felicitat, índex de benestar, anàlisi de contingut, discurs polític, espot electoral.*

## 1. Introduction

In 2011, the European Commission published *Beyond the GDP. Measuring Progress in a Changing World*, a report in which initiatives previously promoted by bodies like the European Parliament, the Club of Rome, the World Wildlife Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development converge, which point to several reflections on the limits of economic growth as the main measure of progress in Western countries.

That same year, the United Nations General Assembly published the resolution called *Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to Development* (United Nations General Assembly 2011), which states that happiness is a fundamental human goal and that by its very nature gross domestic product (GDP) was not envisioned to reflect people's happiness and well-being.

Even though other reports and meetings of this type had been carried out previously, as compiled in the studies of Buendía Sánchez (2015) and Sánchez-Sánchez (2020), after that

point, some governments and intergovernmental institutions began to step up their meetings and commissions to create new measures and indicators that they claim to reflect the importance of citizens' happiness in the development of public policies (Ferrara & Nisticò 2015, Frawley 2015b, Hogan et al. 2015, Lorca Martín De Villodres 2013, Sánchez-Sánchez 2020).

However, ten years after all these initiatives that seek citizen happiness were launched, several researchers and thinkers question the establishment of happiness —and measures like Gross National Happiness— as the new benchmark for measuring national progress. They claim that it has ended up being just a reformulation of the same themes that were already accepted as socially desirable and politically suppleable in a given culture and historical time, more than being a true social and political revolution based on a study of human nature (Ahmed 2010, Frawley 2015b, Sánchez-Sánchez 2020).

To inquire into this claim, this article conducts a content analysis of the main measures and indicators of happiness in

recent years, following in the footsteps of studies like the one by Sánchez-Sánchez (2017), and relates it to the electoral discourse in Spain (in the form of TV spots or advertisements of the main political parties in the Spanish parliament elections in 2021). We have taken the electoral discourse in Spain because even though the country is a member of the intergovernmental organisations mentioned above (based on which we can assume that the member countries may share a certain political culture), Spain has not made citizen happiness a state objective, nor has it considered measures of national progress related to happiness.

Through this comparison, we elucidate the indicators or themes that the most popular well-being indexes and measures bear in mind when measuring citizen happiness and how these happiness indicators or themes are different from the themes that appear in other political discourses which advocate other ways of promoting national progress, as has happened in Spain.

The results showed that, in concurrence with the sectors that are more critical of happiness as a new and definitive measure of national progress, the happiness discourse contained in the measures and indexes analysed (that is, the indicators and themes from well-being indexes) have a high degree of similarity with the Spanish electoral discourse analysed (that is, with the themes referred to in the televised electoral advertisements). This may indicate that for the sample analysed, the happiness discourse implicit in the measures studied behaves just like other Western political discourses, but in this case, the themes are articulated around the signifier *happiness*.

In the conclusions section, we discuss these results and their effect on other studies related to this topic.

## 2. Happiness as a political objective: A new paradigm?

The majority of happiness measures promoted by governmental and intergovernmental organisations in the West tend to draw from a theoretical and methodological current called the Science of Happiness (Sánchez-Sánchez 2020).

According to Davies (2015), this science is the latest expression of the utilitarian idea that the relationship between the mind and the world can be mathematically examined, and that the fundamental political problems can be resolved with the science of feelings and human nature.

More specifically, the everyday activities and events that the Science of Happiness determines may influence on citizen happiness are related to the fields of economics, work, education, family and social relations, culture, the home country and its political system, as well as the age, gender and race of individuals, some of their personality features and personal values, their health and their level of religiosity. Studies like Sánchez-Sánchez (2020) summarise what the Science of Happiness has to say about how all these variables influence people's well-being.

The defenders of this Science of Happiness applied to politics state that all the data collected on how happy citizens are and how much pleasure or pain they derive from different activities and everyday events can be useful for political leaders when designing public policies on matters related to economic growth, equality, retirement, unemployment, health, education or governance, among others (for example, see Bok 2010; Cummins et al. 2009; Layard 2005; Musikanski, Philips & Crowder 2019).

Therefore, through happiness indexes and measurements, governments and intergovernmental institutions can turn the study of citizens' subjective well-being into an affair of public and political concern.

However, as Bruno Frey states, happiness is an object of study that can be easily manipulated by both citizens and politicians (Frey & Gallus 2013a, 2013b; Frey, Gallus & Steiner 2014). It could be said that 'defining happiness is then propagating an ideology' (Veenhoven 1991: 8), and happiness indexes and measures would be no exception.

As Hyman (2011) found, happiness 'is shaped, interpreted and articulated via culturally specific ways of thinking, being and acting' (p. 2). Merely the act of choosing what everyday activities and events may affect human happiness or unhappiness is already reflecting the dominant values of a given culture, its concerns and its yearnings (Boreham, Povey & Tomaszewski 2013; Hyman 2011). Consequently, if happiness is a cultural construct, its reproduction in the guise of well-being indexes and measures is indirectly legitimating the social, political and economic status quo (Aronczyk 2014).

In turn, by choosing certain affairs and relating them to happiness, they are automatically associated with what is good, desirable and acceptable (Ahmed 2010; Frawley 2015b; Veenhoven 2009a, 2009b), and this implies that there is a series of social, cultural, economic and political practices that are better than others are.

Likewise, via the Science of Happiness and well-being indexes and measures, happiness is viewed as the outcome of the empirical study of human beings (that is, as something and universal), which safeguards the themes related to this concept from any moral, political, social, philosophical, historical or any other type of questioning (Cabanais 2013). In this case, science's authority may be used as a guarantor to ensure that certain proposals on how one should live are accepted (Davies 2015, Frawley 2015b).

In consequence, happiness may be used in politics as a rhetorical slogan to promote certain lifestyles that cannot be promoted by other legislative, executive or judicial policies or tax incentives (Offe 2012). Emotional signifiers tend to have a great deal of rhetorical power, as they seem to transcend ideological barriers (Ahmed 2004, Frawley 2015b, Illouz 2007, Offe 2012).

This article follows in the footsteps of critical studies on happiness as a social and political objective, which includes

studies like those by Ahmed (2010), Cabanas (2013), Cabanas and Illouz (2019), Frawley (2015a, 2015b), Hyman (2011), Rodríguez (2012) and Sánchez-Sánchez (2017, 2020), among others. Studies like Frawley (2015b) use different media discourses that talk about promoting happiness from political organisms in the United Kingdom to identify their conceptual characteristics and discuss their consequences.

This study follows an approach similar to Frawley (2015b). The sample includes several happiness indexes and measures, as well as some Spanish electoral discourses which explicitly mention this abstract concept, and it explores their conceptual features.

The reason behind deciding to conduct an analysis of two such different samples is because, following Ahmed's (2010) observation, happiness does not tend to be studied in places where it is not. By describing a world that is constructed via the signifier *happiness*, everything that transcends this horizon and may have the power to explain this concept in any other way is ignored.

By studying texts that do not speak explicitly about happiness and relating them to those that do, we hope to reveal more information on the nature of happiness as a cultural construct.

### 3. Methodology

Bearing in mind the above, this study sets out to conduct a comparative analysis between discourses from different sources (first, international happiness indexes and measures, and secondly, the Spanish electoral discourses) to explore to what extent contemporary discourses on happiness that draw from the Science of Happiness are thematically different than other discourses. Based on this, our general objective is:

- To determine the degree of similarity between the themes suggested as happiness indicators in the most popular international happiness indexes and measures and the themes suggested as socially desirable and politically suppliable in the electoral discourses from the main political parties in Spain.

Consequently, the specific objectives can be broken down as follows:

- To identify the themes suggested as happiness indicators in the most popular happiness indexes and measures.
- To study the presence of the themes suggested in the most popular happiness indexes and measures and the themes suggested in the electoral discourses from the main political parties in Spain.

Below we describe both samples, as well as the analysis technique used to meet these research objectives.

#### 3.1 Sample: Happiness indexes and measures

Of all the happiness discourses, our sample is a series of happiness indexes and measures promoted by intergovernmental

organisations, as they are one of the clearest expressions of the application of the Science of Happiness to politics (Frey & Gallus 2013a).

Because of the large number of happiness measures, in this analysis, our sample is those identified in the study by Sánchez-Sánchez (2017, 2020) using systematised search methods such as the Scoping Review (Arksey & O'Malley 2005).

The most popular happiness indexes and measurements<sup>1</sup> that comprise the sample in this study are:

- *Gross National Happiness Index*. This is an index created to measure Bhutan's progress based on Bhutanese culture and Buddhist values. This measure was the inspiration behind the drafting of the report *Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to Development* by the United Nations General Assembly (2011).
- *Happy Planet Index*. This is an index created by the New Economics Foundation, a think tank in the United Kingdom whose mission is to promote social, economic and environmental justice (New Economics Foundation 2018).
- *Philippine Gross National Happiness Index*. This measure was created by Virola and Encarnacion (2007), two members of the National Statistical Coordination Board in the Philippines.
- *International Well-being Index*. This measure, which seeks to be universal, is proposed by the International Well-being Group, an initiative of the Australian Centre on Quality of Life, to which some benchmark figures in the Science of Happiness belong, such as Robert A. Cummins.
- *Gallup & Healthways Well-being Index*. This index was created by the organisations Gallup and Healthways, and it particularly focuses on promoting people's health, happiness and productivity, as well as on providing all its data to companies that want to apply well-being-related measures (Gallup & Healthways 2013).
- *Index of Economic Well-being*. This measure was created by Osberg and Sharpe (2002) as a proposed alternative to the GDP.
- *Measures of National Well-being in the United Kingdom*. This measure is part of a programme created in 2010 and promoted by the then Prime Minister of the British government, David Cameron, with the goal of studying the country's progress in terms that go beyond the economy and thus complement measures like the GDP (Office for National Statistics 2016).
- *Prescott-Allen Well-being Index*. This measure was created by Prescott-Allen in *The Wellbeing of Nations* (2001) to be applied by lawmakers in all countries.
- *European Social Survey on Well-being*. This is an academic survey created in 2001 and conducted by the European Research Infrastructure Consortium.
- *Well-being in 2030*. Eurobarometer, a body of the European Commission that regularly conducts public

opinion surveys in the Member States of the Union, carried out this study (Eurobarometer 2011).

- *European Quality of Life Survey*. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) of the European Union (EU) created this measure with the goal of generating information to develop social and labour policies (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2012).
- *Quality of Life Survey*. This is a measure promoted by the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat).
- *Quality of Life in European Cities*. This study is also conducted by the Eurobarometer. (Eurobarometer 2015).

These indexes and measures organise the different indicators that are correlated with individual happiness (or with its synonyms in this field, such as well-being or quality of life) in a multidimensional way, that is, through groups and/or categories of indicators. This enables us to quickly see the major thematic groups of indicators which will allow them to be compared with the socially desirable and politically suppliable themes identified in the analysis of the Spanish electoral discourse.

### 3.2 Sample: Spanish electoral discourses

Of all the political discourses, those from Spain were chosen as a sample, as this country is a member of some of the intergovernmental organisations that have promoted happiness measures in recent years, yet happiness has not been made a matter of interest for the government.

More specifically, of all the Spanish political discourses which could be explored, we chose electoral discourse for our sample, which is a 'fundamental phenomenon in democratic societies whose political system is based on the debate among different ideological options, as Spain's is' (A. Capdevila 2004a: 17).

Likewise, of all the electoral discourses, we chose the advertisements broadcast on TV during electoral campaigns, as they are extremely important within the communicative strategies of political parties during campaigns and are not mediated by other agents who could distort each party's political platform (A. Capdevila 1997; A. Capdevila & Pericot 2012; Moragas-Fernández & A. Capdevila 2015; Ruiz Collantes, Pérez-Latorre & P. Capdevila 2015; Sádaba 2003). In this way, in each election we can clearly see each party's proposals regarding what they consider socially important and politically suppliable.

Electoral advertising have been studied multiple times in the field of Spanish political communication (e.g., among many other references, see A. Capdevila, 1997, 2004a, 2004b, 2015; A. Capdevila & Gómez-Puertas 2011; A. Capdevila, Gómez-Puertas & De Higes 2007; A. Capdevila & Pericot 2012; Gómez-Puertas & A. Capdevila 2011, 2012; Hernández Olmedo 2015; Moragas-Fernández & A. Capdevila 2014, 2018; Pericot & Capdevila 2001; Pericot, Ruiz Collantes, Prat & A. Capdevila, 1998; Pujadas, Pérez-Latorre & Oliva 2012;

Pujadas & Xifra 2014; and Ruiz Collantes, Pérez-Latorre & P. Capdevila 2015), so this study is yet another contribution which seeks to further expand our knowledge in this field of study.

We studied electoral advertising for the Spanish parliamentary elections from the leading political parties and coalitions that have governed Spain on a national scale from 1993 to 2019: Partido Popular (PP), Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and Unidos/as Podemos (UP)<sup>2</sup> (see Table I). With this selection, we seek to capture the programmatic promises of the Spanish governments both before and after happiness became politically prominent (2011).

### 3.3 Method of analysis

In order to meet the general and specific research objectives presented at the beginning of this methodological section, we had to compare the themes suggested as well-being indicators in the most popular international happiness indexes and measures and the themes suggested as socially desirable and politically suppliable in Spanish electoral discourse.

When identifying these themes in both samples, the technique used was content analysis, as it enables us to recognise the elements that comprise a document and classify them in order to later explain them (Ruiz Olabuénaga 2012, Sierra Bravo 1983). However, a different content analysis was designed for each sample depending on its characteristics.

In the case of the happiness indexes and measures, the themes suggested as happiness factors are all the major groups of indicators that share a certain theme. Specifically, within a happiness index there may be a group of indicators named Education, within which are indicators related to individuals' literacy level, the national school dropout rate, the national results on the PISA report or the quality of school infrastructures, among others.

In this case, the content analysis conducted consisted in identifying what these major groups of indicators are and combining these general trends among measures in the form of what have been called *happiness dimensions*. Within a happiness dimension there may also be other happiness subdimensions, which are simply subgroups of indicators within a major group that is more similar to one another. Continuing with the example of the major group of indicators Education, it has become one happiness dimension, which in turn may be comprised of one subdimension which encompasses themes related to statistics on the national educational system, and another subdimension which brings together themes related to individuals' intellectual aspirations and values. The names that these happiness dimensions and subdimensions are given are extracted directly from the terminologies used in the happiness measures to refer to the groups of indicators that share a given theme.

Therefore, these happiness dimensions are the outcome of studying the absolute frequencies and conglomerates of indicators, which enabled us to group similar indicators together

**Table I. Electoral advertisements sample**

| <i>Spanish Parliamentary elections</i> | <i>Political party</i>                           | <i>Campaign</i>              | <i>Number of ads analysed</i> |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1993                                   | Partit Popular                                   | Ahora gobierno para todos    | 1                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | España, en progreso          | 1                             |
| 1996                                   | Partit Popular                                   | Con la nueva mayoría         | 1                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | España, en positivo          | 3                             |
| 2000                                   | Partit Popular                                   | Vamos a más                  | 4                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol – Progressistes | Lo próximo                   | 2                             |
| 2004                                   | Partit Popular                                   | Juntos vamos a más           | 1                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | Soluciones ahora             | 2                             |
| 2008                                   | Partit Popular                                   | Con cabeza y corazón         | 2                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | Vota con todas tus fuerzas   | 4                             |
| 2011                                   | Partit Popular                                   | Súmate al cambio             | 1                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | Pelea por lo que quieres     | 1                             |
| 2015                                   | Partit Popular                                   | España en serio              | 1                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | Un futuro para la mayoría    | 4                             |
| 2016                                   | Partit Popular                                   | Unidos podemos               | 2                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | Ahora más que nunca, a favor | 3                             |
|                                        | Units Podem                                      | Un sí por el cambio          | 5                             |
| 2019 (April)                           | Partit Popular                                   | Valor seguro                 | 1                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | La España que quieres        | 1                             |
|                                        | Unides Podem                                     | La historia la escribes tú   | 1                             |
| 2019 (Nov.)                            | Partit Popular                                   | Por todo lo que nos une      | 1                             |
|                                        | Partit Socialista Obrer Espanyol                 | Ahora sí                     | 1                             |
|                                        | Unides Podem                                     | Un gobierno contigo          | 1                             |
| <b>Total:</b>                          |                                                  |                              | <b>44</b>                     |

Source: Author.

without losing nuances (for more information see Krippendorff 1990).

Because the indicators of happiness indexes and measures were sometimes presented in an unstructured way (that is, that the indicators are not always grouped in the same fashion), this analysis was also based on Grounded Theory, which is a methodology for constructing theories based on data (Charmaz 2006).

Given the comparative nature of this study, the content analysis of the Spanish electoral advertisement was designed based on the happiness dimensions identified in the happiness indexes and measures, which in this case worked as categories of analysis.

Thus, the themes suggested as socially desirable and politically suppleable in the electoral advertisements in the sample were classified as based on the happiness dimensions and subdimensions. Consequently, in this same analysis, we were able to identify what themes developed in the electoral

discourse were associated with happiness, as well as the differences and similarities between the two samples.

Continuing with the example of Education, in the analysis of the electoral discourses, we studied what topics were developed in this regard to see whether they or not they matched those suggested as happiness indicators in the well-being indexes and measures. As an illustration, the political parties studied may mention Education themes such as the quality of school infrastructures, but they may not mention matters like individuals' literacy level, the national school dropout rate or the national results on the PISA report.

This analysis was conducted by first studying the electoral campaign of each political party in the sample, and then comparing it with the sample of happiness indexes and measures; when doing so, we took all the analyses of all the parties over time as a single homogeneous sample, that is, without distinguishing among the political parties.

#### 4. Results

The discourse in this Results section is organised around the research objectives. First, we will meet the specific objectives, and secondly, we will fulfil the general objective.

Beginning with the first specific objective, the themes suggested as happiness indicators in the most popular happiness indexes and measures, which are called *happiness dimensions* in this research, are: Subjective well-being (12 of the 13 measures in the sample mention this category), Community (it appears in 8 of the 13 measures), Politics (it appears in 7 of the 13 measures), Environment (it appears in 12 of the 13 measures), Work and Personal Finances (it appears in 12 of the 13 measures), Education (it appears in 7 of the 13 measures), Health (it appears in 10 of the 13 measures) and National Capital (it appears in 3 of the 13 measures).

Because these are categories that encapsulate a large number of indicators, these happiness dimensions and their subdimensions can be seen in their entirety in the Annex to this article (Tables II-IX). They will also be partially shown in this section once the results for the general objective of this research have been presented.

With regard to the second specific objective, based on the analysis conducted, we can conclude that the themes (happiness dimensions) suggested in the most popular happiness indexes and measures have a notable presence in the electoral discourses of the leading political parties in Spain.

As shown in Table X, the happiness dimensions appeared regularly in the electoral discourses of the PP, PSOE and UP throughout the entire period analysed.

More specifically, and extracting the percentages from Table X, the Politics dimension appeared in 60% of the PP campaigns, 80% of the PSOE campaigns and 100% of the UP campaigns, and there was only one election cycle (in 2011) when the political parties in the sample did not refer to themes related to this category.

In turn, the Education dimension appeared in 20% of the PP campaigns, 80% of the PSOE campaigns and 0% of the UP campaigns. There were only two Spanish Parliamentary elections in which this theme was not mentioned: the 2008 and the second 2019 elections.

The health dimension appeared in 20% of the PP campaigns, 30% of the PSOE campaigns and 0% of the UP campaigns, and this time their appearance in the different elections was more irregular than the other dimensions presented so far.

The Work and Personal Finances dimension appeared in 90% of the PP campaigns, 60% of the PSOE campaigns and 67% of the UP campaigns, and it was mentioned in all the Parliamentary elections between 1993 and 2019.

Just like the Health dimension, the Community dimension appeared irregularly in the different elections; specifically, it appeared in 20% of the PP campaigns, 50% of the PSOE campaigns and 33% of the UP campaigns.

The Environment dimension appeared in 30% of the PP and PSOE campaigns and 67% of the UP campaigns, and its appearance was also irregular, although there seem to be more references in the Spanish electoral discourse in the sample since 2016.

The Subjective well-being dimension appeared in 20% of the PP campaigns, 10% of the PSOE campaigns and 33% of the UP campaigns. Its appearance in the different elections was constant over time.

Finally, the National Capital dimension appeared in 30% of the PP campaigns, 40% of the PSOE campaigns and 33% of the UP campaigns, and it seems to encompass themes that over time the PP and PSOE have stopped addressing in their electoral communications, as references to it have been scant since 2004.

Therefore, as an overall trend, we can conclude that the political parties analysed all refer to the happiness dimensions in some of the Parliamentary elections, except for the Education and Health dimensions for Unidas Podemos. However, the sample for this party is so small (just three electoral campaigns) that we cannot conclude whether this is truly a characteristic of this party's discourse.

Likewise, even though the electoral discourse analysed refers generally to all the happiness dimensions, we found that each party has certain dimensions that appear more regularly than others (that is, in more than half the electoral campaigns analysed).

For example, themes related to the Politics and Work and Personal Finances dimensions tended to particularly appear in the PP's electoral discourses; the PSOE tended to mention themes related to the Politics, Education and Work and Personal Finances dimensions; and the UP's discourse revolved around matter related to the Politics, Work and Personal Finances and Environment dimensions.

Therefore, it follows that the topics related to the Politics and Work and Personal Finances dimensions were the ones that appear the most in the Spanish electoral discourse analysed, and that aspects related to Education were characteristic of the PSOE, while aspects related to the Environment were characteristic of the UP.

For the general objective of determining the degree of similarity between the themes suggested as well-being indicators by the happiness indexes and measures and the themes suggested as socially desirable and political suppleable by the electoral discourses of the leading political parties in Spain, all the analyses of all three parties are taken as a single sample.

Below is a series of tables which show the themes or subdimensions that the Spanish political parties develop in each happiness dimension, which more clearly show the degree of match between the samples. The themes which match in both samples are coloured green.

Table IX shows how a wide variety of themes covering all the thematic subcategories (or subdimensions) included in the

**Table X. Presence of the *dimensions of happiness* in the electoral advertisements of PP, PSOE and UP**

| Dimension                  | Political party | 1993 | 1996 | 2000 | 2004 | 2008 | 2011 | 2015 | 2016 | 2019 (April) | 2019 (Nov.) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|-------------|
| Politics                   | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
| Education                  | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
| Health                     | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
| Work and Personal Finances | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
| Community                  | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
| Environment                | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
| Subjective well-being      | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
| national Capital           | PP              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | PSOE            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |
|                            | Unides Podem    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |             |

Source: Author.

happiness indexes and measures and summarised through the Politics dimensions appeared in all the Spanish electoral discourses.

This does not mean that reference is made to all the indicators related to Politics included in the happiness indexes and measures in the electoral discourses studied, but it does mean that reference is made to at least one indicator from each thematic subdimension or subgroup within this dimension.

Thus, in the Spanish electoral discourse, government intervention in matters related to protecting certain civil rights, social organisation, the quality of electoral processes and the separation between the state and the media (Characteristics of the country's political system subdimension) is suggested as desirable.

The government taking part in affairs related to stimulating citizen political participation and preserving the trust in institutions is also suggested as desirable, as is ensuring that

citizens are satisfied with the situation of the country and the policies made by public institutions (Governance subdimension).

In turn, Table XII shows that for the Education dimension, only matters related to the national educational system were mentioned in the Spanish electoral discourse, while themes related to individuals' intellectual aspirations (Personal education subdimension) and value systems (Personal values subdimension) were ignored.

Table XIII shows that for the Work and Personal Finances dimension, the difference between the samples lies in the fact that the electoral discourses do not address aspects related to the relationships among the employees of a company (Interpersonal relations), workplace risks (Physical/Health), individuals' capacity to purchase nonessential goods (Nonessential consumption) and their belongings and properties (Assets).

**Table XI. Subdimensions of the *Politics* dimension developed in Spanish election advertisements**

| Politics                                          |                     |                     |       |                                 |                          |                                                    |                       |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Characteristics of the country's political system |                     |                     |       | Citizen political participation |                          | Governance                                         |                       |                        |
| Civil rights                                      | Social organisation | Electoral processes | Media | Personal interest in politics   | Personal politic actions | Assessment of the general situation of the country | Trust in institutions | Assessment of policies |

Source: Author.

**Table XII. Subdimensions of the *Education* dimension developed in Spanish election advertisements**

| Education          |                 |                           |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Personal education | Personal values | National education system |

Source: Author.

**Table XIII. Subdimensions of the *Work and personal finances* developed in Spanish election advertisements**

| Work and personal finances  |                         |                              |                                                |                                        |                     |                                                    |                          |       |                  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|------------------|
| Work                        |                         |                              |                                                |                                        | Personal finances   |                                                    |                          |       |                  |
| Work conditions             |                         |                              | Contribution of employment to self-realisation | Balance between work and personal life | Financial situation | Household consumption structure / Living standards |                          |       | Financial safety |
| Contractual characteristics | Interpersonal relations | Safety Work Physical /Health |                                                |                                        |                     | Essential consumption                              | Nonessential consumption | Goods |                  |

Source: Author.

However, thanks to the green-coloured cells we can see that there are more convergences than divergences between the two samples, as the Spanish electoral discourse suggests that it is desirable for the government to intervene in matters related to job contracts and stability, the balance between work and personal life and individuals' self-realisation through work (Work subdimension). Likewise, the electoral advertisements in the sample also expressed the desire for the government to take part in matters like citizens' financial stability and their ability to purchase essential goods (Personal finances subdimension).

In terms of the Community dimension, Table XIV shows that there is also a high degree of match between samples, as a Spanish electoral discourse suggests that the next government should guarantee, to the extent possible, aspects related to social cohesion (Social cohesion and interpersonal relationships), satisfactory interpersonal relationships among citizens (Feelings stemming from social interaction) and their social and cultural participation, and that it should promote national traditions.

The only matter within the Community dimension that is not mentioned in the Spanish electoral discourse is the importance of relationships among neighbours in a community (Neighbours).

In the Spanish electoral discourse, the Environment dimension (Table XV) appears less completely, in that only matters related to violence and vandalism (Residential area subdimension),

housing and related accessibility problems (Residential area subdimension) are mentioned in the sample chosen, along with the concern for caring for the environment. In this case, there seems to be less convergence among the samples.

In the case of the Subjective Well-being dimension, Table XVI shows that there is a high degree of similarity between samples, as the Spanish electoral discourse only fails to mention matters related to individuals' religiosity and spirituality (Meaning of life subdimension).

Finally, in relation to the National Capital dimension, Table XVII shows that matters related to the national economy (Economic capital) primarily appear in the Spanish national discourse, although so do matters related to Other kinds of capital, such as human. In this way, we can conclude that all of the themes associated with this dimension on the happiness indexes and measures appear in the electoral discourse studied.

If we take Tables XI-XVII and extract a percentage by dividing the number of subdimensions mentioned in the electoral discourse between the total subdimensions for each dimension, we can see that there is a 100% thematic match between the two samples in the Politics and National Capital dimensions; 33% match between samples for the Education dimension; 64% for the Work and Personal Finances dimension; 88% for the Community dimension; 38% of similarities in the Environment dimension; and 80% match in the Subjective Well-being dimension.

**Table XIV. Subdimensions of *Community* developed in Spanish election advertisements**

| Community                                       |                             |         |            |                                           |                                   |          |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Social cohesion and interpersonal relationships |                             |         |            | Feelings stemming from social interaction | Social and cultural participation |          |
| Social cohesion                                 | Interpersonal relationships |         |            |                                           | Social participation              | Cultural |
|                                                 | Family                      | Friends | Neighbours |                                           |                                   |          |

Source: Author.

**Table XV. Subdimensions of the *Environment* dimension developed in Spanish election advertisements**

| Environment      |                              |                              |          |         |                                            |                                             |                    |
|------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|---------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Residential area |                              |                              |          |         | Environment                                |                                             |                    |
| Characteristics  | Infrastructures and services | Natural spaces and phenomena | Security | Housing | Characteristics of the natural environment | Impact of human activity on the environment | Environmental care |

Source: Author.

**Table XVI. Subdimensions of the *Subjective Well-being* dimension developed in Spanish election advertisements**

| Subjective Well-being          |                                |                              |                                             |                      |  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Emotional assessments          |                                |                              | Cognitive assessments                       |                      |  |
| Positive emotions and feelings | Negative emotions and feelings | Meaning of life              |                                             | Satisfaction of life |  |
|                                |                                | Religiosity and spirituality | Assessment of the meaning of one's own life |                      |  |

Source: Author.

**Table XVII. Subdimensions related to the *National Capital* dimension developed in Spanish election advertisements**

| National capital |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Economic capital | Other capitals |

Source: Author.

Consequently, after examining these tables, the results indicate that the matters that the happiness indexes and measures consider the driving forces behind well-being (happiness dimensions) are also elements that comprise the Spanish electoral discourse analysed, as the samples match much more than they differ.

#### 4. Conclusions

The results of these analyses indicate that a thematic similarity can be established between the groups of well-being indicators from the happiness indexes and measures (which formulate an explicit proposal on how the Science of Happiness should be applied to the exercise of politics) and Spanish electoral advertising, which construct a discourse on what is socially desirable and politically suppleable in a country in which citizen happiness has not yet been stated as a governmental objective.

This conclusion is due to the fact that, generally speaking, we have identified the majority of themes mentioned in the happiness indexes and measures (called *happiness dimensions*

and *subdimensions*) in the spots for the Spanish parliamentary elections, thus showing that both discourses are similar.

However, despite this overall parallelism between the samples, we should also bear in mind that in the electoral advertising studied, each of these happiness themes or dimensions may play a more or less central role in the narrative that each party creates and those that are constructed in the Spanish electoral discourse in general.

For example, job creation acts as an axis around which the PP's narratives are constructed, which state that this is a fundamental factor for achieving national progress and citizen well-being, while for the PSOE jobs tend to be discursively subordinated to the struggle to achieve equality among citizens, and for the UP it may be part of the diagnosis of the situation and used to criticise the previous governing parties' handling of the matter.

Likewise, each party may suggest each of these happiness dimensions in a different way not only narratively but also thematically. For example, the three parties may refer to the Work and Personal Finances dimension, but while the PP suggests themes related to job creation, the PSOE focuses on

highlighting the inequalities between men and women at work, and the UP talks about how some retirement pensions are insufficient to cover basic living needs.

The study of the thematic and narrative differences among the parties goes beyond the scope of this research, as the overarching objective in this article was to explore to what extent the happiness measures take into account variables or themes other than those that appear in other discourses which do not explicitly talk about happiness, such as the Spanish electoral discourse. However, in future studies, it would be worthwhile to bear these nuances in mind within the same sample and to examine how the discourse on what is socially desirable and politically suppliable behaves according to variables like the ideology or parliamentary position of each political party.

In any case, getting back to the discussion of the results of this analysis, the fact that two political discourses that have different approaches and objectives match on what is socially desirable and politically suppliable is a revealing result that raises questions related to the very nature of these two discourses analysed. One possible explanation on why these themes match would be that both samples share a common culture, the outcome of a globalised political mindset.

This is a possibility because, as observed above, the happiness indexes and measures analysed are the outcome of a series of initiatives promoted by intergovernmental institutions like the United Nations, the OECD and the European Commission, after which a series of member countries began to create well-being indexes or similar studies.

In this sense, Spain is also a member country of these organisations, so certain social and political alarms or concerns are likely shared, even if they are not articulated around the signifier *happiness*.

Therefore, for the sample analysed, we could conclude that the happiness discourses implicit in the well-being indexes and measures do not entail a substantial change in the discourse about what is socially and politically suppliable but instead act as a reflection of the dominant values in a common, globalised political culture. Consequently, in this case, as Ahmed (2010) says, apparently all the matters that were already categorised as good for society are simply reinscribed through the language of happiness.

This observation aligns with the critiques of happiness as a social and political objective contained in the theoretical framework of this article and studies like Cabanas 2009, 2016; Cabanas and Illouz 2019; Frawley 2015a, 2015b; and Rose 1999.

However, in order for this conclusion to gain ground, analyses similar to those in this study should be conducted with samples from other countries, as this time we have only studied Spanish electoral discourses. Likewise, the sample should be expanded to other happiness indexes, more political parties and other types of political discourses.

In any case, in this research it is clear that continuing to study happiness in places where it is not present contributes

to a better understanding of the phenomenon of the Science of Happiness and of our societies, what concerns us, what we value, what we have and what we wish for.

## Notes

1. The sample is comprised of measures that measure happiness, well-being or quality of life. In studies like Sánchez-Sánchez (2017, 2020), we find that the use of any of these nouns in the title does not significantly change the variables considered in these measures.
2. We consulted the electoral results on the website of the Ministry of the Interior of the government of Spain. <http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/min/>

## Final note

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## Annex

### Dimensions of happiness

Listed below are the different dimensions of happiness that represent the groups of indicators that share a particular theme in the happiness indices and measures analysed: *Gross National Happiness Index, Happy Planet Index, Philippine Gross National Happiness Index, Internacional Well-being Index, Gallup & Healthways Well-being Index, Index of Economic Well-being, Measures of National Well-being in the United Kingdom, Well-being in 2030, Prescott-Allen Well-being Index, European Quality of Life Survey, Quality of Life Survey and Quality of life in European Cities.*

Each dimension is represented by a table, in which the different sub-dimensions of happiness (groupings of indicators that share a theme within a larger group of indicators) are broken down from the most general to the most specific, i.e. down to the indicators. For reasons of space, it is not necessary to list all the indicators, but rather to summarise them in general terms. [To consult the indicators list, see Sanchez-Sanchez (2020)].

- **Subjective Well-being Dimension (Table II)**

This dimension is referenced in 12 of the 13 measures in the sample.

- **Community dimension (Table III)**

This dimension is referenced in 8 of the 13 measures.

- **Politics dimension (Tables IV.1. and IV.2.)**

This dimension is referenced in 7 of the 13 measures in the sample.

- **Environment dimension (Tables V.1. and V.2.)**

This dimension is referenced in 12 of the 13 measures.

- **Work and personal finances dimension (Tables VI.1. and VI.2.)**

This dimension is referenced in 12 of the 13 measures.

- **Education dimension (Table VII)**

This dimension is referenced in 7 of the 13 measures.

- **Health dimension (Table VIII)**

This dimension is referenced in 10 of the 13 measures in the sample.

- **National capital dimension (Table IX)**

This dimension is referenced in 3 of the 13 measures in the sample.

**Table II. Subjective Well-being Dimension**

| Subjective Well-being                                                           |                                                                                 |                                                                                            |                                                                                       |                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emotional assessments                                                           |                                                                                 | Cognitive assessments                                                                      |                                                                                       |                                                                               |
| Positive emotions and feelings                                                  | Negative emotions and feelings                                                  | Meaning of life                                                                            | Satisfaction of life                                                                  |                                                                               |
|                                                                                 |                                                                                 | Religiosity and spirituality                                                               |                                                                                       |                                                                               |
| Frequency and companionship in feeling different emotions and positive feelings | Frequency and companionship in feeling different emotions and negative feelings | Religious beliefs, level of religiosity, participation in religious or spiritual practices | Views on the meaning of life and place in the world. Personal values and expectations | Satisfaction with present and future life. Levels of happiness and well-being |

Source: Author.

**Table III. Community dimension**

| Community                                                                        |                                                                                                    |                                                    |                                            |                                 |                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social cohesion and interpersonal relationships                                  |                                                                                                    |                                                    |                                            |                                 | Feelings<br>stemming<br>from social<br>interaction                             | Social and cultural participation                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                      |
| Social<br>cohesion                                                               | Interpersonal relationships                                                                        |                                                    |                                            |                                 |                                                                                | Social participation                                                                                                                                             | Culture                                                                                              |
|                                                                                  | Family                                                                                             | Friends                                            | Neighbours                                 | Others                          |                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                      |
| Social interactions, belonging, relationships and tensions between social groups | Family situation and relationship, satisfaction, perceptions and feelings of support in the family | Importance of friends, type of contact and support | Contact with neighbours, trust and support | Love relationships and sex life | Satisfaction with present relationships, feelings of belonging and recognition | Volunteering and donation activities, participation in social, cultural, artistic and sporting activities, membership of associations, leisure activities, etc.. | Importance of culture, language and traditions and their preservation, perception of cultural change |
| Source: Author.                                                                  |                                                                                                    |                                                    |                                            |                                 |                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                      |

Source: Author.

**Table IV.1. Politics dimension**

| Politics                                                                          |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Characteristics of the country's political system                                 |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                            | Citizen political participation                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Civil rights                                                                      | Social organisation                                                                                            | Electoral processes                                                                                                                                             | Media                                                                                      | Personal interest in politics                                                          | Personal political actions                                                                                                                                                            |
| Protection of fundamental rights, right to vote, right to political participation | Characteristics of the democratic system, government-citizen relationship and behaviour of the judicial system | Reliability of the electoral system, possibility of political discussion, possibility of referendums, existence of opposition parties, and government formation | Existence of media, media consumption by citizens, media behaviour during election periods | Ideology, interest in politics and perception of its importance, and voting intentions | Voting behaviour, participation in political parties, action groups, signing of petitions, demonstrations, boycotts and trade unions, and contact with politicians and civil servants |

Source: Author.

**Table IV.2. Politics dimension**

| Politics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Governance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Assessment of the general situation of the country                                                                                                                                                                                              | Trust in institutions                                                                                                           | Assessment of policies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Political and social situation, satisfaction with government, satisfaction with public and administrative services, influence of other governments on the national government, national security, health of the population, and peace and order | Trust in the government, parliament, political class, European bodies, legal and judicial system, police, and local authorities | Evaluation of policies related to the reduction of economic inequalities, the fight against corruption, political transparency, immigration, the LGBT community, gender equality, and the existence of policies adapted to the demands of the majority |

Source: Author.

**Table V.1. Environment dimension**

| Environment                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                             |                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Residential area                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                             |                                                                   |
| Characteristics                                                                                                                                               | Infrastructures and services                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Natural spaces and phenomena                                                                                                                          | Security                                                                                                    | Housing                                                           |
| Level of importance of the environment for happiness, satisfaction with the area of residence, water quality and access to and affordability of certain foods | Assessment of the quality of services and public spaces and administrative services, assessment of access to certain services, travel time and traffic, assessment of certain infrastructures, presence of shops and shelters | Access to natural environments, natural disasters typical of the area and public concern about them, relationship of humans to native flora and fauna | Level of crime, violence and vandalism in the area of residence, sense of physical security, road mortality | Satisfaction with housing, home ownership and associated problems |

Source: Author.

**Table V.2. Environment dimension**

| Environment                                                                                |                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environment                                                                                |                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Characteristics of the natural environment                                                 | Impact of human activity on the environment                                                 | Environmental care                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Climate, diversity and quality of terrain, indigenous species, available natural resources | Environmental problems, pollution, damage to wildlife, number of global hectares per capita | Concern for waste disposal and pollution, a sense of responsibility for environmental care, protected areas, use of natural resources and renewable energies, recycling and combating climate change |
| Source: Author.                                                                            |                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

**Table VI.1. Work and personal finances**

| Work and personal finances                                                                                  |                                              |                                                                                                             |                                                                |                                                                                          |                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Work                                                                                                        |                                              |                                                                                                             |                                                                |                                                                                          |                                        |
| Work conditions                                                                                             |                                              |                                                                                                             |                                                                | Contribution of employment to self-realisation                                           | Balance between work and personal life |
| Contractual characteristics                                                                                 | Interpersonal relations                      | Security                                                                                                    |                                                                |                                                                                          |                                        |
|                                                                                                             |                                              | Work                                                                                                        | Physical / Health                                              |                                                                                          |                                        |
| Employment status, type of organisation worked for, contractual conditions, working hours, union membership | Relationship between employees and employers | Possibility of job loss, job opportunities in the place of residence, opportunities to start a new business | Accidents and occupational diseases, feeling of safety at work | Job duties and obligations, job satisfaction and the importance of the job in one's life | Work and life balance                  |
| Source: Author.                                                                                             |                                              |                                                                                                             |                                                                |                                                                                          |                                        |

**Table VI.2. Work and personal finances**

| Work and personal finances                                              |                                                 |                                                                                         |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Personal finances                                                       |                                                 |                                                                                         |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Financial situation                                                     | Balance between work and personal life          |                                                                                         |                                                                                                                  | Financial security                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                         | Essential consumption                           | Nonessential consumption                                                                | Goods                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Income and payments, satisfaction with the family's financial situation | Capacity to meet basic needs (housing and food) | Ability to consume non-essential goods, purchasing power to afford leisure and holidays | Ownership of technological goods, household appliances, and other assets. Level of deprivation of material goods | Presence of financial risk factors (unemployment, illness, single parent, ageing, difficulty making ends meet, debt, amount of savings), arrears and financial pressures (rent or mortgage, utility bills, loan) |
| Source: Author.                                                         |                                                 |                                                                                         |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**Table VII. Education dimension**

| Education                                                   |                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Personal education                                          | Personal values                                                                      | National education system                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Educational level, literacy level, intellectual aspirations | Valuing education, technological knowledge, murder, theft, discord, sexual behaviour | Access to education, public expenditure on education, enrolment and graduation data, number of individuals neither studying nor working, number of individuals with no academic qualifications, satisfaction with the national public education system and its facilities |

Source: Author.

**Table VIII. Health dimension**

| Health                           |                                           |                                  |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Individual                       |                                           | National                         |                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Subjective                       | Objective                                 | National data                    | Health system                                                                                                                                                               |
| Self-assessment of health status | Rest, illness, eating habits and drug use | Life expectancy, mortality rates | Possibility of receiving medical consultations and treatment through the national health system, satisfaction with the health system, services offered by the health system |

Source: Author.

**Table IX. National capital dimension**

| National capital                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Economic capital                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Other capitals |
| Growth rate of the country and in comparison with neighbouring countries, perceived importance of the economy for happiness, income per capita before and after taxes, public debt, inflation, capital stock, external debt, consumption, public spending and poverty level | Human capital  |

Source: Author.



## Critical Book Reviews

**AGUADO, JUAN MIGUEL.** *Mediaciones ubicuas. Ecosistema móvil, gestión de identidad y nuevo espacio público*  
Barcelona: Gedisa, 2020. Colección Comunicación. 270 pages  
ISBN: 978-8418193583.

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### Ubiquitous mediations: how the new media ecosystem works

The implications of technology in citizens' lives are astonishing, and the successive waves of technological developments are transforming our culture. One of these transformations affects individuals' behaviour in society and is occurring with increasing frequency in the digital world via mobile technology. In *Mediaciones ubicuas*, Juan Miguel Aguado, a professor of Journalism and coordinator of the Mobile Media Research Lab at the University of Murcia, proposes a communication theory that defines the new forms of communication produced by 'technological mediation' in 'all the spheres and moments of everyday life' (p. 13). Aguado outlines the features of the transformation of the media ecosystem, whose main attribute is ubiquity and the most important instrument is the smartphone. This book is yet another step forward in the research that Aguado conducts on the social impact of mobile communication, whose results can be found in books like *La comunicación móvil. Hacia un nuevo ecosistema digital* (Gedisa 2003) and *Emerging Perspectives on the Mobile Content Evolution* (IGI Global 2015).

The book analyses the mechanics of mobile communication and the new role played by humans in this environment. It also presents a critical analysis of the functioning of the media and platforms in the digital age, and it lists the social and economic relationships that emerge in a new capitalism in which monetisation is achieved via the users' data. Here the reader will find 'a clear genealogy between the smartphone and Big Data, artificial intelligence (AI), social algorithms, hyper-surveillance, the platform economy and the new virtual public sphere' (p. 12).

Ubiquitous mediations encompass a set of transformations that are giving rise to a new technological ecosystem. In that scenario, content is also transformed, although it takes on features of the formats in other media formats, like television or CDs, to adapt to the very nature of mobility. The content is dematerialised and socialised through the interaction and

transformation possibilities afforded by the different platforms. According to Aguado, 'the uniqueness of the mobile context lies in its ability to ubiquitously and continuously superimpose the symbolic digital context and the sphere of real interaction with one's environment'; that is, 'mobile technology absorbs the world and reconstructs it in a thousand prisms' (p. 26).

In the new media ecosystem, actors interact to generate networks of value, which oftentimes have an economic component. Thus, new business models emerge which are adapted to a ubiquitous demand for dematerialised content designed to be accessed from different devices. Furthermore, this business model is created adapting to the new consumption rituals that mobile technology makes possible. In these new consumption scenarios, identity management becomes a determining factor because 'mobile social interactions and cultural content [...] are involved' in communicative exchanges (p. 102). Aguado uses the concept of 'egospheres' to explain those dynamics of representation that are associated 'with the rights of self-(re)presentation' (p. 103). With this idea, he 'tries to designate a structure of symbolic resources commonly used to present oneself to others in social interaction rituals mediated by mobile phones' (p. 104).

The author describes the companies that emerged within the context of mobile technology, primarily digital platforms, which use these identity management rites to draw the attention of the consuming public. They do not use persuasion, as traditional industries did, but instead aspire to 'a soft, fluid, frictionless can-do, like a second skin' (p. 53). In the new business models, 'personal information' is an 'increasingly important' asset (p. 57), and cross-media platforms are based on this premise.

All these changes channelled in ubiquitous mediations occur in a technological world that uses big data as a tool, without which this transformation would not have been possible and which, as the author asserts, has ethical connotations. Aguado stresses that the use of data is not a neutral, innocuous practice but is related to the knowledge of the person who chooses and organises them. It is a new form of power in which algorithms

will become a social actor. 'Through their services and applications, platforms shape structures of data collection' and 'constitute veritable datafication structures with a performative value', thus shaping 'reality in that it measures or analyses it' (p. 132), Aguado explains in the book.

On the other hand, the use of big data has given rise to a Copernican turn in economics, generating new forms of monetisation, this time via data. At this point, another ethical question emerges: privacy. Aguado believes that in today's capitalism, the value is not in the data themselves but in the way they are used and the profiles and patterns created. On the one hand, the structures of the new virtual sphere 'limit', 'conceal' or 'transform' privacy 'into a web of micro-decisions which are lost in the infinite settings options [...] or in interminable conditions', so he claims that 'privacy becomes a question of privileges' (164) associated with the subscription to a service or the purchase of a device. On the other hand, another ethical question that emerges in ubiquitous mediations is the surveillance of individuals' social interaction by institutions and companies. This practice was originally used by states as a defence strategy; however, Aguado believes that we are now faced with the duality of political surveillance, or Big Brother, and corporate surveillance, or Big Business. In the former, individuals give up their personal data as a mechanism of protection, and in the latter, they do so to access content and services freely and effectively.

Aguado finishes his theorisation of a new media system with one of the main dilemmas in today's society: the dissemination of content involving hatred and disinformation. As stated above, ubiquitous mediations entail a transformation of both the format and content of communicative messages associated with personal identity. However, just as an emotional component is used in communication and social relations, there is an 'emotionalisation of the public discourse' (p. 186) in the news messages conveyed with mobile technology. According to the author, that is the ideal environment to develop communication pathologies, namely the dissemination of messages of hatred and fake news.

In conclusion, the value of this book is twofold. First, it offers an academic concept, ubiquitous mediations, to describe the new communicative universe fostered by mobile technology and conceptualises it within the field of communication theory. Secondly, it provides an extensive bibliography which is extraordinarily useful for any reader who wants to learn more about the new information and communication paradigm.

MARZAL-FELICI, J.; SOLER-CAMPILLO, M.; LÓPEZ-OLANO, C. *Participación ciudadana y medios de comunicación públicos, 1: Conceptos y teorías*.

Valencia: Tirant Humanidades, 2021, 462 pages

ISBN: 978-84-18656-13-2.

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### Citizen participation as a tool to promote public media

Public media corporations are in crisis. The cutbacks in their budgets after 2008 and the consequent loss in the range of programmes, audiences and reputation are joined by factors like the lack of regulatory mechanisms from depoliticised governments and the laborious adaptation to the new context of digital platforms and social media. These issues and others are the crux of *Participación ciudadana y medios de comunicación públicos. 1. Conceptos y teorías*, a collectively-authored book which takes a multifaceted look at the burning issue of citizen participation in an effort to 'continue contributing to enriching the debate on the role of the public media and their political, economic, social and cultural importance, the key to progress in our country and our democracy' (p. 46).

The editors of the volume, Javier Marzal-Felici, María Soler-Campillo and Carlos López-Olano, are researchers in the fields of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising and Public Relations at the University Jaume I and the University of Valencia. Their contribution is based on the work promoted by professor Marzal-Felici within the project entitled [PARCICOM](#) (Citizen participation and public media. Analysis of audiovisual co-creation experiences in Spain and Europe), an ambitious study underway with the support of Spain's State RDI Programme geared at Society's Challenges by the Ministry of Science and Innovation of the government of Spain. Its products include other publications on topics related to this field (SOLER-CAMPILLO, GALÁN-CUBILLO & MARZAL-FELICI 2019; MARZAL-FELICI, SOLER-CAMPILLO & LÓPEZ-OLANO 2020; CAMPOS-FREIRE & LORIGUILLO-LÓPEZ 2021).

The volume has divided the reflections of 26 renowned researches in the field into 14 chapters. First comes the robust introduction (p. 25-46), in which the editors provide the updated context of both the status of the public media in the age of platforms and post-truth as a challenge that citizen participation poses for their re-legitimisation as actors in the public sphere. On the one hand, participation is a feature that

defines all public media, even more so at a time when their reputation has diminished due to factors like those mentioned above, which are joined by the lack of political independence or 'the widespread belief that any private management model is better' (p. 34). On the other hand, the benefits of implementing participation mechanisms are undeniable in 'the observance of good practices and the exercise of an ethics in both the public and private spheres' (p. 38). In summary, given this media context dominated by commercial media and contamination with disinformation, the editors claim that 'the public media are essential in order to strengthen and improve the health of our democracy' (p. 38).

The authors thus lay the groundwork on which the other contributions are developed. In the first chapter, entitled 'Audience participation in public media. From an instrumental to a goals-based vision' (p. 47-73), authors Anne-Sofie Vanhaeght and Karen Donders paradoxically offer a well-reasoned debunking of citizen participation as it is currently being applied in the public media. Even though participation is unanimously considered essential for their renewed presence as prominent actors in the public sphere, these Belgian researchers base their criticism on deliberative democracy to showcase its application 'without critical deliberation on whether participation truly contributed to the concept of the programme, much less to the democratic mission of public stations' (p. 55). In this way, 'instead of fostering audience empowerment, it is used as a strategic means to deal with the challenges of the digital age [...] but not to achieve social objectives like increasing diversity' (p. 57). To achieve these latter goals, the authors are clear: the main challenge facing the public media is setting aside the threat of vulnerability and confronting the permanent opening of audiences as active participants, not solely as the recipients of content.

Next, in the chapter entitled 'Citizen participation in public media: What it really means' (p. 75-98), Marius Dragomir presents some of the innovative trends in getting citizens involved bearing three main areas in mind: financing via rates focused on

individual consumption; depoliticised, inclusive governance with civil society; and the unflinching opening of their newsrooms to integrate citizens into their news and creative contents.

Directly related to Dragomir's text, in the chapter entitled 'Participation in audiovisual communication: Between the grassroots appropriation of technology and the law of the market' (p. 143-162), Emili Prado i Picó and Matilde Delgado offer a comprehensive overview of the evolution in the paradigms of participation which have come in response to technological developments from antenna-based telephone calls in the 1960s to user-generated content.

In turn, in 'The participative function of public audiovisual media in the context of the great mediatisation' (p. 227-244), Laura Cervi and the current president of RTVE, José Manuel Pérez Tornero, examine the transformations stemming from the impact of the web and the Internet, with a particular emphasis on their status as social entities. According to the authors, participation should avoid replicating the use of commercial operators' engagement strategies in the digital media and instead focus on their role as public services.

Due to a lack of space, we can only make a bare mention of the entire chapters devoted to such timely topics as participation in the governance of public TV and radio stations (CAMPOS-FREIRE, RODRÍGUEZ-CASTRO & VÁZ-ÁLVAREZ; p. 199-226); scholars', professionals' and experts' participation in social promotion (SOLER-CAMPILLO, LÓPEZ-OLANO & MARZAL-FELICI, p. 245-267); citizen participation in news programmes (LAMUEDRA-GRAVÁN, MATEOS-MARTÍN & BROULLÓN, p. 269-294); the participative mechanisms in the Basque public broadcasting service EITB (JUAN CARLOS MIGUEL, CARMELO GARITAONANDIA, SIMÓN PEÑA & MIGUEL ÁNGEL CASADO, p. 295-312); and the right to access and participation from the legal standpoint (JOSÉ M. VIDAL-BELTRÁN, p. 313-362). These contributions are joined by those of authorities on the matter, such as the late Enrique Bustamante (prologue), Ana María López-Cepeda (p. 163-184), Ignacio Bergillos-García (p. 125-141), David Fernández-Quijada (p. 185-197) and Manuel Ángel Vázquez-Medel (p. 363-385), which only serves to highlight the many different angles of the book.

For researchers specialising in the field of communication, this volume is an essential window onto the ever-changing landscape of audiovisuals produced by public media. Its second part, planned for 2022 and also open-access, promises to serve as a complement to these reflections thanks to the 'study of prominent experiences of participation in public media, both domestic and international' (p. 44). By doing so, this pair will be an intriguing introduction to the thrilling transformations occurring at the crossroads between the European public audiovisual system and the atomised audiences of today.

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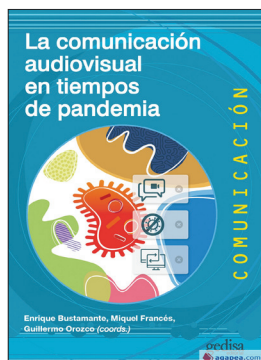
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## Books Review

**BUSTAMANTE, E.; FRANCÉS, M.; OROZCO, G. (COORDS.)**  
***La comunicación audiovisual en tiempos de pandemia.***  
 Barcelona: Editorial Gedisa, 2021. 440 pages.  
 ISBN: 9788418525681



Enrique Bustamante left an invaluable legacy and a huge void after his death this year. His last work, which he coordinated in conjunction with Miquel Francés and Guillermo Orozco, reflects on the role of the audiovisual media in tracking and broadcasting an event that touched social life around the globe in 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic. The publication seeks

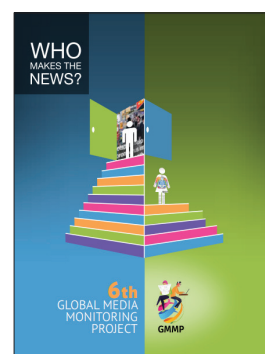
to highlight the scope, opportunities and challenges facing the media system in communicating with and reporting to citizens accurately and ethically.

The book compiles the papers presented at the international gathering of the TVmorfosisCONTD, which was held at the Universitat de València in late October 2020. Enrique Bustamante wrote the prologue, and the book analyses the following topics: access to rigorous, proven news; the risks of the 'infodemic' and the status of the media in the post-pandemic period; the importance of the media and public news models; the media's treatment of the most vulnerable social groups; scientific and cultural information-sharing in the pandemic; the crisis and models of public news; news contents; and the importance of the communication technologies via the Web.

The book also has a final section containing experiences of good practices within the framework of the digital multi-dissemination of audiovisual contents that goes beyond the generalist TV space, with a special emphasis on local contents.

Available [here](#).

**MACHARIA, S. (ED.)**  
***Who Makes the News. 6th Global Media Monitoring Project. Final report.***  
 WACC, 2021. 166 pages.  
 ISBN: 9781777803803



The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), on the initiative of the WACC, is publishing its sixth report on the presence and representation of women in the news media around the world. With a special emphasis on the global health crisis prompted by Covid-19 and the heightened inequalities that it brought about, the research in this sixth edition

offers an analysis of the representation of gender in the media coverage during the global catastrophe and highlights the increase in the consumption of TV and digital contents, as well as the definitive take-off of on-demand video platforms and majority access to the written press via their websites. Also, for the first time, the report includes data and analyses of the roles of original peoples, individuals with disabilities, groups facing discrimination because of their ethnicity and adults in the news. For the first time, it also analyses the representation of people over the age of 80.

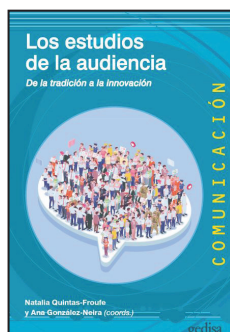
The GMMP 2020 was implemented in 116 countries and covers more than 30,000 pieces published or posted in the written press, TV, radio, digital media and Twitter. The study reveals mixed progress, stagnation and regression in gender biases and stereotypes in the news and other contents, in which women are featured in only 25% of news stories. The report yet again reiterates the need to bear social, legal, cultural and labour aspects in mind to improve the representation and treatment of women in the media.

In addition to the text containing global data, the GMMP also draws up specific reports by regions, such as Europe or Latin America, and by countries.

Available [here](#).

Report on Spain [here](#).

**QUINTAS FROUFE, N.; GONZÁLEZ NEIRA, A. (COORD.).**  
***Los estudios de la audiencia. De la tradición a la innovación***  
 Barcelona: Editorial Gedisa, 2021. 264 pages.  
 ISBN: 9788418525872



In this publication, Natalia Quintas Froufe and Ana González Neira compile knowledge, reflection and analysis of the evolution of audiences in such a constantly changing media ecosystem as today's. This book was written in conjunction with the Spanish Media Research Association (AE-IC).

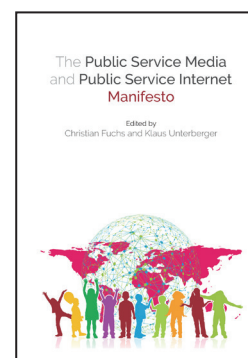
The book has ten chapters with a theoretical approach to the concept of audience; its historical evolution; the main research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative; and an analysis of current systems to measure audiences in the different media: TV, radio, press and digital. The book is framed within a communicative society in which the audience is partly abandoning its passive role and becoming active (or, as Guillermo Orozco indicates in the introduction, hyperactive) in front of screens and media, and in which data protection regulations give the audience the power to give or withhold their explicit consent to use their data.

The work includes contributions from Amparo Huertas (theories and ways of thinking about audiences); Juan José Igartua (quantitative study of reception); Javier Callejo (research methodologies); Lorena Gómez-Puertas, Mònica Figueras-Maz and Iolanda Tortajada (the fan phenomenon and audience participation); Luis Miguel Pedrero Esteban and José María Legorburu Hortelano (challenges of audience mediation on radio and audio); Ana González-Neira, Eduardo Madinaveitia and Natalia Quintas-Froufe (print media and the audience's power); Ana Isabel Rodríguez-Vázquez (TV audiences and total content rating); Luis Deltell Escolar (cinematographic audiences); and Natalia Papí-Gálvez and Marta Perlado-Lamo de Espinosa (measuring Internet audiences). Finally, the book closes with Vanessa Rodríguez-Breijo and Jorge Gallardo-Camacho's chapter on the challenges of audience studies in the digital age and the culture of convergence.

Available [here](#).

**FUCHS, C.; UNTERBERGER, K. (ED.)**  
***The Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto***  
 London: University of Westminster Press, 2021. 135 pages. ISBN: 9781914386299

The University of Westminster Press is publishing this book after a process of debate and collective work among media experts and professionals who—in light of the attacks on the public media, the rise in fake news online and the evolution of the post-truth culture—are demanding the defence of the existence, financing and independence of the public media, as well as the creation of a public Internet service.



The publication contains the Manifesto on the public media and public Internet service and the materials that gave rise to its creation: the report by Christian Fuchs on the results of the public media survey; the written version of the online talk that Graham Murdock gave on the role of the public media in critical periods; connectivity; the climate crisis and the COVID-19 crisis; and a summary of a discussion by the eComittee platform on the underpinnings of the Manifesto: public media, Internet and the future of communications.

Ultimately, the Manifesto highlights the value of the public media and the creation of a public Internet service for the future of society as non-profit alternatives to the digital giants.

Available [here](#).

JACKSON, D. ET AL. (ED.)

*Olympic and Paralympic Analysis 2020: Mega events, media, and the politics of sport*

Austin (USA): Center for Sports Communication. September 2021. ISBN: 9781910042335



The Center for Sports Communication & Media has published this report, in which it analyses the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics from the cutting edge of media and sports media studies. The publication aims to become a compilation of thoughts, reflections and immediate knowledge from a broad range of disciplinary influences: media, communication studies, cultural

studies, sociology, political science and psychology.

The research had the support of the International Association for Media and Communication Research and the Asociación Internacional de Estudios en Comunicación Social (IAMCR/AIECS), whose members contributed to it. The report, written by academic experts from all over the world, is organised into five content-based sections. The first section analyses diverse aspects of the Olympics as a major event, with discussions on its impact, as well as the logistical concerns of the organisation in Tokyo in particular; the second focuses on the media coverage and representation, with contributions on identity, gender and stereotypes, among others; the third and fourth sections spotlight the athletes' athletic performance and identity, and the different forms of fandom and national identity generated by the Olympics for both the country organising the event and other countries competing in it; finally, the fifth section addresses the relationship between politics and sport with the goal of evaluating the external political factors that can affect the organisation of the Olympics.

Available [here](#).

SVENSON, J.

*Wizards of the Web: An Outsider's Journey into Tech Culture, Programmins, and Mathemagics*

Sweden: Nordicom, 2021. 172 pages.

ISBN: 9789188855527

In this book, Jakob Svensson studies the human and cultural aspects of the programmers at the heart of a social scene where algorithms and automated systems are exerting increasing power in connected data societies.

Svensson starts with the idea that we have to understand the people behind the screens in order to understand the changing power relations in societies overtaken by data, digital media and automated systems. In this sense, the publication addresses the rules, ideals, values and imagination guiding the programming professionals in their work. The empirical and academic study is based on interviews with engineering and programming professionals, observations made at their headquarters and at technology conferences in Denmark, Sweden, Brazil, Germany, India and the United States and a case study about the introduction of algorithmic automation on the cover of a Scandinavian newspaper.

Available [here](#).





## Journals Review

### ***Trípodos: Gender and media***

Barcelona: Blanquerna - Universitat Ramon Llull

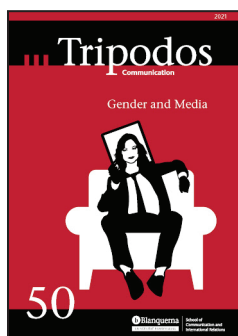
Issue 50, July 2021

ISSN print: 1138-3305, ISSN electronic: 2340-5007

*Trípodos* is celebrating its 50th issue with the addition of the figures of the gender editor and youth editor onto its editorial board. The objective of this initiative is to ensure that the content published has a gender perspective and avoids sexist stereotypes and the underrepresentation of women in the media, and that young researchers are represented in its publication.

In this vein, this issue explores the intersection of gender with communication and technology. The journal encompasses different articles on gender identity and the behaviours and representations of women and men in the media and social media. For example, the study by Marta Mensa and Tao Deng examines how women are portrayed on Instagram, in both luxury fashion brands and public tags in the social media. The study by Dafne Calvo, Eva Campos and Iris Simon confirms that automation techniques and contradictory power flows are critical factors in understanding the real potential of the social media for feminist social change, while the research by Zeynep Gultekin-Akçay shows how the representation of the dominant discourse in television affects children's perceptions of masculinity and femininity.

The journal also includes articles on identity and gender representation and male violence in specific countries through the cinematographic space, urban art and advertising.



Available [here](#).

### ***Comunicar: Participación ciudadana en la esfera digital***

Huelva: Universidad de Huelva

Issue 69, October 2021

ISSN print: 1134-3478, ISSN electronic: 1988-3293

The profound transformations in the digital technologies and social participation feature in this issue of *Comunicar*, which addresses their relationship not only with the media but also with education and political processes. The publication stresses how digital realities in the era of the coronavirus pandemic have redefined and promoted citizen participation in their roles as content consumers and producers and their massive interaction on the Web.



In this sense, the journal offers five articles which analyse how technological innovations have created opportunities and spaces that are affecting the political and social reality and have reformulated online civic commitment. The first article, 'COVID-19 en YouTube: Debates y polarización en la esfera digital' (COVID-19 on YouTube: Debates and polarisation in the digital sphere) by Óscar Luengo, Javier García Marín and Emilian de Blasio presents an analysis of the deliberation on COVID-19 observed on this video-exchange platform in Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom; while 'Participación ciudadana en Twitter: Polémicas anti-vacunas en tiempos de COVID-19' (Citizen participation on Twitter: Anti-vaccine controversies in the time of COVID-19), by Rafael Carrasco, Miguel Ángel Martín and Ernesto Villar, examines the degree to which public interactions on Twitter are favourable or unfavourable to the main COVID-19 vaccines.

Finally, the texts 'Participación Infantil, política local y entorno digital: Visiones y usos en municipios españoles' (Child participation, local policy and digital environment: Visions and uses in Spanish municipalities) by Ana María Novella, Clara Romero, Héctor S. Melero and Elena Noguera; 'Medios digitales y prácticas políticas universitarias en la esfera pública' (Digital media and university political practices in the public sphere) by Ana Laura Maltos, Francisco Javier Martínez and Oscar Mario Miranda; and 'Contravalores del ethos digital percibido por futuros formadores' (Counter-values of the digital ethos perceived by future trainers) by Paula Renés, María J. Hernández, M. C. Caldeiro and Cleofé G. Alvites, focus on the use of the digital media in child citizenship, the university and the future teaching community.

Available [here](#).

**Anàlisi: Quaderns de Comunicació i Cultura**

Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Issue 64, June 2021

ISSN print: 0211-2175, ISSN electronic: 2340-5236



The journal *Anàlisi* conducts an in-depth reflection on the struggle against disinformation and its viral spread via the social media. The volume examines the issue of fake news from a multidisciplinary perspective, in which theories of information, IT, statistics and systems engineering converge. It also sheds light on the new scenarios of deepfakes, which can threaten the privacy system and increase the risks stemming from identity theft.

To further this research, the articles analyse different examples. Specifically, Antonio M. Bañón uses the political comedy *Yes Minister* (BBC, 1980-1984) to show that the ironic dialogue among the characters is a powerful critical tool of political disinformation, which perfectly fits the usual YouTube policy; Marga Cabrera, Rodrigo Cisternas, Alberto López and Rebeca Díez use a multimodal approach to study the Instagram posts of presidential candidates in four Latin American countries with 2021 elections to identify what part of their discourse was related to controlling the pandemic; José Gamir, Raquel Tarullo and Miguel Ibáñez address the construction of image via disinformation on the Internet based on 161 false racist, xenophobic or Islamophobic stories debunked in 2020 by the four Spanish news verification media accredited by the International Fact-Checking Network: *Maldita.es*, *Newtral*, *Efe Verifica* and *Verificat*; Nadia Alonso, Pavel Sidorenko and Fábio Giacomelli analyse the narrative of disinformation through TikTok posts from four countries (Spain, Portugal, Brazil and the United States), with different national idiosyncrasies and realities; Lola Bañón conducts her study by observing the Al Jazeera channel in the audiovisual verification process of the traditional newsroom in the cloud structure; and finally, Francisco J. García addresses technology, the possibilities and risks of deepfakes.

**Ámbitos. Revista internacional de comunicación**

Seville: Universidad de Sevilla.

Issue 53, summer edition 2021

ISSN print: 1139-1979, ISSN electronic: 1988-5733

Available [here](#).

The focal point of the research in this issue of the journal *Ámbitos* is Instagram, one of the massive social media with the greatest growth, influence and social potential today. The publication presents a series of articles with varied methodological and thematic approaches to report on where this social media and its users are headed. Even though it started as primarily for young, non-professional people who mainly valued images, it has recently captivated an adult, professional population, influencers, political parties, companies, scientists, scholars, institutions and others.

The monograph opens with case studies to determine how publishers use Instagram to promote and influence the book market; it then analyses how healthcare staff used the tools offered by the platform during the first two weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown to get greater repercussions among their audiences; and it then reports on how hashtags have become a form of content management which justifies their use as information representation which could benefit from indexing techniques.

Finally, the monograph includes articles examining the impact of Instagram on emotions, social marketing, advertising, the truth of news, news treatment and the media.

Available [here](#).

*The International Journal of Communication* (IJOC) opens



***Internacional Journal of Communication***

California: University of Southern California (USC)

Vol. 15, 2021

ISSN: 1932-8036



its 15th volume with a broad selection of miscellany with contributions by experts on a variety of topics like journalistic ethics, the discourse of hate, sensationalism, stereotypes, migrations and public policies.

With a focus on the rising field one of social media applications that allow users to easily post short, popular videos, especially among youths, the journal devotes a special section to the social phenomenon of TikTok. Throughout the qualitative content analyses and a series of qualitative case studies, it provides an overview of the platform's emerging frameworks, approaches, methodologies and applications, and it stresses an analysis of the social aspects and cultural contexts in which it emerged; its ownership, governance and management; its content and digital youth culture; and its popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last part of the publication includes a variety of articles on digital and smart infrastructures, and it concludes with texts on the theoretical approach between religious and the media.

Available [here](#).

***Studies in Communication Sciences***

University of Zurich

Vol. 21, issue 1, June 2021

ISSN print: 1424-4896, ISSN electronic: 2296-4150



democratic societies. Specifically, it focuses on information on the perspectives of users, visibility in the digital age and the social responsibility of the press, and the relationship between journalists and audiences.

The journal is organised into three sections. The general sections contains a study by Dorothee Artl on the recent case of the grassroots

Swiss initiative 'Yes to a veil ban', which examines the public's perceptions of media bias; a study by Thomas Zerback and Dominique S. Wirz on how the factors inherent to messages influence emoji reactions of Facebook users; and an analysis by Nina Wicke and Monika Taddicken on how the media cover the contemporary and global issue of climate change. The section closes with a contribution by Michael V. Reiss, Noemi Festic, Michael Latzer and Tanja Rüedy on the social relevance of algorithm selection.

The second part is a thematic section on issues of accessibility, representation, participation, diversity and inequalities; it also examines scientific communication, algorithms, the social media, speech applications, open-source software and TV programmes. That is followed by empirical studies aimed at the digital visibility of gender as a way to highlight inequalities and reveal the ambivalence in women's participation in online debates, replies and reinforcement of gender norms via digital technology, and other inequalities related to sexual orientation and socioeconomic level.

The last part includes book reviews and two conference reports that reveal how the digital transformation is affecting the field of communication science itself.

Available [here](#).

SComS devotes its first issue in June to the role of the media in

***L'Atalante: Revista de estudios cinematográficos***

València: Asociación Cinefórum L'Atalante i El Camarote de Pere Jules

Issue 32, July 2021

ISSN print: 1885-3730, ISSN electronic: 2340-6992

Issue number 32 of the cinematography journal *L'Atalante* focuses on observing the image of women in the Spanish film world, paying attention to the profile of women with different archetypes of modernity during the Franco era.

The publication encompasses a series of articles with a variety of case studies to ascertain how actresses more or less explicitly transgressed the passive, domestic, servile model dictated for women by the fascist regime. The journal also examines the social representations of women, the forms of work in the industry, the way history is addressed in the cinema by the actresses, the aesthetic analysis of performance and especially their role as the bearers of new models of femininity for the female audience. In a similar vein, the journal concludes with a conversation between Marga Carnicé Mur and Endika Rey and the actress Teresa Gimpera, in which they discuss the different roles she played throughout her film career and her personal fit within the different archetypes when portraying a free, modern femininity.



Available [here](#).

## Websites Review

### European Broadcasting Union (EBU)

<<https://www.ebu.ch/home>>

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU, first known as the UER when it was in French, the organisation's other official language) is the global alliance of public service media. It encompasses 115 member organisations in 56 countries and 31 additional affiliates in Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas. The members of the EBU operate almost 2,000 television channels and online services, reach a joint audience of more than one billion people all over the world and broadcast in more than 160 languages.

The main goals of the EBU are to guarantee a sustainable future for public-service media. The organisation offers its members the chance to exchange high-quality contents, from news to sports and music. Its [resources](#) section provides information and its own [reports on trends](#) on the evolution of the sector, most notably the following:

- [Democracy and Public Service Media](#) (September 2021)
- [Public Service Media and News](#) (August 2021)
- [Diversity and Public Service Media](#) (May 2021)

Access to the documents on its website comes in three formats: only for members, for registered users and public access. We recommend visiting its [Knowledge Hub](#) section, which allows you to search for documents, videos and EBU guides by subject.

### European Audiovisual Observatory

<<https://www.obs.coe.int/en/web/observatoire/>>

The European Audiovisual Observatory (OEA) is part of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. It was created in 1992 with the goal of compiling and distributing information on the audiovisual industries in Europe from both the economic and legal standpoint. The services offered on the OEA website include the [IRIS Newsletter](#), which provides monthly reports on the new audiovisual laws in 41 European countries. In more than 30 brief articles, it provides a regular, general, free-of-charge overview of what has been happening both nationally and internationally in relation to laws or legal rulings in fields like radio broadcasting, cinema, à la carte video services and IPTV. The OEA also publishes its annual '[Yearbook 2020/2021. Key Trends. Television, Cinema, Video and On-demand Audiovisual Services – The Pan-European Picture](#)' every March (versions in English, French and German). Also worth noting are its databases [Mavise](#), [Lumière VOD](#) and [IRIS Merlin](#) and its tracking of [COVID-19](#) measures in the field of audiovisual and the transposition of the latest [Directive on audiovisual services](#).

### Public Media Alliance

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

The Public Media Alliance (PMA) is the largest association of public media in the world, and it focuses specifically on promoting and supporting public audiovisual services all over the globe, including the BBC, the ZDF and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It also offers its members the opportunity to exchange ideas, opinions and good practices in the public media.

The PMA holds international conferences, offers grants, publishes research and provides resource and exchanges of good practices in public media, such as the tool [Coronavirus: Resources and Best Practices](#). It also has an interesting [glossary](#) with aspects and definitions related to public service missions and media, and a [weekly newsletter](#) with the latest news in the sector.

### EPRA: public service and the role of regulatory authorities

<[https://cdn.epra.org/attachments/files/3463/original/EPRA\\_PSM\\_Plenary\\_2\\_questionnaire\\_analysis\\_final.pdf?1554198287](https://cdn.epra.org/attachments/files/3463/original/EPRA_PSM_Plenary_2_questionnaire_analysis_final.pdf?1554198287)>

The European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) was created in 1995 in response to the need for closer cooperation among the European regulatory authorities. Therefore, it has more than 25 years of experience and is the oldest and most extensive network of audiovisual regulators on the continent. It is comprised of 55 regulatory authorities from 47 countries, including the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia. The European Commission, the Council of Europe, the European Audiovisual Observatory and the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media are permanent observers of the platform.

The [resources](#) section on the website provides access to documents of interest in general and specifically to its members. EPRA, which holds two meetings a year, devoted its 48th conference (Bratislava, 11-12 October 2018) to 'Public Service and Content of Public Interest in the Digital Age'. The documentation drafted includes:

- [Introductory document](#) (drawn up by the EPRA secretariat)
- [Public service in the United Kingdom](#) (Ofcom, United Kingdom)
- [Public service in the Netherlands](#) (CvdM)
- [Public service in Norway](#) (NRK)
- [Public service in Switzerland](#) (Ofcom, Switzerland)
- [Public service in Latvia](#) (NEPLpadome)
- [Document summarising all the contributions of the EPRA regulatory authorities](#) (drafted by Ofcom, Switzerland)

### Ofcom: analysis and updating of the public service

<<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/public-service-broadcasting>>

Since the approval of the [2003 Communications Act](#), the British regulatory agency, Ofcom, has been charged with revising and updating public service audiovisuals in the United Kingdom. The public service providers are BBC, Channel 3 (which operates under the trade name ITV), Channel 4, Channel 5 and S4C (the Welsh channel).

Among other activities, Ofcom drafts the [annual compliance report on public service](#), annual studies on [the perception of public service among the audience](#) and [strategic plans](#) to guarantee its sustainability. One obligation of the public service in the British regulatory system is 'made outside London production', whose intention is to decentralise production, which is heavily concentrated in the city of London.

Its website includes a [Research](#) section with multisectoral reports and data, surveys and public consultations conducted on the audiovisual industry and the communication aspects of public service.

### International Association of Public Media Researchers (IAPMR)

<<https://publicmediaresearchers.org/>>

Previously known as RIPE (Re-invigorating the Public Interest in Media), the IAPMR brings together more than 300 researchers in academia and the profession with expertise in analysing the public media sector. The association's activity has maintained the RIPE format: a biennial conference and a 'conference-less' lecture during the year. Each gathering is organised by a local university and a provider of audiovisual public service.

The [proceedings](#) of the conferences are published by [Nordicom](#) (Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research, a think tank at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden). Likewise, the IAPMR website offers research resources: new publications, dossiers made by other organisations, guides, journals and periodicals, new media policies, reports and information on websites, all collected in a [resource container](#), as well as its own [newsletter](#) and activity on [Facebook](#).

### AIECS, Public Service Media Policies Working Group

<<https://iamcr.org/s-wg/working-group/psm>>

The [International Association for Media and Communication Research](#) (IAMCR, AIECS in Spanish and AIERI in French) has a working group on public service media.

The purpose of this working group is to examine and inventory good practices on performance and accountability mechanisms for the public service media in different countries inside and outside Europe in order to research how they work.

### London School of Economics, Media@LSE

<<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/medialse/>>

The [Department of Media and Communications](#) at the London School of Economics and Political Science has the Media@LSE think tank organised as a set of blocs that analyse different topics in the audiovisual sector. In addition to academia, the debate in Media@LSE also enlists the active participation of the industry, policymakers, journalists and other important stakeholders in the sector. The prime areas of research and debate are Internet governance, minors and audiovisuals, representation in the media, digital inequalities, political communication, audiovisuals and identity. Therefore, while public service is a cross-cutting notion that does not have a specific entry all its own, it is dealt with in many of these areas.

To illustrate, there are important contributions from [Damian Tambini](#), the current director of the [LSE's Master's in Science in Media and Communications](#), who recently published the article '[Public service media should be thinking long term when it comes to AI \(Artificial Intelligence\)](#)' (May 2021).

# Manuscript submissions guidelines

## Presentation of the articles

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

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

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

## Submission

Articles should be addressed at: [quadersdelcac@gencat.cat](mailto:quadersdelcac@gencat.cat)

## Copyright clearance

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

Letters should be addressed by e-mail to [quadersdelcac@gencat.cat](mailto:quadersdelcac@gencat.cat) or by post mail to:

*Quaderns del CAC*

Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya

Carrer dels Vergós, 36-42

08017 Barcelona

## References and notes

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

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

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

[in Catalan]

## • Books

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

## • Articles in journals

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

## • Contributions to books

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

## • Online documents

LAST NAME; INITIAL/INSTITUTION. TITLE [ONLINE]. EDITION/VERSION. PLACE OF EDITION: PUBLISHER, YEAR.  
<URL ADDRESS>[CONSULTED: DATE]

## Tables and figures

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

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



## Book reviews guidelines

1. The aim of the section 'Critical books review' is to review the most important new publications in the world of communication and particularly in the field of broadcasting.
2. Reviews must be original and previously unpublished.
3. Reviews must be adequate for readers to get a general idea of the content of the book under review, as well as providing a personal assessment of its interest. The review must therefore contain a description and analysis of the book, as well as some conclusions indicating its value and importance to readers.
4. The recommended length for reviews is around 1,000 words, not exceeding 1,300 words in any case.
5. Reviewed books must be contemporary, i.e. they must have been published during the last two full calendar years, although an earlier book may be included if duly justified.
6. The review must be given a title that summarises its content, with the bibliographical details and the author of the review below, including his or her position and the institution to which he or she belongs.
7. The model used for citing the bibliography must follow the criteria given by TERM CAT, which may be consulted at:  
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LAST NAME; INITIAL/INSTITUTION. *Title*. Edition. Place of edition: Publisher, year. Volume. (Collection, number). ISBN number
8. The author should be introduced briefly by commenting on his or her background or most recent work.
9. The most important part of the review is the summary and analysis of the content. Here it is necessary to explain the field in which the book is placed, the perspective adopted by the author, the goals the author sets him or herself and the fundamental thesis of the book and how it is developed.
10. The critical evaluation should be generally positive but negative comments can also be included, in both cases suitable arguments being required. Readers must be informed regarding the value, interest and usefulness of the book under review. If relevant, other details can also be included, such as the use of sources, documentation, the bibliography used by the author, the book's formal presentation, etc.
11. Any possible references to text from the book under review must be written in inverted commas, with the page number afterwards, in brackets. "Quote" (p.XX)
12. Bibliographical references to third parties cited in the text of the book under review must use the following model: (Last name year, page number)
13. Bibliographical references from other works quoted in the review must be contained in full at the end, using the same format as the initial bibliographical reference but excluding the ISBN.
14. The review must be sent digitally, in Word or Word RTF, to the following email address: [quadernsdelcac@gencat.cat](mailto:quadernsdelcac@gencat.cat)
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