

35

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Proximity and distance on television



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Introduction

Jesús Martin Barbero is the guest author for the 35th edition [vol. XIII (2)] of the QUADERNS DEL CAC, this time devoted entirely to the new dimensions of television and their potential to serve proximity or local communication, entitled "Proximity and distance on television".

Martin Barbero, a Colombian researcher and international pioneer in studying the cultural mediations of contemporary television, provides a broad reflection, from Latin America, on the complexity of the new television experiences ("Television: a question of spaces between proximities and distances"). Together with his remarkable paper on communicative democratisation, he believes that television is redefining its place in the threefold space "of networks, territories and heterotopias".

Given the relevant role of local television's different experiences and developments historically in Catalonia, we start this edition with a documented account by **Josep Àngel Guimerà** ("Policies for television, technological change and proximity in Catalonia") of the far-reaching transformation resulting from the roll-out of local DTT. For his part, **Àngel Badillo** provides a detailed map, by autonomous community, of the decisions and outcomes of digitalisation at a regional level ("Competition, crisis, digitalisation and the reorganisation of local television in Spain"). **Matilde Delgado** presents an overview of this area in the United States ("Public access television: television within reach"), examining the tradition and prospects of citizen participation channels under the central concept of public access. From Quebec, **Jean-Paul Lafrance** tackles the transformation in television under pressure from the internet ("Quebec's new television in the internet revolution"), highlighting features such as the focus on people's domestic and personal problems and commitment to the culture of immediacy. **Reinald Besalú** and **Frederic Guerrero-Solé** present a case study of the syndicated model of production employed by local television networks in Catalonia and distributed via the new IP architecture ("IP Syndication: Syndication and the new content distribution model in Catalan local TV networks"). And the monograph ends with a summary of the conclusions and operational goals of the fieldwork entitled "Diagnosis of local digital terrestrial television in Catalonia", carried out by commission by the Catalan Audiovisual Council during the months of September and October 2009.

The "Observatory" section includes articles by **Juana Gallego** and **Joaquim Capdevila**. Gallego presents the initial findings from her research into how paid sex is represented in the cinema by analysing the figure of the prostitute in over 200 films ("Cinema and prostitution: how prostitution is interpreted in cinematographic fiction"), while Capdevila's essay proposes and explains an approach to interpret television's impact on contemporary culture, rooted in the nature and tradition of the carnivalesque in social life ("Hypermodernity and the carnivalesque. Reality humour in television of change in the 20th and 21st centuries. Study proposal").

Finally, the QUADERNS DEL CAC has enhanced its review section in this edition by including reviews of seven new books.

Josep Gifreu
Director

Television: a question of spaces between proximities and distances

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Abstract

Over the last 25 years, television has evolved at such a speed that the categories used to understand it have become partly out of synch. This lack of synchronisation is not only a question of time but also space. This article attempts to analyse this last dimension to describe the place where both the figures of television co-exist that legitimise the omnipresence of the market as well as the new players and dynamics of social emancipation and citizen empowerment. Based on the context of the Latin American scenario, the article presents a reflection on the new complexity brought into play by the experiences of local television, which help new players to take shape through these new types of communication that connect and redesign what is offered globally with local demand.

Key words

Local television, citizenry, mediation, proximity, globality, community television.

Resum

En els darrers vint-i-cinc anys la televisió ha evolucionat a una velocitat tal que les categories per entendre-la han quedat, en part, desfasades. Aquest desfasament no és només una qüestió de temps, sinó també d'espai. Aquest text pretén analitzar aquesta última dimensió per intentar descriure el lloc en què conviuen tant les figures de la televisió que legitimen l'omnipresència del mercat com els nous actors i les noves dinàmiques d'emancipació social i apoderament ciutadà. L'article planteja, a partir del context de l'escenari llatino-americà, una reflexió sobre la nova complexitat que les experiències de la televisió local posen en joc i que faciliten que nous actors prenguin forma a través d'aquestes noves modalitats de comunicació que connecten i redissenen les ofertes globals amb les demandes locals.

Paraules clau

Televisió local, ciutadania, mediació, proximitat, globalitat, televisió comunitària.

I must begin this article by explaining the reasons for the reflective horizon I have chosen. And the first of these is that, for at least twenty-five years, television has been moving much more quickly than the categories we use in our attempt to understand it and the lack of synchronisation of the last few years has proven to be not only a question of time but also of space. This can be seen in the names we use for television - *state, local, regional, proximity* - but in very few studies this dimension is tackled in all its disconcerting weight, what is delocating and relocating the meaning and value of what we still call *television*. It is this dimension that I propose to analyse in order to roughly map out the *place from which* we think, both the figures of television that legitimise every day the market's mediating omnipresence and the perversion of policy, as well as those other figures in which we can make out new players and dynamics of social emancipation and citizen empowerment.

The second reason is that my long and dense relationship with Catalonia was where I found not only pioneering research into the processes and means of regional and local communi-

cation but also encouraging research into the design and implementation of public policy to regulate and promote the expansion of community and citizen media. So that, in my research on the Latin American experiences, the studies of De Moragas, Prado, Gifreu and Guimerà, the pioneering local TV stations of Cardedeu, TV Clot (of Barcelona) and the Catalan local television network (XTVL) have been a point of analytical, political and strategic reference. That is also why, rather than an analysis of the experiences of local television, what I am proposing here is a reflection on the new complexity that these experiences bring into play, obviously based on a different geographical context, namely Latin America, its particular history of the struggle to democratise communication.

1. What is global does not come from the international but from another way of being in the world

In a radio talk in 1967 (but which, strangely, was not published until shortly before his death in 1984), Michel Foucault

proposed a radical challenge to western thought when he stated that, while modern thought of the 18th and 19th century was built on a basis of categories of time, we were at the dawn of a new era in which space had started to take on a perceptive relevance and strategic policy. Foucault actually says (1999, 15-19): "The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world", and states immediately afterwards: "the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed"; and he reinforces this idea by stating that we are at a time when "our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein". The connection between this conceptualisation and terminology cannot be more significant [as he doesn't talk of what is *real* or of *reality* in the philosophical sense but of *the world*] with a thought whose axis is an analysis of the reorganisation of the conditions of existence and the exercising of power. Foucault was thinking of *the world* in terms of *power space* long before social sciences took the category seriously, warning us that the relevance of space would become an inevitable source of conflict between "the pious descendents of time and the determined inhabitants of space".

By the middle of the 1990s, the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos saw, in the challenges proposed by the *world* category for social sciences, the breaking point to understanding what is emerging with globalisation, as the new meaning of the world can no longer be derived from what, until recently, was one of the central categories in social sciences, namely that of state-nation. And if globalisation cannot be thought of as a mere quantitative or qualitative extension of national society, it's not because that category and that society are not valid (the expansion and exasperation of nationalism of all kinds proves this), but because the knowledge garnered of what is national is according to a paradigm that "can no longer explain, either historically or theoretically, all the reality in which individuals and classes, nations and nationalities, cultures and civilisations are inserted" (Santos 1996, 215). The resistance of social sciences to accept that this is a *new object* is very strong, hence the tendency to subsume this object in the classic paradigms of evolutionism and historicism, which allows us to focus only on partial aspects (economic or technological) that still seem to be *studiable* and understandable from a continuity, without traumas, with the idea of what is national.

The connection of this approach with the sense of the first far-reaching transformation to the initial model of television has been analysed by Eliseo Veron in these terms: what, in Eco's text (1983) is called *neotelevision* is a change whose exponent is not named in this text, when what is essential to understand

is precisely what is actually changing, to which Veron answers "the *extratelevisual* socio-institutional context [...] is the *national localisation* of mass television. This is the reason why, both under state monopoly in Europe or under the private ownership system typical of the Americas, the role of television was essentially the same" (Veron 2009, 233 and 237). And that role was basically *pedagogical*, as the communication contract was established between the nation and citizens-TV viewers via a "structuring programming grid" not only of the time of day and week but of *forming* the citizenry-of-a-nation. Much earlier, Daniel Bell (1969, 1977) had already pointed out the structuring role of the mass media in *forming* the North American nation and the visible crisis of this function as from the end of the 1960s. What is therefore called *neotelevision* is the rough draft of the exponent *nation* by *institutionalising* the medium itself, namely television, which thereby becomes a source of a new kind of communication contract, breaking, and with increasing clarity, with the political field that shaped the previous model: now the communication contract is taken out between the *medium/television institution* and *its audiences*, a contract that very soon became *formal* by means of the contract to pay for services, first via satellite and then via cable TV subscription.

The model of mass television, which disappears as from the 1980s, is the reincarnation of the communication model put in place by national-cinema, which Carlos Monsivais (1976, 434) had characterised thus: cinema connects in Mexico with the hunger of the urban masses by making them socially and nationally visible, as "most people go to the cinema not to have fun but to learn to be Mexicans, they don't go to dream but to see themselves and to see a country represented in their image". Consequently, beyond the reactionary content of many films and of the schemata of form, this cinema legitimised gestures, faces, voices, ways of speaking and walking that had previously been unknown socially and culturally, and in a movement of recognition that was vital for the urban masses who, via cinema, diminished the impact of the cultural shocks that made them such. And concerning the rupture introduced by television, I wrote, summing up Benjamin (1982): "While cinema catalysed the experience of the crowds in the street, as citizens exercised their right to the city in a crowd, what now catalyses television is rather the domestic and domesticated experience: it is from the home and through television that people now exercise, every day, their connection with the city. While the relationship was transitive and conserved the collective character of experience between the *people* that would take to the street and the *public* that went to the cinema, the shift from the cinema public to television *audiences* signals a profound transformation: social plurality subjected to the logic of disaggregation makes difference a mere rating strategy; and as it's impossible to represent in policy; the fragmentation of the citizenry is taken on by the market. Television is the main mediator of this change" (Martin-Barbero 1987, 181).

Now we can go back to the thoughts of Foucault, as an extraordinary capacity for anticipation leads him to shift his reflection and move from *utopia* to what he calls *heterotopias*. This shift is, firstly, between the singular and the plural and especially in the shift from a *project of society* “without location” to others that can be located, that have a location but whose sites “are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted”. To aid understanding he uses the concept of place in terms of a mirror: that place *where I see myself there where I am not*, that, nonetheless, is a place that really exists but which I have to be outside of in order to be able to see myself. The key to heterotopia is that “it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there” (Foucault 1999, 19). Heterotopias are then *other-places*, which make it possible to question the place where we are, showing us where we are not. Heterotopias are the place of tension between territories and counter spaces. If *territory* is the place marked by the time we are born, grow and the rituals that outline the anchors and transits, then *counter spaces* are those places whose relation with time is precisely that of interrupting it, disturbing it or inverting it, like that of a party, a children's hiding place, a garden, cemetery, brothel. Socially denounced places because they enunciate, in highly diverse ways, the questioning of and counter-examples to the normal course of social life.

To a large extent, post-television or hypertelevision is not only related to what the market and the state do or stop doing but also to “its place” in this triple spatiality: of networks, territories and heterotopias, i.e. delocations, anchors and relocations. At the same time and in such a way that any dualism, such as those that tenaciously continue to oppose space/territory or global/local, is dislocated both due to economic reality as well as to cultural life. Hence an analysis per se of television requires a new language such as that used by Imbert (2008, 80 and 85) in his last book, also introducing the idea of “transgenre” or “porous places”. From his *Hermes I* (1984) and *Atlas* (1994) to *Hominescence* (2001), Michel Serres has been the communication expert who has most helped to renew categorising language and the first to locate and space these studies by talking precisely of how the membrane or pores are not either exterior or interior but space-from-in-middle, i.e. that which is non-linear, since it like *circulation* which, like a change in direction on a road, requires me to exit on the left in order to reach the lane on the right, as I can only go right via a detour. It's the language that resounds politically in that other paradox opened up to us and facing us, namely of feminism with its “what is personal is political”, when women make a decisive break visible: that of the incapacity of policy as exercised today to *mediate* between the space of situations and the practices that make up the network of identities and o structures that govern the macrosocial.

2. The local: between levity of space and thickness of place

Perhaps one of the most radical questions posed by *society-network* is that of identities when they evidence the profound rupture between the world of economic *reason*, based on the light flows of finances, technology, information and power, against the thick, heavy world of *identities* rooted in territories and traditions. Aware of this rupture, Manuel Castells devoted the second volume of his *Era de la Información* [Information Age] to the power of identity, where we can read: “But there is something else, shared by men, women and children. A deep-seated fear of the unknown, particularly frightening when the unknown concerns the basis of everyday, personal life. [...]. [They are] terrified of solitude and uncertainty in a wildly competitive, individualistic society [...].” (Castells 1998, 49). Here are the coordinates of a fundamentalism that is made up of both raging resistance and feverous searches for meaning. Resistance to the process of social atomisation, to the intangible nature of flows that, in their interconnection, blur the limits of belonging and destabilise the space and time contextures of work and life. Society-network is not, then, a pure phenomenon of technological connections but a systemic disjunction of the global and local by fracturing their temporal frameworks of experience and power: against the elite that inhabits the timeless space of global networks and flows, the majority in our countries still inhabit the local space/time of their cultures and, against the logic of global power, they take refuge in the logic of communal power. That's why politics has ended up without language, because it doesn't know nor can it talk about what it should talk about, hence it has no other option than to dress itself up in the language of surveys and advertising.

On the other hand, David Harvey (1989) places at the start of the 1970s the fundamental changes in the meaning of spatiality, related to the new conditions of capitalism: those of a *flexible accumulation* made possible by the new production and organisational technologies leading to a *vertical disintegration* of the work organisation and to a growing financial centralisation. Moreover, at this time the “new mass markets” appear that introduce democratising styles but whose products are the clearest expression of the rationalisation of consumption; and something crucial for the field of communication: according to Harvey (1989, 226), “capitalism is now predominantly concerned with the production of signs, images [...]. Competition in the image-building trade becomes a vital aspect of inter-firm competition. [...] investment in image-building [...] becomes as important as investment in new plant and machinery”. When the restructuring of space leads to a profound change in its social meaning: “We thus approach the central paradox: the less important the spatial barriers, the greater the sensitivity of capital to the variations of place within space, and the greater the incentive for places to be differentiated in ways attractive to capital” (Harvey 1989, 327). Local identity there-

by becomes a *representation of the difference* that makes its sellable and to this end it will be subjected to the whirlwind of collages and hybridisation imposed by the market, reinforcing its exotic nature and the hybridisation that neutralise its most conflictive traits. Because the aim is no other than to inscribe identities in the logics of flows: a mechanism to translate cultural differences into the *lingua franca* of the techno-financial world and the volatilisation of identities so that they can float freely in the cultural *indifference*. A large part of the celebration of diversity (a secret code that has much to do with discourse about what is local) plays this game in its most globalising version, turning difference into mere fragmentation recoverable by, and legitimising, the deregulation of the market.

Today we cannot talk of the local without understanding the density of its contradictions. And in this we are helped by the strategic reflection of Arjun Appadurai (2001) on the relations between globalisation and localisation. His starting point is that both movements, which structure the multiplicity of processes that make up globalisation, are *the flow of images and information by electronic media and the displacement of migrant populations*. It's obvious that each one of these two movements has its own logic and dynamics but what makes them crucial is precisely their interpretation and the corrosive, overwhelming effect of this overlapping on what was hitherto the axis of convergence of the economy, politics and culture, the state-nation. Globalisation means, then, that the convergence made possible by coupling a territory-nation and a state no longer works and that (albeit strongly structured by the economic sphere) politics and culture are no longer going at the same pace as the economy, or in the same direction. Divergence on this plain entails a qualitative growth in social, political and cultural instability but also a multiplication of interrelations, certainly asymmetric, between *the flow of images*, whose direction is north-south and whose new *value* includes communication in the logics of production, and the *mass exodus of populations*, whose direction is south-north: be it Turks in Germany, Mexicans and Koreans in the USA, Ecuadorians in Spain or Sub-Saharanans in Italy. Exoduses of hope, of despair or terror, whose images and stories, both those that force people to emigrate as well as those that enable survival in other lands, are forged in the *social imagination* of these populations that combine their fears and dreams with scenarios and models that circulate via the electronic media. A "work of the imagination" that overwhelms the evasive function and dodges the implosive temptation of groups, becoming inscribed in a collective desire to survive, both socially and culturally. An imagination that works both with the resistance and anger as well as with initiative and irony, basis of the mobilisation of collective identities. Appadurai then talks of a *grassroots globalisation* as "it is in and through the imagination that modern citizens are disciplined and controlled — by states, markets, and other powerful interests. But is it also the faculty through which collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life emerge". (Appadurai 2001, 46).

In this perspective, the local stops being something provided by the territory, identity, neighbours and relations and becomes something *to be constructed between* populations and images. Against the old, dense and implosive sense of local (an 'us' that delimits what's inside and is defined by opposition to what is outside, made up of all the 'them', be they enemies, foreigners or both), *what is local in a global society* means a project of recognition and socio-cultural creativity based on an everyday commitment exercised by citizens. And this because, until now, the local has formed an indivisible part of the "national-state" project, which impregnated it with its uniformities and its entropies, its obsessions of permanence and raising of boundaries in all senses, i.e. of exclusions. Similar to the nation-state, the region and municipality were flat and homogeneous, the result of passive, obedient citizens. Of course this contains differences in the Anglo-Saxon world, more decentralised; the Latin world, making it much more uniform; and the Scandinavian world, much more inclusive. But even so, it is the national-state model that the local needs to free itself from in order to take on the far-reaching transformations that today reshape its meaning (its memory and its future) and therefore the fragility of the new players and figures that are giving shape and strength to territorial communities, be they regional, municipal or district.

3. Local television: new citizen visibilities

If *place* constitutes our primordial anchor (embodying what is everyday and the material nature of action, which form the basis of human heterogeneity and also of reciprocity) the sense of *what is local*, however, is not unequivocal: one is the result of the fragmentation produced by the delocation imposed by the global, and the other, quite different, is assumed by *the place* in the terms of "practised space", as coined by Michel de Certeau (1980, 208), who applies to space a concept inspired by the linguistic distinction between language and speaking: while *space* is defined by the intersection of vectors of direction and speed and, therefore, as operational, *place* is the equivalent of word, a sphere of appropriation and of practices, either to live in or to pass through. Space therefore results from the use made by citizens, in its most physical sense, just as those who walk and leave marks with their steps and journeys construct a different city to the one of architecture and engineers. It is the space that is no longer exterior to the subject, as it is the result of his or her own practices, a *place* that introduces *noise* into networks, distortions in the discourse of global flows, a noise that makes us listen to the word of others, of the many others.

And what the *between* is referring to is precisely *mobility*. And we owe this to Zigmund Bauman (1999, 128) a good interpretation of *mobility*, that key figure in globalisation that has ended in such a misleading exaltation of nomadism that it makes emigrants appear as mere nomads of a planet around

which everyone can walk as they wish. Bauman shows that mobility has two faces: that of the tourist and that of the tramp. The *tourist* inhabits a despatialised world, without territories, hence their mobility is instantaneous, without waiting, and theirs is a world *in which standing still is dying*, and living is incessantly moving, accumulating “new” experiences, sensations and emotions: the world of the tourist is, in short, that of the *consumer*. The *tramp* inhabits a thick, slow world, a space full of territories with boundaries and visas and, therefore, full of despairing waits and painful uprootings. There’s only one territory the tramp belongs to and all others are remote and hostile. But the biggest difference when compared with the tourist is that tramps cannot remain still even in their own territory, as they are forced out from there, starting a journey that does not guarantee another territory will be found that they can make their own, as travelling for tramps is leaving without arriving anywhere: it’s the world of the *emigrant*. But the most important aspect of Bauman’s thoughts is that this differentiation is not transmuted into mere dualist opposition with its too easy denouncement and easing of conscience, since these are not two distant worlds that are exterior to one another but one single world with two kinds of traveller that, no matter how little they communicate with each other (and certainly it’s becoming less and less) they are nonetheless connected structurally, they are *globally complementary* and so much so that *a world without tramps is the utopia of the society of tourists*.

What does this world, whose global mobility interweaves tourists and tramps, consumers and migrants, have to do with the future for local television stations? At least two features. One, the insertion of television into digital convergence transforming the hitherto tranquil intermediality of genres or programmes into powerful “viruses” of flows, which infect television and deprogramme it. Obviously this process is going to take some time but the breadth of the spectrum opened up by DTT is displacing “television” and is initiating a plurality of television stations whose peculiarities are going to be closely related to how TV production is inserted in the internet and vice versa, to how the crazy and confused but also rich and diverse audiovisual production on the internet is put on television. And again, what is truly important here is not what is happening in each world (that of television and that of the internet) but which is going to be the face of local television penetrated by and inserted within the global. Or what global will mean and imply in truly citizen-based television. Questions that cannot be answered *technologically* but from a new sense/undertaking of policy; which is what Appadurai is getting at when he gets us to think of globalisation not only in terms of techno-imagination flows but also population flows. Because it is precisely this other flow, also global, the flow of emigrants, which is leading to a strong frustration with identity even in the most democratic countries and to a reinstatement of boundaries. As if, with the weakening of the walls that had marked the different niches of civilisations for centuries,

the different political ideologies, the different cultural universes (by the joint action of media imaginaries and migratory pressure), the contradictions had been revealed of the universalist discourse the West had felt so proud of. And then each one, each country or community of countries, each social group and even each individual, will need to avert the threat posed by the closeness of the other, of the more other that, according to G. Simmel (1977), is not the enemy but *the foreigner*, restoring exclusion not only in the form of *borders* but also *distances* that once again “put everyone in their place”.

Which is requiring us to accept that *identity* today means and implies two different dimensions that were hitherto radically opposed. Until very recently, *identity* meant talking about territory, roots and the long-term, of symbolically dense memory. But *identity* today also implies (if we don’t want to condemn it to the limbo of a tradition disconnected from the perceptive and expressive mutations of the present) talking about de-anchoring and instantaneity, of networks and flows. English anthropologists have expressed this new identity through the splendid image of *moving roots*. For much of the substantialist and dualist imaginary that still permeates anthropology, sociology and public policy, this metaphor is unacceptable but, nonetheless, in it we can make out some of the most challenging and fertile-disconcerting realities of the world in which we live. As noted by the Catalan anthropologist, Eduard Delgado (2000, 32), “we cannot live without roots but a lot of roots prevent you from walking”.

The other feature that characterises the insertion of television (especially local) in global mobility is that the process of connection/disconnection, of inclusion/exclusion, on a planetary scale entailed by globalisation is turning culture into a strategic space to express the tensions that break up and recompose what it means to “be together” instead of linking its political and economic crises to religious, ethnic and aesthetic crises. That’s why it’s based on the *cultural diversity* of stories and territories, on experiences and memories, where one not only resists but also negotiates and interacts with globalisation and from where it will end up transforming this. What galvanises identities today as the battle engine is inseparable from a *demand for recognition and meaning* (Martin-Barbero 2002), and neither one nor the other can be formulated in mere economic or political terms, as both refer to the same core of culture in the sense of *belonging to* and *sharing with*. This is why identity is constructed within one of the forces most capable of introducing contradictions in the hegemony of the instrumental reason with which the market dominates us.

If something characterises and distinguishes local television, it’s the presence therein of grassroots democratisation movements, which find in digital technologies the possibility to *multiply the images* of our societies to make diversity visible: at the level of region, municipality and neighbourhood. Although for some critics of television the inequality of the forces in play is overwhelming, I am one of those that believe that underestimating the convergence of technological transformations with

the emergence of new types of citizenry (already advanced individually by Benjamin when analysing cinema's relations with the emergence of the urban masses in its potential to transform) can only lead us back to the short-sighted Manichaeism that has paralysed the gaze and action of the immense majority of the left in the field of communication and culture for years. Of course, the sense of the local or regional in television varies hugely as it ranges from mere business to the best of what is meant by community. But there are *new players* who, in no few cases, are taking shape through these new types of communication that *connect* (redesigning them) what is offered globally with local demands. There are new strategic tensions that force the media to *change* tensions, between its predominant commercial nature and the emergence of new figures and expressions of freedom and independence, among its tendency towards inertia and the transformations imposed by technological changes and some new demands by the public.

People are rediscovering the communicative capacity of everyday practices and alternate channels allowing society to discover *communication competition* as the capacity to mobilise and strengthen *civil society*. Every day there is a closer relationship between what is public and what can be communicated, and here the *mediation of images* is increasingly memorable. But this centrality of image cannot be reduced to an incurable illness of cultural and political life, to a concession to the barbarity of these times that use images to cover up their lack of ideas. And the issue is not that there isn't much of this in how today's society and politics use images, but rather what we need to understand goes beyond denouncements: towards what is socially produced in the mediation of images. And what is produced in images is, firstly, floating to the surface, the emergence of the crisis suffered, from its very inside, by the *discourse of representation*. Because whereas the growing presence of images in debate, campaigns and political action makes this world more spectacular to the extent of emptying it of true deliberation, it's also true that *the social is visually constructed* through images, where visibility includes the shift of the fight for *representation* to the demand for *recognition*. What the new social, minority movements (ethnic groups and races, women, young people and homosexuals) demand today is not so much to be represented but to be recognised: *to make themselves socially visible in their difference*. Which gives rise to a new way of exercising their rights politically. Proof of this is the growing proliferation of citizen *observatories* and *inspectorates*. This is much more significant than phonetic closeness, semantic structure, between the *visibility* of the social, which enables the constitutive presence of images in public life and *inspectorates* as a contemporary means of citizen control and intervention.

So community television becomes a *decisive place to inscribe new citizenries* where social and cultural emancipation acquire a contemporary face. So *recognition policies* (Taylor 1998) highlight the difficulties faced by liberal-democratic institutions to include the many different figures of citi-

zenry that, given socio-cultural diversity, stress and disrupt our institutionalities at the same time as not finding any kind of presence that is not denigrating or excluding in most of the programming and advertising on private television stations. This rupture can only be repaired with a policy to extend *citizen rights* to all segments of the population that still do not enjoy this right to any great extent, such as ethnic minorities or women, evangelists or homosexuals. Given the citizenry of "the modern", which was designed and exercised *ahead of the identities* of gender, ethnic group, race or age, today democracy requires a citizen-based idea and force that is responsible for identities and differences. The appeal that calls up/forms citizens and the right to exercise citizenry find their *own place* in citizen television, thereby converted into a sphere of participation and expression. In the midst of the experience of *uprooting* experience by so many of our people, talking of *participation* is inextricably associating the right to social and cultural *recognition* with the right to express all sensitivities and narratives in which both the political and cultural creativity of the municipalities and urban neighbourhoods takes shape.

And the fact is that, at this disillusioned start of the century, proximity between technological and aesthetic experimentation is leading to the emergence of a new parameter to evaluate technique, different to its mere economic instrumentalisation or political functionality: evaluating its capacity to result in the most far-reaching transformations of the epoch experienced by our society and *deviating/subverting* the destructive fatality of a technological revolution directly or indirectly dedicated to increasing military power. The *art/communication* relationship then reaffirms cultural creation as the very space of that minimum of utopia without which material progress loses its sense of emancipation and becomes the worst of alienation. Rather than to a particular type of content, what is cultural on local television refers to the strengthening of what, on this medium, in its languages and expressive possibilities, *connects with* the accelerated, fragmented urban life of today. And this through the flow of images, this being understood both as the continuity stretched between fragments of information and aesthetic shock, of knowledge and play, as well as the assembly of the strangest discourses and genres, one compared with the other. It was Raymond Williams (1994), one of the first to call our attention to this correspondence and the possibilities opened up for television to translate expressively and reflexively in its fragmentation and flow, one of the most strongly significant "traits of the epoch". With the consequent requirement to make this experience both a chance to provoke as well as to reflect.

Only by accepting local television as a new cultural experience can the path be opened up to help all society become literate in the new languages and writings of the audiovisual media that form part of the specific cultural complexity of today. This is a resocialisation based on the new forms of knowledge, to which are associated the new mental, professional and work maps, and also to the new sensitivities and lifestyles. This is therefore related to a crucial kind of mediation

that can be performed by television: the conversation between generations via which the empathy of young people can dialogue with the information technologies and the reticence/resistance which a large number of adults still show towards them. The democratisation of new knowledge and languages will then go hand in hand with the recognition of the special creativity of young people to design and produce television. Taking away the negative images held of young people by our disconcerted and fearful society, local television can offer young people the chance to find themselves again creatively with their society.

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Policies for television, technological change and proximity in Catalonia

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Abstract

The switch from Catalan local television to DTT has gone beyond a mere change in technology, involving the far-reaching transformation of a sector with three decades of history. This alteration is due to how the new broadcasting technology has been implemented in the local sphere, as Spanish and Catalan public policies have not taken the pre-existing analogue situation into account. Instead, the public administration has taken advantage of the change in technology to make fundamental changes in how local television is organised as well as in the broadcasting model (called the proximity model) that is to provide this service. This article explains the basic features of this new organisational model and shows how its application has quantitatively and qualitatively changed Catalan local television as of May 2010.

Key words

Communication policies, DTT, local television, proximity television, Catalonia.

Resum

La migració de la televisió local (TVL) catalana cap a la TDT ha anat més enllà d'un canvi tecnològic i ha comportat una transformació en profunditat d'un sector amb tres dècades d'història. Aquesta alteració es deu a com s'ha gestionat la implantació de la nova tecnologia de transmissió a l'àmbit local, ja que les polítiques públiques espanyoles i catalanes no han tingut en compte la realitat analògica preexistent, sinó que l'Administració pública ha aprofitat el canvi tecnològic per canviar d'arrel la manera com s'organitza la TVL i també el model d'emissora –anomenat de proximitat– que ha de prestar el servei. Aquest article exposa les característiques bàsiques d'aquest nou model d'organització i mostra com la seva aplicació ha canviat quantitativament i qualitativa la TVL catalana en data de maig de 2010.

Paraules clau

Polítiques de comunicació, TDT, televisió local, televisió de proximitat, Catalunya.

Introduction

Public policies affecting the digitalisation of television in Catalonia and in Spain as a whole have involved the far-reaching transformation of Catalan local television. In fact, university research clearly shows that the sector arising after the digital switchover has little to do with the analogue situation preceding it (Guimerà 2007; Corominas 2009).

The basis of this change can be found in the combination of two factors of a highly different nature. The first is the fact that Catalan local TV has fundamentally been a Hertz bandwidth medium since its birth: historically, cable has not figured very predominantly and the new internet-based transmission media (IPTV, webcasts) are still highly marginal in the first decade of the 21st century (Guimerà *et al.* 2009). This has meant that the digitalisation of this kind of television has been almost exclusively through digital terrestrial television (DTT). And, secondly, the fact that public policies have not taken into account, either in Catalonia or in Spain as a whole, the analogue situation existing in the territory. The roll-out of local DTT entails the full legal recognition of local TV in Spain (which had

never been completely regulated) and introduces a model of television that has little to do with what had predominated until now (Guimerà 2007; Corominas *et al.* 2007).

The Spanish government also decided to organise local DTT based on a new "organisational unit" called *demarcation* (Corominas *et al.* 2007; Corominas 2009). Demarcations are made up of more than one municipality and this has broken the close relationship that analogue local TV had had with its municipality, the basic unit of organisation until DTT arrived (Corominas 2009). On the other hand, advantage was taken in Catalonia of the digital switchover and its associated regulations to define a broadcasting model (called the *proximity model*) that is merely one of the several models in operation in the first decade of the 21st century. Consequently, the digitalisation of local TV is not even close to being a *mere* technological change but rather has led to the industry being recreated (Guimerà 2007).

All these conceptual changes have led to modifications in the sector's structure, some of them far-reaching. The Spanish government limited the maximum number of local DTT broadcasters in Catalonia to 96, a number that is slightly lower than

the 119 analogue broadcasters existing in 2004. The economic requirements of the broadcasting model and the lack of interest on the part of some suppliers has meant that a large number of the licence holders have not started up digital television as planned: in May 2010, once the digital switchover was complete, only 51 of the 93 channels granted licences in 2006 were actually broadcasting. We can therefore talk of a crisis in local public television: of the 37 stations planned, only 12 are actually in operation.

The outcome is a less heterogeneous sector with fewer players than analogue local TV, characterised up to the 1990s by having a range of very different local TV stations (Guimerà 2007). In fact, the model defined by public policies has left some private analogue broadcasters with very little chance of migrating, right at the time of the licence tender. Those depending most on volunteers and more closely related to a municipality (with the pioneering RTV Cardedeu as the most significant case) decided not to take part in the licence allocation process as they believed that the local DTT proposed did not allow them to implement their particular model (Guimerà 2007).

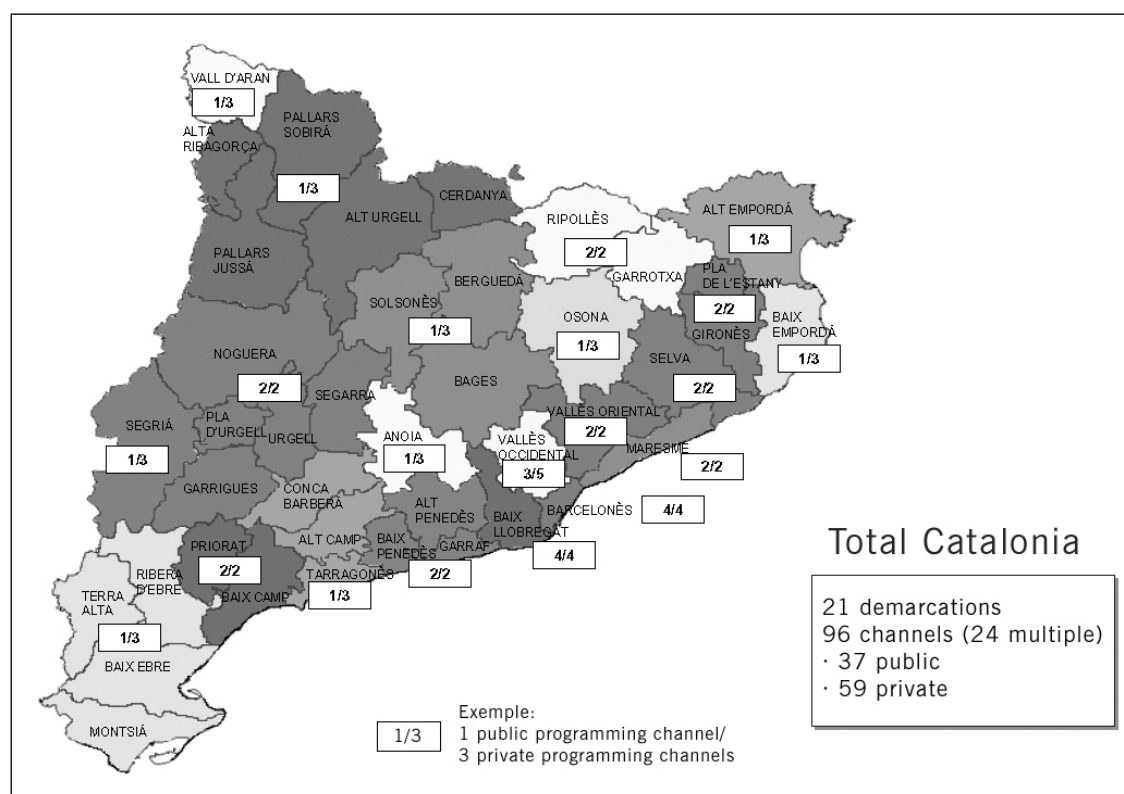
This article has two aims. Firstly, to explain the basic features of the digital switchover policies for local TV developed by Spain and Catalonia. And, secondly, to show how these policies have transformed the Catalan local sector's structure, both

from a quantitative point of view as well as in terms of the models and types of broadcasters. To do so, I have used the findings from Catalan university research, one of whose main areas of study has been the digital switchover of Hertz-based television in the first decade of the 21st century (OCL 2000, 2003, 2005 and 2007; Corominas *et al.* 2007; Corominas 2009; Guimerà 2007; Guimerà *et al.* 2009). However, it is also based on data obtained from the fieldwork carried out by the study by the Catalan Audiovisual Council (CAC) entitled *Diagnòstic de la TDT local a Catalunya (2008-2009)* [*Diagnosis of local DDT in Catalonia (2008-2009)*], based on which a report was published (CAC 2009) that provides a highly detailed picture of the state of local DTT just at the time of transition.

State policies for DDT and local television: towards a change in model

Unlike the transition of television for the autonomous communities and the state of Spain, the switchover of local broadcasters to DDT did not take the analogue situation into account. The local broadcasters of the time did not automatically migrate but had to go through a tender based on a brand new

Image 1. Demarcations and share of public and private channels in Catalonia (2006)



Source: Direcció General de Mitjans i Serveis de Difusió Audiovisuals. "El Govern obre el procés de concessió de canals de televisió digital a les entitats municipals" [Online]

<<http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/Sala%20de%20Premsa/Documents/Arxius/6948.pdf>> [Consulted: June 2010]

model that had very little to do with the pre-existing analogue reality (Guimerà 2007), especially regarding the aspects established by the Spanish government: the definition of a basic structure for the sector and the fixing of obligations and limitations on content.

The Spanish government established the basis of this new model in 2004 and 2005 through the National Technical Plan for Local Digital Television (PTNTDL)¹ (Guimerà 2007). The plan established that local television should be organised into demarcations, a brand "new unit of organisation" (Corominas 2009) and composed of an area of cover, a multiple channel (or two) and specific demographic features (Corominas *et al.* 2007; Corominas 2009). As pointed out by Corominas (2009: 16), demarcations are a new phenomenon exclusive to local DTT, as they are made up of groups of municipalities that "as such, do not constitute any recognised administrative or political unit".

The Spanish plan divided Catalonia into 21 *demarcations* (see image 1). None is made up of a single municipality (the smallest has three and the largest 28) and the total number of municipalities included is 240² (Guimerà 2007), all having a multiplex channel (MUX), although there are three (Barcelona, Cornellà and Sabadell) with two. In Catalonia there are therefore 24 MUX and 96 channels, as each MUX has the capacity for 4 digital *programmes* (equivalent to the old analogue *channels*).

In addition to establishing the number of television stations possible and their geographical scope, the central government also defined their ownership. Spain reserved one programme from each multiplex for public television, although autonomous communities could reserve up to two and the rest were for private television. In those demarcations with two MUX, one complete MUX could be reserved for public management and another for private (Guimerà 2007).

In the area of content, in 2002 and 2003 the Spanish government introduced amendments to Act 41/1995, of 22 December, governing local terrestrial television (BOE no. 309, of 27 December 1995)³ which forced suppliers to broadcast original content related to the region where the licence had been granted for at least 4 hours a day and 32 hours a week (Guimerà 2007). The Act also specified that any "mere repeat broadcast" of programmes that had already appeared or that were being broadcast by other operators could not count as original content.⁴

These obligations were in addition to the limitations contained in Act 41/1995 for chain broadcasting, which was forbidden. In terms of local television, chain broadcasting was considered to be when local TV stations offered the same programming for an amount of time equal to or greater than 25%, albeit at different times of the day. Moreover, syndicated broadcasting could not occur for more than 5 hours a day and 25 hours a week, albeit at different times. However, the same Act established that autonomous communities could authorise chain broadcasts for reasons of cultural, social or regional proximity.

Defining the model in Catalonia: proximity television

Based on the foundations established by the Spanish government, the Catalan government defined its local DTT model in 2005.

Firstly, the Catalan government distributed the 96 programmes among public and private ownership and started the procedures for granting licences. It decided to reserve 37 programmes to be directly managed by municipalities⁵ and 59 by private interests,⁶ after having consulted with councils and seeing that there were only four from all those planned that didn't want to manage a public television channel (Guimerà 2007). Of the 37 public programmes, four corresponded to a single council (Badalona, Barcelona, Hospitalet de Llobregat and Reus), while the remaining 33 were to be run by different groups of municipalities.

The fact that several councils had to share a local DTT programme is a consequence of having adopted the demarcation as a unit of organisation and that there was no single municipal unit. So most councils have to share a programme if they want to provide a local DTT service. Given this situation, the Catalan government decided to reserve more than one programme for public management in some demarcations to make it easier for the 200 councils involved to come to an agreement (Guimerà 2007; Corominas 2009).

At the time of establishing the criteria for both licensing procedures, the Catalan government explicitly defined the model of television it wanted for Catalonia, which it called *proximity television*. Both the documentation governing the granting of licences for public suppliers as well as that for private organisations defined "local, proximity digital terrestrial television" as a medium linked to the region, with infrastructures and production capacity in its demarcation, that promotes mechanisms for citizens to access and participate in local television, encourages and collaborates with the local audiovisual industry and dedicates most of its broadcasting time to content related to the area it covers. Subsequently, Act 22/2005, of 29 December on audiovisual communication in Catalonia (DOGC no. 4543, of 3 January 2006) ratified this model.

Public television is defined explicitly in this way and licence holders must therefore apply this model without exception or variation. In the case of private channels, the tender's conditions clearly stated that this is the desired model: of the 1,000 points that could be gained in the tender, 200 were obtained on proving that the channel was broadcasting before 1995, that it had a tradition of proximity programming and that it wanted to continue in this way (Guimerà 2007: 137). No other item awarded as many points, 20% of the total.

Moreover, the tender's conditions converted the minimum of 4 hours a day and 32 hours a week for broadcasting original programmes related to the region, as established by the Spanish legislation, into hours of in-house production. Although allowing a maximum of 25% of broadcasting time for chain broadcasting, and 25% of content that could be co-produced by various

channels (so-called *syndication*), the conditions stated that this content must be broadcast without affecting the minimum hours established. Moreover, those applicants exceeding the minimums required by the legislation were particularly highly rated (more than 50% of programming in Catalan, more than 4 hours a day and 32 hours a week of broadcasting). Finally, the tender rewarded those operators that set up production infrastructures in the demarcation for which the licence was being applied, hiring a minimum of five professionals.

The model defined by the Catalan government is not neutral and, in fact, seeks to achieve two very specific goals. On the one hand, to facilitate the switchover to local DTT for what had been called the historical television channels, characterised by having been in operation for many years (some more than 25), with close links to the region and a large amount of local content in their programming. The other aim was to prevent the penetration of state local TV networks, such as those run by Prisa (Localia), Vocento (Punto TV) and COPE (Popular TV). In defining the Catalan model, both the government and the historical operators wished to stop large communication groups from becoming involved, fearing that they would harm the tradition of proximity considered to be so essential to Catalonia. In this respect, local content becomes a barrier to companies with little or no relation to the local area (Guimerà 2007; OCL 2007).

So the Catalan proposal reflected, as far as was allowed by the Spanish regulations, the requests of the local sector, which wanted to ensure that the tender conditions wouldn't marginalise the *historical* DDT operators that were closely related to the region. From this point of view, the model can be considered as the outcome of a consensus between representatives of historical television channels with a tradition of proximity and the Catalan government (Guimerà 2007). Consequently, although the model defined by Spain respected the pre-existing analogue situation to a large extent, Catalonia made an effort to limit its possible impact on the sector, at least in terms of private operators.

The structure of the sector: towards a recreation of Catalan local television

The application of the model defined by public policies has extensively transformed the sector. In fact, in spite of having the support of some local television stations, this model has elements that lead it to exclude others, as it does not give the same options to all analogue television stations.

Firstly, because the 96 programmes planned for Catalonia do not allow the 119 broadcasters to continue that were broadcasting in 2004, one year before the tender took place (see table 1). Secondly, because the model does not allow for television stations covering a single municipality (the majority in the analogue era) as all demarcations are made up of more than one municipality. Thirdly, because local DTT does not provide for the existence of amateur television stations, a phenomenon that had been widespread in Catalonia from the early 1980s (Guimerà 2007), as all licence holders must have a minimum of five employees.

These prior conditions mean that the restructuring of local television started even before the licences were granted. So, of the 66 private local TV stations that were broadcasting on the Hertz wavelength in 2004, 19 did not apply for a licence. Among these absences were cases such as the pioneering RTV Cardedeu, which decided not to take part as it felt that local DTT impaired the local model and community profile it supported (Avui, 19 January 2006, pg. 56). Among the historical television stations, there were seven that didn't apply for a licence, either for similar reasons or other reasons related to the costs of the model designed (Guimerà 2007: 140-141).

The restructuring of the private sector was completed once the tender ended, as 12 of the analogue broadcasters that applied for licences didn't get one. Added to the 19 that didn't take part, that makes a total of 31 broadcasters. In other words, almost half the 66 local TV existing in Catalonia in 2004 (OCL 2005) didn't managed to switch over to local DTT. On the other hand, 10 new television stations appeared. The

Table 1. DTT demarcations and local TV broadcasters in Catalonia (2004-2005)

<i>Demarcation</i>	DTT demarcations (2005)	Multiplexes	Programmes	Hertz local TV with broadcasts (2004)
Barcelona	9	12 ^A	48	76
Girona	5	5	20	17
Lleida	4	4	16	5
Tarragona	3	3	12	21
Total	21	24	96	119

^A The demarcations of Barcelona, Sabadell and Cornellà de Llobregat have two multiplexes each.

Source: Author, based on Royal Decrees 439/2004 and 2268/2004, and data from the OCL (2005).

sector resulting from the tender was made up of 56 licence holders, as the CAC (the body responsible for granting the licences) declared one programme void in three demarcations (Balaguer, Blanes and Vielha) (Guimerà 2007).

This restructuring was not limited to the private sphere. In fact, the change in model has had more of an effect on the public media. In 2004, 53 public TV channels were broadcasting in Catalonia on the Hertz wavelength, of which only one was managed by a group of municipalities and the other 52 corresponded to a single town council (OCL 2005). However, the organisation of local DTT into demarcations has forced many councils to agree to run a programme jointly.

This is therefore how a public sector made up of more than fifty municipal broadcasters became one made up of 37, of which 33 are run by and serve more than one municipality. Consequently, the switchover to DDT has reduced the relative weight of public television, as these 37 broadcasters account for 38.54% of the total. DDT has therefore accentuated the loss of weight of public broadcasters which was already occurring in the first decade of the 21st century, when it went from 51% in 2000 to a little more than 40% in 2004 (Guimerà 2007; Guimerà *et al.* 2009).

In spite of the extensive reorganisation caused by DDT, some suppliers that have not switched over to DDT by the legal route have migrated to digital broadcasts without legal recognition. Historical private television stations such as RTV Cardedeu⁷ and TV Vilassar (<<http://www.catvilassar.com>>) have started to broadcast digitally using free radio waves, attempting to keep their model alive without making a profit. Towards the end of 2009, the Catalan government presented a bill that aimed to regulate this sector and make it legal, allowing not-for-profit television stations to operate that are closely related to their municipality.⁸

A new transformation: the problems of applying the model (2010)

As soon as the public and private DDT licences had been decided, voices started to be heard (both from the Catalan government and the industry) that raised doubts concerning whether the 37 public and 56 private television stations allocated a licence in the tender would actually start operating, as the sector was felt to be unsustainable (Guimerà 2007: 144-145).

These fears were confirmed in May 2010, a little after the analogue system was switched off in April: only 51 of the planned 93 programmes were broadcasting, 54.8% of the total. Of these, 39 are private and 12 public.⁹ In percentage terms, 69.6% of the 56 private programmes have started up and 32.4% of the 37 public programmes planned by the Catalan government (see table 2).

Of the 17 private suppliers that are not broadcasting, six are firms that have left the business and have returned their

licences. These are Collserola Audiovisual (Grupo Prisa / Localia TV, with three programmes); Avista Televisió de Barcelona (Vocen-to / urBe TV, with one), Uniprex Televisió Digital Terrestre Catalana (Planeta, one programme) and Diari de Girona (one programme). All had a business model based on chain broadcasting (CAC 2009). Of the others, one has announced that it is leaving the television industry (TV Mataró).

With regard to the 25 public stations, 24 correspond to groups of municipalities, while only one is from a single council (Reus), which hopes to start up in the autumn of 2010. Only three further consortiums seem able to start up in the medium term. As pointed out by the CAC (2009), consortiums are one of the big problems in rolling out Catalan local DDT, as they represent, by themselves, more than half the programmes that have not started broadcasting. In this respect, the regulating body of Catalonia was already talking, in the autumn of 2009 of a "public television crisis", an assessment that to be ratified in spring 2010.

The reasons for the low start-up rates for programmes are many and diverse. The report by the CAC (2009) entitled *Diagnòstic de la televisió digital terrestre a Catalunya (setembre - octubre 2009)* [Diagnosis of digital terrestrial television in Catalonia (September-October 2009)] pointed out that the most significant reasons were related to the local DDT model defined by public policy. The situation in May 2010 suggests that most demarcations are incapable of supporting the four (or eight) programmes assigned (see table 2). Size in terms of both demographics and the advertising market appears as one of the main reasons (CAC 2009). And this is without taking into account the fact that, in some demarcations (Tarragona, Reus, Barcelona, Sabadell, Balaguer and Girona), the actual supply is larger than planned, given that these areas are also reached by broadcasts from neighbouring zones.

In any case, signal carrier costs seem to be a key reason, as prices have ostensibly risen in some demarcations compared with analogue transmission (CAC 2009). The real lack of competition (with Abertis as almost the only operator) has not helped negotiations or lowered prices. Moreover, the fact that some of the less populated demarcations are highly complex in terms of their physical geography has led to even higher carrier costs due to the complex network required. In this respect, the collegial nature of DDT acts as an aggravating factor, since the cost is almost the same irrespective of whether one or four programmes are broadcast, so that the disappearance of competition might make prices shoot up and result to a demarcation being unsustainable (CAC 2009).

Finally, the proximity model means that production costs for both public and private television stations are quite high, especially when we consider that, in the tender, many private suppliers undertook to broadcast more than the minimal 32 hours a week established by law for original programming. According to the CAC (2009: 74), private suppliers undertook, on average, to broadcast 75.3 hours a week of original programming, more than double the legal minimum. This means that they

Table 2. Local DTT programmes broadcasting in Catalonia (May 2010)

Demarcation	Planned	Public - planned	Public - broadcasting	Private - planned	Private - broadcasting	Total broadcasting
Balaguer*	4	2	0	2	1	1
Barcelona**	8	4	3	4*	2	5
Blanes*	4	2	0	2	1	1
Cornellà**	8	4	0	4*	2	2
Figueres	4	1	0	3	2	2
Girona	4	2	0	2	2	2
Granollers**	4	2	2	2*	1	3
Igualada	4	1	1	3	2	3
Lleida	4	1	0	3	2	2
Manresa	4	1	0	3	3	3
Mataró	4	2	2	2	2	4
Olot	4	2	0	2	2	2
Palafrugell**	4	1	0	3*	1	1
Reus	4	2	0	2	1	1
Sabadell	8	3	1	5	4	5
Seu d'Urgell	4	1	0	3	1	1
Tarragona	4	1	1	3	3	4
Tortosa	4	1	0	3	3	3
Vic	4	1	0	3	3	3
Vielha*	4	1	0	3	0	0
Vilanova	4	2	2	2	1	3
Total	96	37	12	59	39	51

* One of the private programmes was declared void in these three demarcations.

** Demarcations where private suppliers have returned their licences.

Source: authors' own.

have to offer a service that many feel they are not in any condition to provide (CAC 2009).

In fact, in 2007 the CAC approved a document¹⁰ that helps to partly count, as original programming, any in-house production rebroadcast more than once, and also to count as programming those programmes obtained from syndicated networks; in other words, produced with the participation of several television stations. In doing so, the CAC was responding to a formal request by the private sector, which demanded a flexible interpretation of the law to make the model economically sustainable (Guimerà 2007). Nevertheless, throughout 2008 and 2009 suppliers were still complaining of the production requirements (CAC 2009).

We must remember, however, that not all these causes are related to public policy: many suppliers that are not broadcasting (both private and particularly public) have internal problems (CAC 2009). In those consortiums that are not making progress, some have decided not to provide the whole service; others have not reached an agreement on basic aspects or enti-

ties with economic problems. Among private suppliers, most already had production or financial problems in the analogue era or won licences in demarcations where they weren't present and have had to start from scratch. This, added to the already mentioned production commitments, has placed many suppliers in a delicate situation, as they must start operations knowing that they are unlikely to be able to meet all their legal obligations.

Within this context, we must remember that the CAC (2009) characterises the private local sector as a highly precarious economic industry with low liquidity. The economic crisis has therefore made things worse. In spite of this, the same study by the CAC notes that there are private suppliers that are handling the switchover to DDT in a better condition. These are mostly historical broadcasters that had provided proximity television in the analogue era and that, with digitalisation, are continuing with the same model (CAC 2009). In other words, the suppliers that fit the model defined by Catalan policy in 2005 are more competitive.

Conclusions

The public policies applied by the Spanish and Catalan governments have meant that the switchover to DTT has extensively transformed the local television industry in Catalonia. With this kind of television, the digital switchover has not been limited to a mere technological change. In fact, it has been used to implement a new model for organising the market and new models of broadcasting. The system resulting from the digital switchover in April 2010 has therefore little in common with its preceding analogue system.

On the one hand, because we have gone from 119 analogue broadcasters in operation in 2004 to 51 digital operators working as of May 2010, a few weeks after the switchover. On the other, because amateur broadcasters (be they municipal or private) are disappearing from the digital scene, when they were a very important feature of the 1980s until well into the first decade of the 21st century. Thirdly, because council-run television has been reduced to four broadcasters and a new broadcasting model has appeared of supra-municipal management, almost unheard of in local TV's 30 years of history in Catalonia. Finally, because publicly-owned television has gone from being hegemonic at the start of 2000 to little more than 20% of the sector in May 2010.

The new model results from the policies applied by the Spanish and Catalan governments to handle the switchover. The government in Madrid decided to organise digital local TV based on a new unit of organisation, namely *demarcations*, always supra-municipal and, in some cases, supra-regional. Moreover, it defined the number of suppliers that could operate in each demarcation, a minimum of four and a maximum of eight, of which at most half could be public. Thirdly, the disappearance of most municipal television stations is due to the organisation into demarcations and the need for many councils to share a programme if they wish to provide a service. However, the fact that private suppliers have had to go through a tender instead of automatically migrating (as was permitted by the Spanish government in the case of national television) has meant that many did not apply for a licence or weren't successful in the tender and, therefore, can't continue to broadcast.

The Catalan policies, using the foundations established by the central government, ended up defining a model that resulted in the sector's transformation to some extent. The broadcasting model designed for the private sector (with high production capacity, professionalised and profit-oriented) has left no room for the popular amateur set-ups that still existed in the analogue world, such as the pioneer stations of RTV Cardedeu and TV Vilassar.

At the same time, the commitment to proximity television has meant that many stations with local analogue cover did not apply for a digital licence or weren't granted one because their proposal did not fit the model desired by the Catalan government for Catalonia. In fact, the repercussions of having cho-

sen this model will go on even after DTT has been rolled out. With hindsight, and considering the Catalan government's objectives at the time of the private local DTT tender, it's no surprise that those suppliers that had chosen a chain-based model have been the first to return their licences.

In turn, the suppliers with the biggest difficulty in making the jump to DTT and staying there are those using a model where proximity is relatively less important. On the other hand, those that have managed the switchover to DTT in a relatively better condition are the suppliers committed to local content, especially those that have been operating for longer. Nevertheless, the model has turned out to be difficult to apply even among those committed to locally-based television. This is why the CAC has to be flexible in its interpretation of the obligations concerning original programming contained in the Catalan regulations, in order to help suppliers be economically viable.

It seems clear that, right from the start, the model imposed for DTT, especially regarding the elements defined by the central government, does not ensure equal opportunity for all operators: some did not apply for a licence and some cannot maintain the model they used to employ, even though they have been granted a licence. In this respect, the switchover to DTT has led to a standardisation of local TV, which had been known for its high degree of heterogeneity in terms of models until well into the first decade of the 21st century: amateur, professional, with local cover, with supra-county broadcasts, run by cultural entities or by companies of all sizes and scope.

Nonetheless, the attempts of some historical suppliers and of the Catalan government to provide a legal footing for not-for-profit television broadcasts might end up introducing further changes in a sector that has always tended towards transformation.

Notes

- 1 The PTNTDL was first defined through Royal Decree 439/2004, of 12 March, approving the national technical Plan for local digital television (BOE no. 85, of 4 April 2004). It was amended via Royal Decree 439/2004, approving the national technical Plan for local digital television (PTN) (BOE no. 292, of 4 December 2004). Finally, Act 10/2005, of 14 June, on urgent measures to promote digital terrestrial television, the liberalisation of cable television and to encourage pluralism (BOE no. 142, of 15 June 2005) amended it again.
- 2 As highlighted by Catalan university research, although a key element of the model, the concept of demarcation is not clearly defined in the documents governing local DTT. In fact, it is this research itself that characterises the concept based on an analysis of documents (Corominas *et al.* 2007; Corominas 2009). In the case of Catalonia, moreover, the Catalan government had defined *demarcations* as groups of counties (see image 1), while legally they are only made up of those municipalities mentioned in the PTN. According to current legislation, therefore, Catalan demarcations are made up of 240 Catalan municipalities and not the 946 existing in Catalonia, as suggested by the government's maps (Corominas 2009).
- 3 Act 41/1995 is the fundamental legislation used to govern and manage the digitalisation of local TV. Although approved in 1995, it didn't come into force until 2004, when the Spanish government approved the necessary national technical Plan to be able to hold tenders.
- 4 It should be noted that Act 7/2010, of 31 March, on audiovisual communication in general (BOE no. 79, 1 April 2010) has annulled the legal provisions containing these obligations. So these elements were key to defining the local DTT model but now, in June 2010, they are no longer in force.
- 5 Source: Resolution PRE/2804/2005, of 27 September, publicising the Government Agreement of 20 September 2005, establishing the tender procedure for granting licences for local digital television programmes to the municipalities of Catalonia included in the demarcations established by the current National Technical Plan for Local Digital Television and its regulations (DOGC no. 4482, of 4 October 2005).
- 6 Source: Announcement for the public tender to grant different licences for public local digital television (DOGC no. 4509, of 14 November 2005).
- 7 Source: *Ara Vallès*. Interview to Carolina Blasco: 'Les úniques televisions locals que sobreviuran són les que es dediquen al seu municipi'. [Online]
<<http://www.aravalles.cat/entrevista/17217/les-uniques-televisions-locales-que-sobreviuran-son-les-que-es-dediquen-al-seu-municipi>> [Consulted: 20 June 2010]
- 8 Catalan government. "El Govern aprovarà la primavera de 2010 un decret per donar cobertura legal a les emissores comunitàries i sense ànim de lucre". [Online]
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- 9 In the demarcations of Reus and Figueres there are two municipal suppliers (TV L'Escala and TV Cambrils) that are occupying the programme assigned to one consortium. This situation must be resolved, as the service licence holders - the consortiums - are the only ones that can provide the service (CAC 2009).
- 10 CAC. *Criteris d'interpretació de les obligacions que integren el règim dels prestadors del servei de televisió digital terrestre d'àmbit local en matèria de programació original, producció pròpia, emissió en cadena i sindicació de continguts* [Online]. Barcelona: CAC, 2008.
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Competition, crisis, digitalisation and the reorganisation of local television in Spain

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Abstract

Local television in Spain has gone through a dramatic transformation over the last decade. After years of gaps in public policies, digital terrestrial television (DTT) switch-over, the decision of most regional governments to implement commercial competition in the autonomous sphere and the far-reaching crisis in advertising revenue have completely redrawn a sector that, just a few years ago, was the strategic target of large communication groups and today presents numerous doubts regarding its immediate future.

Key words

Local television, autonomous television, autonomic, community, alternative, public policies.

Resum

La televisió de proximitat ha patit una forta transformació a Espanya durant l'última dècada. Després d'anys de buit en les polítiques públiques, la reordenació del mapa audiovisual, conseqüència de la implantació de la televisió digital terrestre, la decisió de la majoria de les comunitats autònomes d'introduir competència comercial en l'àmbit autonòmic i la crisi profunda de la inversió publicitària han redibuixat un sector que fa pocs anys era objectiu estratègic dels grans grups de comunicació i avui presenta nombroses incerteses pel que fa al seu futur immediat.

Paraules clau

Televisió local, televisió de proximitat, televisió autonòmica, autonòmic, comunitària, alternativa, polítiques públiques.

1. Introduction: proximity broadcasting in global television competition

The aim of this work is to review, from an essentially descriptive perspective, the current situation of proximity television in Spain. Under the umbrella term *proximity broadcasting* we include all forms of public or private television that are broadcast at state level, which in Spain means public regional channels, the new private regional stations, municipal broadcasters, private local stations and non-profit stations. Although these are not reviewed in this paper, all stations that broadcast 'a-legally', or illegally, should be mentioned (depending on how loopholes in the regulations are interpreted) both in analogue and digital television. The research on this phenomenon in Spain has been useful because there are numerous regional case studies (Martínez Hermida 2001; Navarro Moreno 1999; Sabés Turmo 2002), but we agree with Casero and Marzal regarding the need to approach this phenomenon from a wider perspective which allows us to detect trends across the system (Marzal Felici and Casero Ripollés 2008).

From the first broadcasts of local Catalan non-profit television stations (see especially Guimerà and Orts 2006; Guimerà and Orts 2007; Prado and Moragas 1991) until today, the local television sector has undergone a formidable transformation

and has passed through very diverse stages, from a regulatory point of view to its development as an audiovisual market, to a movement towards digital determined by the European context (García Leiva 2006) and the possibilities of revenue for public finances provided by the digital dividend. In the following pages the sector's public policies are reviewed, as well as the situation in each regional provider's territory, both local and community, to particularly understand the current situation regarding the proximity television system and the public/private split in the Spanish broadcasting sector below the level of state.

2. The public/private split of autonomous television

The situation regarding public television in Spain has been particularly complicated in recent decades, especially due to the unsustainable model designed by RTVE in the Radio and Television Statute (Act 4/1980, of 10 January, on the radio and television statute), which was immediately adopted by regional public television stations. In recent years, the institutional redesign of RTVE to the State Act 17/2006, of 5 June, on state-owned radio and television and the public assimilation of the huge public debt have served to provide a new opportunity in state public television, but this transformation

Table 1. Providers of television service in Spain according to ownership (2010)

Television service provider in Spain		Ownership		
		Public	Private	Third sector
Broadcasting areas	Spain	RTVE	Antena 3 TV, Sogecable, Telecinco, laSexta, NET TV, Veo TV	—
	Autonomous communities	Autonomous radio and television stations	Private autonomous stations	—
	Municipalities or local groups	Municipal stations	Private local stations	Community television (currently being regulated)

has not happened at a similar level to autonomous public television.

Regional television stations appeared in Spain because of the decentralised political model recovered by the 1978 Constitution. Given the possibility of following a decentralised audiovisual model supervised by TVE, the regional communities assumed their statutory responsibility to start up public bodies with RTVE (Act 4/1980, 10 January, on the radio and television statute) as a model (Mateo Pérez and Bergés Saura 2009), and with the third channel Act (Act 46/1983, of 26 December, governing the third television channel) as an enabling instrument (in all cases except the Basque Country). After an initial stage, which the regions considered “historical” and created their regional stations in their own languages, in the second half of the 1980s a second set of autonomies was established, to which we add a final group must be added of public bodies, created in 2000, to complete the current 13 (see López *et al.* 1999). Thanks to the availability of frequencies brought about by the National Technical Plan for digital terrestrial television, all have at least two terrestrial broadcasting channels within the autonomous community’s multiplex. Only Castile and Leon, Cantabria, Navarra and Rioja have no public radio/television. The model designed in 1983 remains unchanged, which has resulted in controversy concerning the political use of these media, the deficit accumulated and even the possible illegality of the dual financing model (advertising and public subsidy)¹ (Llorens 2005; De Moragas and Prado 2000).

With this critical context as a background, in the last decade a privatisation movement has developed in regional television, driven particularly by conservative political forces. The first gesture in this direction was the awarding in 1998 of the content of the Canary Islands’ public television to Productora Canaria de Televisión, a company owned by Prisa and local firms which manage the channel Canal Canarias; afterwards, in 2005, Aragón Televisión decided to outsource part of its production to Chip Audiovisual and Mediapro (Fernández Alonso 2002; Mateo Pérez and Bergés Saura 2009). The third channel Act did not allow for the privatisation of public regional stations

(nor is it allowed now by the general Act on audiovisual communication), so that the Partido Popular (PP) tried to modify it² in the 1996-2000 legislature. A lack of consensus with their parliamentary members ended this proposal, but the rollout of digital terrestrial television allowed the PP to clear the way for the awarding of autonomous licences for private digital television, which afterwards appeared in many areas, according to the deregulatory desire of each regional community.

The state of autonomous community broadcasting is very different in each community and for this reason it’s important to briefly review each of them:

1. Andalusia: has had a public provider since 1988, RTVA, which broadcasts various terrestrial channels. In 2007 and 2008 the four private regional channels were put out to tender, won by Prisa, Vocento, Prensa Ibérica and the Joly group. Of these, only Vocento (Canal 10) and Prensa Ibérica (with various brands, such as Málaga TV or Canal 21) operate now and Prisa has resigned its licence.

2. Aragón: 2004 started up the public station CARTV, which is broadcast by Aragón Televisión. There was no autonomous private television tender.

3. Asturias: RTPA was created in 2004, which broadcasts two public signals throughout the region; in 2007 a licence was granted to the Prisa group for a private regional channel, which is in the process of being returned.

4. Canary Islands: RTVC began in 1998; in 2007, the government in the Canary Islands awarded the two digital terrestrial television licences with regional coverage (DTT-A) to COPE and Antena 3 Televisión Digital Terrestre de Canarias.

5. Cantabria: the regional government has repeatedly insisted that it will not create regional public television (*El Diario Montañés*, 17/03/2010). In 2006, the Cantabrian government held a tender for DTT-A providers, but it was declared void.

6. Castile-La Mancha: public television started in 2000 under the name of Castilla-La Mancha Televisión. The tender for regional private companies ended in 2010 with three definitive licences, which Green Publicidad y Medios, La Regional de Castilla-La Mancha and Radio Prensa y Televisión received; the fourth licence, received by the newspaper publishing group

La Tribuna was returned after the Castile and Leon group Promecal terminated its activity in Castile-La Mancha media.

7. Castile and Leon: there is no public provider. The regional private licence given in 2009 consists of two signals: one single frequency and the other with provincial disconnections. The tender winner was the company formed by the merger of the two pre-existing local television networks of the region (Canal 4 and Televisión Castilla y León). Municipal local television was also soon regulated, although no licence has been awarded as yet.

8. Catalonia: Catalan public radio/television (CCRTV) started in 1983 and has the most terrestrial broadcasting signals (five in total). It competes with the Godó group for the regional private licence granted in 2003 by the Catalan government to Emissions Digitals de Catalunya. Unlike other autonomous communities, the private provider has a complete digital multiplex at its disposal (actually, nowadays it broadcasts three different signals).

9. Community of Madrid: its public body, RTVAM (TeleMadrid and La Otra), was created in 1988. Madrid was the first to hold a regional private tender in 1999, and the Vocento group (which operates as Onda 6) won the licence, along with the now extinct Quiero Televisión which, in ceasing to exist, left the licence empty until today, despite the unsuccessful attempt of the regional government to put it up for tender again in 2005.

10. Community of Valencia: as well as the public RTVV, operating since 1984, the Community held a private regional tender, which the Vocento group (La 10) and COPE (Popular Televisión) won in 2006.

11. Extremadura: the public group Corporación Extremeña de Medios Audiovisuales (CEXMA) has broadcast the channel Canal Extremadura since 2004. The regional government held a tender for private licences in 2007 which was won by Kiss Media and the Prisa group (which gave up its licence).

12. Galicia: from 1984 the public channel TVG has been broadcasting as part of the regional corporation CRTVG. In 2005 two private regional licences were given to Popular Televisión and La Voz de Galicia.

13. The Balearic Islands: in 2004 the public station IB3 was awarded the licence for the third channel. The tender for the private regional licence in 2006 was won by Prisa (which gave it up) and Unidad Editorial.

14. Rioja: without a regional public provider, the community held a DTT tender; the result came at the end of 2001 and found in favour of Rioja Televisión (Vocento) and Popular Televisión, which both have two channels each.

15. Navarra: has no regional public provider and, in 2004, the regional private tender was carried out, won by two channels – Canal 6 Navarra (linked with the Castile and Leon Promecal group) and two more for Canal4 Localia Navarra.

16. Basque Country: was the first community to start its own public television station, the EITB, in 1982, under the Statute of Autonomy. There are no private autonomous providers.

17. Murcia: in 2005 Radio Televisión de la Región de Murcia (RTRM) began, which now broadcasts two autonomous channels. The private licence was won in 2006 by Televisión Murciana, SA, La Verdad Radio y Televisión, SA and Televisión Popular de la Región de Murcia, SA.

There are therefore four ways of resolving the public/private split in regional broadcasting:

a. First, the solution of communities that prefer to protect their public radio and television companies as much as possible, and open up competition to local but not regional markets. This solution is used in Aragon and the Basque Country.

b. Those that do not have regional public bodies and have chosen to give more than one channel to private providers and protect them as much as possible from local competition. This is the case with Navarra, Rioja (these two have the same model of two providers that compete amongst themselves with two channels each) and Castile León (with one private regional provider).

c. The more common solution, where regional private competition has been fragmented among public providers. Here the solution has offered each provider one channel from the private regional multiplex to compete with the regional public body. Andalusia and Castile-La Mancha won four channels in the tender, but the most frequently used option has been to incorporate two private providers (with one channel each).

d. The fourth model, used only in Catalonia, is to offer all the private regional multiplex to one provider. No other autonomous community has followed this model.

3. The new post-DTT local television scenario

Regarding local television, for various decades the sector has moved amid regulatory uncertainty, until State Act 41/1995 was passed, of 22 December, on Local Terrestrial Television, which tried to structure the sector, and after in an 'a-legal' context (Prado 2004), in which for years the entry of all types of firms was allowed in a process that has been called "covert deregulation" (Badillo 2005; Badillo 2004; Badillo and Moreno 2004) ending with the switchover to digital terrestrial television. State Act 53/2002, of 30 December, on Fiscal, Administrative and Social Order Measures proposes the basic state framework by fixing the scope of local television coverage, not according to municipalities but "demarcations", based on population criteria, from provincial capitals and towns of more than 100,000 inhabitants. The law also incorporates the novelty of reserving a quarter for each multiplex (a channel) for municipal management. On this basis, the previous Partido Popular government designed the National Technical Plan for local digital television (RD 439/2004), modified slightly afterwards by the government of the PSOE (RD 2268/2004). The autonomous communities, in exercising their powers, have held tenders to award licences.

The diversity of situation in each autonomous community makes it even more necessary to review the situation case by case:

1. Andalusia: the government in Andalusia started the tender to award local DTT licences in 2006, and completed it two years later, only a few months after they had granted licences to regional private providers. The councils that had requested the corresponding licences have been receiving them since 2008, and now there are 28 municipal licences (another ten are being processed and 34 have been declared void). Of the 157 effective private licences, Green Publicidad y Medios (with 28) and Alternativas de Medios Audiovisuales (with 19) are the providers prevalent in most areas.

2. Aragon: the community has awarded licences to four councils to operate in local DTT, which must be added to the 22 private (having discounted those returned by Prisa) awarded in 2006, amongst which 6 licences granted to Producciones de Entretenimiento stand out, or the three that the La Comarca and El Heraldo de Aragón groups received.

3. Asturias: of the 21 licences granted by the Principality in 2007, the highest number were 6 to Editorial Prensa Asturiana (Prensa Ibérica, editor of *La Nueva España*), followed by 5 to Canal 48 Occidente. No municipal licences were granted.

4. Canary Islands: the tender was decided in 2007 with the award of 46 private licences for local and island coverage, while eight channels were also given to municipal corporations and island councils,³ although in 2009 the Canary Islands government mentioned the possibility of incorporating even more providers in the market because of high demand (Europa Press, 17/06/2009). Canal 8 (4 licences between local and island groups) or Prensa Ibérica (3) are the licence holders present in most areas.

5. Cantabria: after a first call to tender in 2006 was declared void, in January 2009 a local tender was organised which, to date, has not been decided. When the digital switchover occurred, the existing local stations gradually decreased their activity (for example, Canal8DM, Tu TV or Cantabria Televisión / Telecabarga, see EFE 20/07/2009), while others, such as AquíTV, PopularTV or Telebahía, have chosen to continue with analogue broadcasts while they await the results of the digital tender (ABC, 17/03/2010). The local press announced in 2009 the start of a multiplex on channel 24 which digitally broadcasts the signals of CantabriaTV, AquíTV and Telepromociones (*El Diario Montañés*, 15/07/2009).

6. Castile-La Mancha: the local television tender was decided in July 2009 when 72 licences were awarded to private providers and a reservation was made for one channel for each area for councils that wanted to have their own channels. Although there are no municipal licences given under regional media law, there is evidence that some councils already operate in DTT under trial conditions. In the case of private providers, the regional tender, once closed, saw numerous duplications, by which Green Publicidad y Medios (CRM, with 5 local licences) and Radio Prensa y Televisión (TVCM, with 14

licences) will be forced to give up one of their two markets (probably the local one).⁴

7. Castile and Leon: Although in 2005 the Castile and Leon council published a preliminary text which announced a local television tender in a few months, this never happened. Despite this, the merger between local television networks Canal 4 and Televisión Castilla y León and the current regional private provider has taken on much of the system, because the regional private DTT licence holder has, as well as a single-channel frequency, a channel for provincial coverage for each of the new provinces under the denomination CyL 8. There are no municipal broadcasts.

8. Catalonia: the tender closed in 2006 and produced a market of 50 private licences, while at a municipal level (where the regional community has extensive experience), the Catalan government has awarded 32 licences to councils and municipal groups.⁵ Of note is the government's decision to devote several complete multiplexes to municipal management, which led to complaints before the Supreme Court of Justice in Catalonia, which has ruled that tenders in these demarcations are void.

9. Community of Madrid: the first tender that took place in Madrid 2005, with 30 awards, was annulled by Madrid's Supreme Court of Justice following the contentious administrative procedure brought by various providers that did not receive a licence, such as Localia.⁶ In 2009, the Community of Madrid re-ran the tender, in which the same providers won the same demarcations. The audiovisual producer Enrique Cerezo, with 10 licences, received the most, together with Libertad Digital, Popular Televisión and Antena 3. There was only one municipal licence, belonging to the city.

10. Community of Valencia: the Valencian tender was decided in 2006 with the awarding of three private licences to each multiplex to all the demarcations except for four, which were put to tender in 2010. The Mediamed consortium (which runs the Tele7 brand), Libertad Digital and the newspaper publishing house *El Mundo* received most of the licences. A regulation exists for requests from local councils, some of which have received the respective licences to operate.

11. Extremadura: the autonomous government held its first tender in 2006, which was declared void two years later, then held a new procedure in 2008 which resulted, in May 2010, in 24 channels being allocated and a further 27 void. Canal 30 Cáceres, Producciones Audiovisuales del Norte de Extremadura and the entrepreneur Francisco Javier Morillo Benegas received the most licences. There were no municipal licences.

12. Galicia: the tender for private local providers was held at the same time as the regional, but was decided later, in 2006. After the tender ended, in 2009, the Supreme Court of Justice in Galicia annulled the licences for Pontevedra and El Ferrol, so, effectively, only 40 licences were given (discounting the 17 void ones), which are mainly in the hands of the community's leading newspapers. The regional government has planned to implement a procedure for council applications, although there is no evidence of any operating.

13. Balearic Islands: tenders were held for local and island television with both private and public providers. There are 34 privately allocated licences (28 local and 6 island). There are only three public licences, all for island coverage.

14. Rioja: the regional government has not yet announced a local DTT tender.

15. Navarra: only five private licences have been granted to date in Navarra, one in each local community charter multiplex, all to Popular Televisión. There are no municipal licences.

16. Basque Country: the local tender was decided in 2007 with the awarding of 58 licences. Guipuzkoa Televisión and Hamaika obtained the greatest number. Only Donostia has a public municipal licence.

17. Murcia: the 24 private licences awarded in 2006 were to La Opinión de Murcia, Canal 21, Libertad Digital and the Grupo Empresarial de Televisión de Murcia. Regarding municipal television stations, once access to licences had been regulated for councils and one channel was reserved for municipal use in each local multiplex, the autonomous government has granted licences to those providers applying for them.

Therefore, 662 private and 96 public licences were awarded to both local and island groups. Although the picture for providers appears more stable than ever in the local sector, it's still subject to short-term changes: temporary provision number ten of audiovisual communication's new general Act warns that operators who have not started their broadcasts at the right time, or those who have interrupted them, will lose their licences. The same provision announces that, by May 2012, the DTT technical plan will be revised according to the ultimate occupation of frequencies.

In any case, reviewing the facts confirms that one of the fundamental characteristics of local television is its definitive inclination towards private, not public, providers (Corominas *et al.* 2007), for whom 75% of each multiplex's capacity is reserved, and which highlights a remarkable difference in the make-up of the private-public split in autonomous television. In nearly all the tenders, it's easy to discern a clear political orientation in the awards given, which only in one case were supported by reports from regional audiovisual councils (Bustamante 2008).

Table 2. Private licences for local and island DTT (May 2010)

Regional community	DTT-A	DTT-I	DTT-L	Overall total
Andalusia	3		157	160
Aragon			22	22
Asturias			21	21
Canary Islands	2	14	32	48
Castile-la Mancha	3		72	75
Castile and Leon	2			2
Catalonia	4		50	54
Ceuta			2	2
Community of Madrid	1		30	31
Community of Valencia	2		42	44
Extremadura	1		24	25
Galicia	2		40	42
Balearic Islands	2	6	28	36
Melilla			2	2
Navarra	4		5	9
Basque Country			58	58
Murcia	3		24	27
Rioja	4			4
Overall total	33	20	609	662

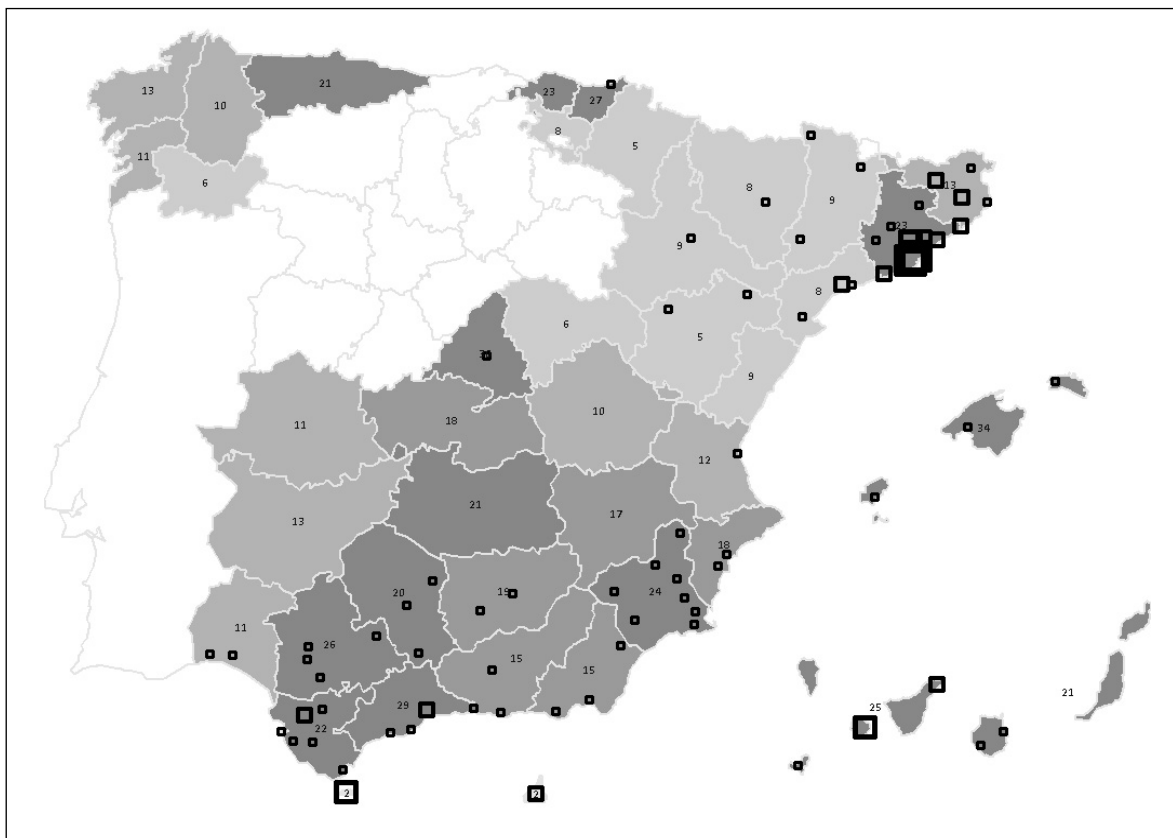
DTT- A: Digital Terrestrial Television with autonomous community coverage

DTT- I: Digital Terrestrial Television with island coverage

DTT- L: Digital Terrestrial Television with local coverage

The overall total reflects the licences published in the official journals of the autonomous communities (whether broadcasting or not), having eliminated those declared void or those returned by the winners at any point in the process.

Source: Author, with data from the regional communities' official journals.

Illustration 1. Licence holders of local and island digital terrestrial television in Spain

Source: Author. The number shows the private licences given to each province and the box scales by size the public licences granted. Only the licences awarded are shown (the void licenses, the returns or those pending a decision are excluded).

4. Community television, pending regulation

Community television stations are very scarce in Spanish proximity broadcasting. The European Parliament's report on community media in 2007 recognised the existence of only three community television stations in Spain — together with 130 radio stations — (European Parliament 2007). Despite the fact that European institutions (Council of Europe 2008; Council of Europe 2009; European Parliament 2008) recognise the importance of alternative media, community audiovisual media have not found a place in Spanish public policies. The additional provisions fifteen and eighteen of Act 56/2007, of 28 December, on measures to promote the information society, contained the most recent attempt to protect this type of media.^{vii} This text, which talks about “proximity television stations” in order to differentiate these from commercial ones, prohibits them from broadcasting advertising or telesales (even though sponsorship is allowed) and refers to the future development of a technical plan and the provision of a general regulation of the service, because it is these regional communities that grant the licences, which will be non-transferable and incompatible with commercial licences. In any case, the law warns that the planning of the spectrum for these stations “is

not a priority when compared to other planned or feasible services”, and what will be used are “frequencies which, because of their use by upcoming services, are not available for commercially viable television broadcasting services”. This gives a clear idea of the legislator's position regarding this type of television station. Article 32 of the 2010 law on general audiovisual communication (LGCA – General Act on Audiovisual Communication) recognises the possibility for non-profit entities to provide audiovisual services, and the central government is expected to provide frequencies for this type of media, and they will be able to obtain specific licences. The audiovisual authority is responsible for verifying that the operational expenses of community stations do not exceed 100,000 euros per year. Temporary provision number fourteen of the LGCA provides for the statutory regulation of licences for this type of media, while respecting existing areas of authority, and recognises the seniority of “non-profit community communication services which were operating before 1 January 2009 [...]”.

In any case, the model applied for the digital switchover for local television has clearly served to eliminate the few experiences in local television of the third sector that existed in Spain in local television. Forced to compete with private firms, and without any frequencies being reserved in any autonomous

community, non-profit television has been swept from the Spanish audiovisual system in the only field (local) in which some experiences had survived. It has only been possible to confirm two licences (in Castile-La Mancha and the Basque Country) where the holders presented themselves in the tender as non-profit entities, although they had to compete under the same conditions as private companies. Unfortunately, Bustamante's prediction from two years ago has become reality, that "the structure drawn for future digital television, regionally and locally, not only shows a loss of public weight and the almost total marginalisation of the association sector but also, overwhelmingly, a private architecture that overly favours national and local media groups" (Bustamante 2008).

5. Reordering of operators, commercial competition and advertising crisis: features of local television in Spain

Although some tenders still have to be held, and some providers have provisional licences after confirming they meet all the initial requirements, with various appeals brought via contentious administrative proceedings before the Higher or Supreme Court of Justice and while many demarcations are currently setting up their multiplex management system, the conclusions we reach in this work are provisional to some extent.

The first conclusion we can make about local television in Spain concerns the redefinition of the role of large groups in the sector. Once local and regional television has become an opportunity to resolve the limits of the national market, the expansion in the number of state coverage channels and the crisis in advertising have meant that national groups have tended to leave the sector. The most obvious case is the Prisa group which, in 2008, decided to close Pretesa-Localia and remove itself from local and regional broadcasting, at the beginning of the crisis and the restructuring of the business. Prisa has been returning its licences to each autonomous community (the situation is at different phases in each territory because it involves a slow administrative process), and all its broadcasts ceased on 1 January 2009.

Those who seem to have found a more defined space for growth in this sector are Vocento (which is unifying its private regional licences with the brand La10, for which it has even created a common broadcasting programming); COPE, which had to choose to accept new partners (the arrival of the Mexican Burillo Azcárraga, reformed as Popular-Mariavisión) to maintain its local and private regional television stations, and Kiss Media, with uneven implementation but with presence in some notable markets.

Other national groups have shelved their local and autonomous television projects: Unidad Editorial (with a national licence) is using its regional frequencies to broadcast the English learning channel Aprende Inglés TV; Uniprex

(Antena 3) fills its local signals with low-cost programming under the Ver-T brand, while Telecinco still seems to be using its licences. The same is happening a little with groups set up within an autonomous community: Prensa Ibérica does not seem to have a coordinated project yet for its numerous licences throughout the country (above all in Andalusia, Asturias, Canary Islands, Galicia and Murcia) and Godó group has concentrated on its private regional *super-licence* in Catalonia.

Some small groups have emerged in recent years as new and relevant players, particularly Local Media (a joint company of Teletoledo and Telebilbao) and CRN. The former has won a large number of local licences in Castile-La Mancha, the Basque Country and Andalusia. Local Media operates as a satellite content supplier through local television stations throughout Spain, but could now become one of the new operators of importance in the market. For CRN, Andalusia and Castile-La Mancha also appear to be its reference areas, and in both there are sufficient licences to become an important player in the sector. Other groups worthy of mention are those that are highly concentrated in a single regional market: Hamaika in the Basque Country (a project in which Euskaltel, *Deia*, *Gara* and Baintet participate), Canal Català in Catalonia and Tele7 in Valencia. At least in these cases some care can be observed in providing "proximity" or local content, against the tendency to de-regionalise the sector, which research has recognised as an immediate risk from years previously (Prado 2004). It appears that the businesses that were in the sector to exploit expensive fraudulent competitions or telephone calls have disappeared and, anyway, the restriction of available frequencies and high revenue resulting from the reuse of the digital dividend (García Leiva 2009) for telecommunication services is likely to have a very minimal impact on illegal broadcasts in the sector.

As noted above, the public-private split is very different in local DTT television. Both in regional and local broadcasting coverage, we have governments that have either chosen a strong presence in the private sector or that have preferred to create a strong public sector; from autonomous communities that do not subject public bodies to private competition, to those that are only now granting municipal licences. Undoubtedly this depends on their ideological stance concerning the role of direct public management in communication, because it's surprising that the communities that are most protective of their public media are governed (at least in their decision-making) by centre-left groups, while the tendency to reduce public activity appears to be more characteristic of administrations managed by the liberal-conservative right. More attention must be paid to this aspect in future research. It seems certain that the widespread cuts in public spending, which Spain will face in coming years, will determine the evolution of this phenomenon and the development of public forms of communication, particularly those dependent on councils.

Finally one cannot forget the stabilisation of the local broadcasting system, which is occurring within a context of a sharp

Table 3. Summary of licences awarded (May 2010)

	Regional public entity (year, terrestrial channels)	Private regional holders (number of channels)	Number of local private licences given	Number of municipal licences given	Total
Andalusia	RTVA (1989) (3)	Prisa* (1) Vocento (1) Prensa Ibérica (1) Joly (1)	157	28	192
Aragon	RTVA (2006) (2)	0	22	4	28
Asturias	RTPA (2005) (3)	Prisa* (1)	21	0	25
Canary Islands	RTVC (1999) (2)	Popular TV (1) Antena 3 Canarias (1)	32 (TDT-L) 14 (TDT-L)	3 (TDT-L) 5 (TDT-L)	58
Cantabria	0	0	0	0	0
Castile-La Mancha	RTVCLM (2001) (2)	Green PyM (1) La Regional (1) Radio, Prensa y TV (1)	72	0	77
Castile and Leon	-	RTVCyL (2)	-	-	2
Catalonia	CCRTV (1984) (5)	Emissions Digitals de Catalunya (4)	50	35	94
Community of Madrid	RTVAM (1984) (3)	Vocento (1)	30	1	35
Extremadura	CEXMA (2004) (1)	Prisa* (1) Kiss (1)	24	-	27
Galicia	CGRTV (1984) (2)	Popular TV (1) Voz de Galicia (1)	40	-	44
Balearic Islands	RTVIB (2005) (1)	Unedisa (1) TV Digital Balears (1)	28 locals 6 insulars	3	40
Rioja	-	Vocento (2) Popular TV (2)	-	-	4
Navarra	-	Canal4 (2) Canal6 (2)	5	-	9
Basque Country	EITB (1982) (4)	0	58	1	63
Murcia	RTRM (2005) (2)	Televisión Murciana (1) La Verdad (1) Popular TV (1)	24	8	37
Total	30	33	28	697	788

Source: Own about data from regional communities' official bulletins.

fall in advertising revenue in Spain, and which will condition (and is already doing so) the strategies of private players in local television business. More dangerous still are audience measurement tools with which advertising investment decisions are made in Spain, and which do not seem to be ready to include local providers, only regional ones. It's not only a question of the need for larger autonomous samples to provide statistically representative disaggregated figures, but also about audio-matching techniques used by Kantar Media (until now known as TN Sofres AM) to identify content in DTT broadcasts, which are not applied to local broadcasts. Even though this is not the aim of this work, suffice to say that there are serious

problems posed by Kantar Media's figures regarding local television stations in the last two years and, most particularly, after the digital switchover. Without the possibility of offering audience figures, at least aggregate, it will be difficult for local television stations to access the advertising market at such a delicate time.

Notes

- 1 See especially the statements by the Unión de Televisiones Comerciales Asociadas (UTECA) in recent years, at www.uteca.com.
- 2 The Spanish government presented its bill to regulate the regional television public service in December 1997, discussed in parliament during the months of March and April, 1998. The lack of a significant majority to approve this bill and opposition from parliamentary groups made the bill obsolete in 2000.
- 3 The newspaper *La Opinión de Tenerife* (Prensa Ibérica) filed an administrative appeal against various awards that the Superior Justice accepted. The Canary Islands government resorted to the Supreme Court, which has, to date, still not passed a ruling.
- 4 Something similar could happen with Castile-La Mancha's private regional licence holder for the third channel, La Regional, which is jointly owned by several companies that have received numerous local licences.
- 5 In the words of the CAC president Ramon Font, "the plan was for 96 local channels in Catalonia, and we broadcast 45: 34 private and 11 public. Of those that have returned their licences, the Planeta group, three from Localia (Prisa) and another from the Vocento group in Barcelona stand out, where two local frequencies are empty" (*El Periódico de Catalunya*, 30/01/2010).
- 6 The same day, the Supreme Court in Madrid decided on various appeals regarding these licences, although the appeal that managed to annul the tender was the one brought by Localia TV Madrid, SA, Comunicación y Medios Audiovisuales Tele Alcalá, SL, Productora Digital de Medios Audiovisuales, SA and Telenoroeste, SL.
- 7 This was included in the Senate after it was proposed by the following parliamentary groups: Socialists, Catalan Understanding of Progress (GPECP), Nationalist Basque Senators (GPSNV), Catalan CiU in the Senate (GPCIU), Senators of the Canary Island Coalition (GPCC) and Mixed (GPMX).

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Public access television: television within reach

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Abstract

The concept of local television in the United States differs from the concept in Europe. In the United States television is generally local, in such a way that television networks have an affiliation model that combines network programming and the local programming of the affiliated stations. The idea of community television is based more on participation rather than proximity. The key to this type of television lies in models like the so-called public access channels. This paper primarily deals with this television model: its concept, origins and prospects for the future.

Key words

US television system, local television, community television, public access, public television and participatory TV.

Resum

El concepte de televisió local als Estats Units difereix de l'europeu. Als Estats Units, la televisió ordinària és local, ja que les cadenes de televisió tenen un model d'afiliació on es combina la programació en cadena i la programació local de les estacions afiliades. La idea de televisió comunitària rau més en la participació que no pas en la proximitat. La clau, doncs, d'aquest tipus de televisió es troba en models com ara els anomenats canals d'accés públic. Aquest article tracta principalment d'aquest últim model televisiu: el seu concepte, l'origen i les perspectives de futur.

Paraules clau

Sistema televisiu als Estats Units, televisió local, televisió comunitària, accés públic, televisió pública i televisió participativa.

Terrestrial television in the USA: local network stations

Local television in the USA does not have the same meaning as it does in Europe. In fact, the entire television structure in North America is based around thousands of local stations that are affiliated with networks in one way or other, depending on whether we're talking about commercial or non-commercial stations. However, it would be wrong to think that no debate exists on the localisation and centralisation of television programming in the United States. On the contrary, debate has existed within the television system practically since its inception (Head *et al.* 1998, Engelman 1996).

In the case of commercial television, the system is based on large networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and WB to name but a few of the most important English-speaking ones), which own only a few stations but which, in the majority of cases, are able to take out affiliation contracts with stations around the country and own the licences. These local stations combine network programming and local programming in agreement with the membership contract they have arrived at.

Local channels primarily offer information programmes –local in nature– which often feed national networks with news sto-

ries from different places around the country. The relationship is symbiotic: local stations can access programmes that their budgets would otherwise find difficult to afford, while the networks can aspire to realise their commercial dream: achieving the widest audience possible.

The fact that there's an Association of Local Television Stations could be misleading, but this is an association that, despite declaring an ambition to be independent, has ended up becoming affiliated with the large networks. This is something which, in practice, makes them rather similar to other stations that are essentially local, although their affiliation with the channel leaves them little opportunity to produce their own programming.

However, the affiliation model is not perfect. The success of cable systems, the economic downturn and the cost of adapting to digitalisation, amongst others influences, have revealed large cracks in the model that could even start to threaten the future of weaker local stations or smaller markets. These have suffered a decline in audience ratings since 2008 and have had to make major cuts. The networks, which already started investing in cable systems from the 1980s, are seriously looking at the possibility of exclusively broadcasting on cable (*The*

Wall Street Journal 2009). Moreover, many of the affiliation licences will be renewed as from 2011 and they will more than likely be negatively affected by the whole situation. However, there are still some guarantees that this will not happen, such as the strength of some stations, the fact that channels will also own some of the larger stations and because there's political pressure for sports leagues to be broadcast on terrestrial television. On the other hand, this dual network-local scheme helps to exploit the local advertising market, which contributes notably to these channels' profits.

Therefore, at the moment we can conclude that the American commercial terrestrial television market is, as we said, the sum of its local markets, which vary in size but can exceed 10 million inhabitants.

In the case of non-commercial television in the United States, we find a highly interrelated system, although with significant differences. The non-commercial channel Public Broadcasting System (PBS) started operating in 1970 as a national institution after the promulgation in 1967 of the Public Broadcasting Act, which marked the transition from a purely educational medium to a system of public television, and of a medium supported by private funding to a non-commercial television network with federal funding (Engelman 1996).

In practice, this is about a chain of individual, local broadcasters that provide the channel with programmes and, at the same time, use the programming from PBS's office that centralises purchases (either produced by the stations that form part of the channel or foreign or independent, syndicated productions) and programming decisions. The main public television license owners are states and municipalities, universities, public schools and community foundations.

Tensions at the channel's core (apart from those many and varied ones originating from political powers) have arisen precisely from the contradiction between the need to create their own identity as a channel and the desire of local stations to protect their own identity. Although the Public Broadcasting Act expected "a strong component of local and regional programming to provide the opportunity and the means for local choice to be exercised upon the programs made available from central programming sources" (CCET 1967, 33 cited in Head *et al.* 1998, 197), it has actually been very difficult to control the centralisation of programming.

In general, however, non-commercial television in the United States broadcasts more local than commercial programmes, although it often obtains programmes from the same distributors as commercial stations. As Head *et al.* states, "local production is often one of the first things to go when budgets are cut (Head *et al.* 1998, 205). The economic crisis and low audience ratings for public television are of little help in this respect and, as is the case with public television, normally the programmes that escape centralisation are local and regional news.

"Local" in cable and public access television

Cable television in the United States originated in the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1980s, terrestrial TV broadcasters were as important as the networks and generated as much income (*The Wall Street Journal* 1999) as cable television, although they were seen as "the little sister". This situation changed at the beginning of the 1990s and the number of cable subscribers has continued to grow, alongside the interest of large producers to deliver their products to cable networks as a priority.

Generally, these systems offer a package of thematic channels and premium originals and also include most broadcast stations, whose signal covers their franchise area, and some cable companies are even committed to producing local news content. In the case of cable, the franchise system also means that the system is based on local subscriptions; it's not by chance that the origin of the current cable television system in the United States can be found in the community cable systems of Community Antenna Television (CATV) which, during the 1950s and 1960s, grew from 70 to more than 800. In fact, cable television came into being because there were no economic incentives and no obligation for the networks to serve small communities (Rennie 2006, p. 52).

Ultimately, and regarding the concept of "local", what is most interesting in relation to cable networks is what's known as "public access television". In the aforementioned context, this was defined as a television system in which the concept of local is far from the media of community identity and proximity that constitute this concept in Europe. In the case of North America, the concept of community television relies mainly on the idea of participation.

The concept of participation is used to cover a wide range of practices that involve audience participation in televised broadcasts or in communication devices generated around broadcasts. There is another conception of participation which refers to the participation of citizens in controlling and advisory bodies for television or even in its managing bodies.

Another form of public participation in television, albeit symbolically in spite of the desire to see it as a form of public participation, is the use of citizens as raw material for programmes. Chronologically, the genre of the game show was probably one of the earliest to use the participation of ordinary citizens as "material" to produce its content, followed by candid camera programmes and, in the 1980s, the different types of infoshow, particularly reality shows.

One must add audience intervention to this form of participation, either live or using electronic devices at their fingertips provided by the programme (text message, internet, telephone), or the forms of television participation aimed at getting people interested in public affairs, encouraging direct involvement in asking questions to different politicians. Amongst the most recent forms of participation, it's worth mentioning the interactive possibilities of digital systems, such as cross-media

strategies, which have come out of the alliance between television, mobiles and the internet and which have substantially widened the range of participation promoted by the media.

This polysemy of the concept also affects scientific approaches and, from communication studies, the concept can be approached in various ways; on the one hand, it can be studied from the perspective of participatory television, where the emphasis is placed on the characteristics of the broadcasts and on the usage of participation as an element in the programme; and it can also be studied from the perspective of television as a dynamic agent of public participation or even from the point of view of the social use of the medium. This last approach has been called social media and concerns society's more or less organised access to the media, with civil society taking the initiative and becoming involved, as per the concept described by Habermas as a "public sphere". The public sphere is related to the idea of public understood as a social construct that, as such, requires social spaces to exist, debate, and act in the public's interest, without whose existence one cannot talk of a true democracy (Aufderheide 2000). Television and the media in general are potential platforms to encourage this process and can promote the necessary communications to construct the public sphere (Aufderheide 2000).

These theoretical concepts took hold in North American society, especially between the 1960s and 1970s, and have led to a social movement that demands television be used without professional mediation, such as through journalists, directors or producers, which is possible thanks to technology: "the introduction of cable television and portable video technology provided the means to make television a more open medium – more decentralized, more diverse, and more accessible to ordinary citizens" (Engelman 1996, p. 220).

This discourse refers us to a whole series of media that gets together around the concept of community media, whose major player has been radio in the electronic era (Rennie 2006; Howley 2005 and 2010; Fuller 2007, amongst others). Therefore, Howley (2005:16) states that "community media initiatives are one of the more effective strategies in the global struggle to democratize communication and ensure local autonomy in the wake of rampant media privatization and consolidation".

Moreover, in the United States, demands for media access and part of the philosophy on public access channels come from the venerable North American notion of free speech which is based, more or less, on a strict interpretation of the First Amendment of the US Constitution (Higgins 2007).

This social movement that demands access to television is concentrated at the Alternate Media Center at the University of New York, created by film and documentary-maker George Stoney, who participated in the "Challenge for Change" project in Canada, undoubtedly the clearest precedent of public access channels in the United States. Many interests and groups come together at the Alternate Media Center, with mixed and similar aspirations, including anti-war activists,

defenders of the First Amendment or activist groups of alternative or radical video, amongst others.

Contrary to the Canadian case, in the United States these demands for public access television end up being linked to private industry – cable television in this case – even though the earliest predecessors of public access television occurred in different local public television stations, such as WGBH in Boston, with its own programme *Catch 44*.

Consequently, in the United States, the pressure for access has crystallised into a kind of programming controlled by the public in general or by public institutions, instead of the cable operator, taking shape through an order from the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in 1972 requiring the cable operators of the 100 largest markets to provide up to three channels for educational, local government and public use, as well as guaranteeing free access to any individual or group demanding this, for a minimum period of five minutes. A year before, in July 1971, the public access channel for the neighbourhood community in Manhattan (MNN) started its broadcasts, which was the first successful experience after the failed experiment of Dale City, in Virginia.²

Later, in 1976, this entitlement applied to all cable systems with more than 3,500 subscribers, and also required cable suppliers not to intervene in the content, given that the PEG stations (public, education and government – the abbreviation by which these types of stations are known) are ruled by the principle of free speech on a first-come, first-served basis. This philosophy, which aims to eliminate discrimination and guarantee equal access so that no groups are favoured over others, is based on the strictest interpretation of the First Amendment and, at the same time, has led to numerous debates, particularly within stations, about the limits that can be placed on free speech, taking into account that this includes ideas that are not necessarily democratic. This debate has yet to be resolved and, even though it has been the main philosophy in the development of access channels, the same Alliance for Community Media has brought this debate to the pages of its *Community Media Review* and it has been analysed by many theoreticians (Rennie 2006 or Higgins 1999, 2007).

This kind of participation is very active and notable in size. Most broadcasters of this kind form part of the aforementioned Alliance for Community Media, a national organisation that represents more than 3,000 PEG. According to statistics from the Alliance, these centres produce 20,000 hours of new programmes each week, serving more than 250,000 social organisations each year, with the collaboration of 1,200,000 volunteers.

Cable suppliers must provide the necessary production infrastructures so that social groups and/or individuals claiming their right of access can produce their own content. They must also give them minimum training in production in case they do not have this skill. In 1984, the Cable Franchise Policy and Communications Act reaffirmed the limitation on cable operators to intervene in the content of these channels, as well as,

and no less importantly, exempting them from any liability regarding the content.

There are many types of access channels linked to education centres, local governments or community and religious groups. The programming on these channels is highly varied and the fact that they were created by “radicals” means they have traditionally been used for debates by social activists who are very critical of the system. This is the case, for example, with the legendary Paper Tiger TV on MNN which, since the 1980s, has been highly critical of the mass media with a deliberately rebellious appearance, or also *Deep Dish* or *Gulf Crisis*, both from MNN. However, not all public access channels have been used for political, democratic or alternative debates: many are dominated by religious or spiritual groups (Rennie 2006).

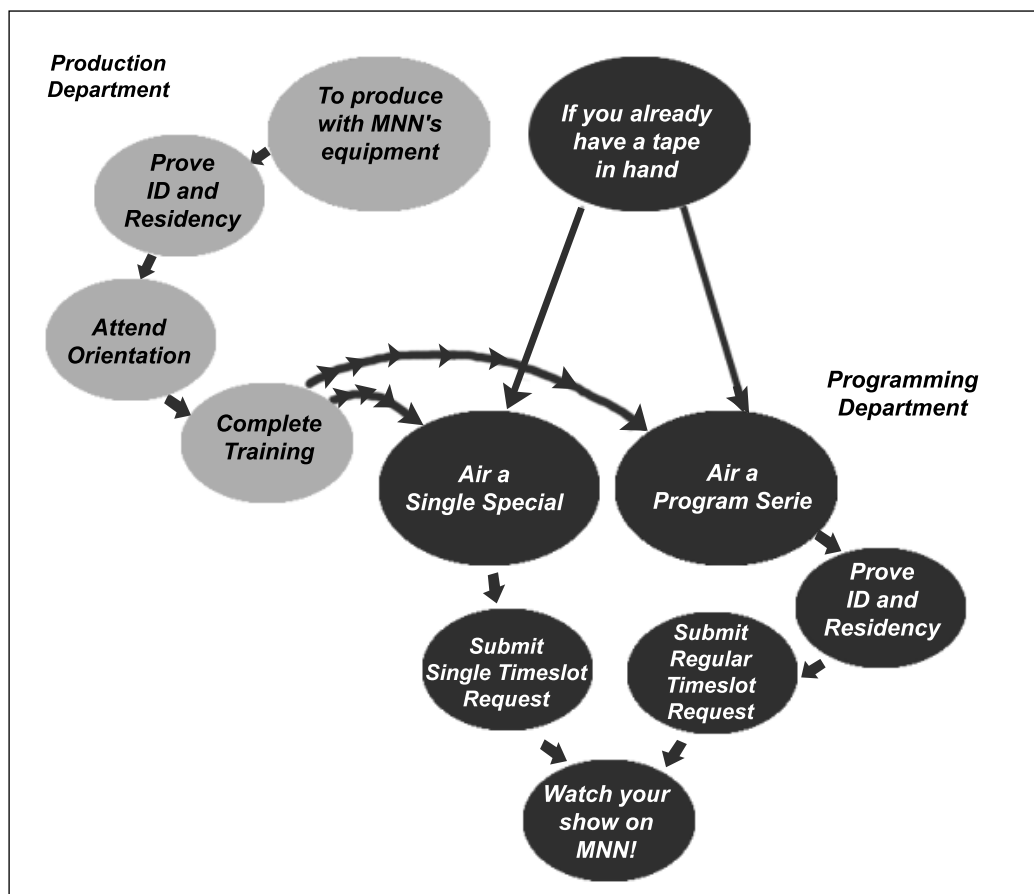
In organisational terms, community access or public access centres are typically found in many areas, where all sorts of associations and individual citizens can request training and resources to take advantage of their access entitlement and, therefore, to exercise their right to free speech.

A citizen, group or association that wants to access MNN's broadcasting content has to follow this specific route to use the

network. If they have no access to production equipment and/or the knowledge to do so, they have to contact the Production Department to request production equipment, where they must also provide identification and proof of residency in Manhattan; additionally they must attend orientation sessions and training courses. Once they have gained these skills, they will be able to develop their project and, once finished, will follow the same process as those who already have the means and knowledge and a product to offer.

At this point they can approach the Programming Department to request a single time slot if they only have a one-off programme, or a regular time slot if they are making a series. And the programme that will be broadcast will comply with the following mission: “*Manhattan Neighborhood Network* is responsible for administering the *Public Access* cable television services in Manhattan. Our purpose is to ensure the ability of Manhattan residents to exercise their First Amendment rights through the medium of cable television and to create opportunities for mutual communication, education, artistic expression and other non-commercial uses of video facilities on an open, uncensored and equitable basis. In providing services, we seek

Figure 1. Circuit for exercising the right to access a public access television network: the case of the Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN)



Source: The Manhattan Neighborhood Network, <<http://www.mnn.org/es/producers/getashow>>.

to involve the diverse racial, ethnic and geographic communities of Manhattan in the electronic communication of their varied interests, needs, concerns and identities" (The Manhattan Neighborhood Network, <<http://www.mnn.org/es/about>>).

This solid reality of public access television in the United States is not without its threats. Cable suppliers have always tried to save the largest number of channels and invest as little as possible in public access centres, but legislation has been relentless in its defence of this right. However, new difficulties are now arising out of deregulation, which has led to concentration among operators and the emergence of the triple player.

Some of these conglomerates, in choosing IPTV, have wanted to be freed from their duties as cable suppliers and, when they haven't been able to do this, have looked for imaginative solutions. This is the case of AT&T, which wants to comply with its obligation to provide public access channels with the U-verse system which, in essence, entails a loss in quality and the shifting of these channels from the range of 20 to 99, where all public access channels are squashed in and where, to access one in particular, you have to search using an application until, finally, the desired channel opens. All this takes nearly two minutes.

Public access stations and the Alliance for Community Media are fighting a great battle to preserve the right to keep this ideal of public participation alive: "In order for democracy to flourish, people must be active participants in their government, educated to think critically and free to express themselves. The mission of the Alliance for Community Media is to advance democratic ideals by ensuring that people have access to electronic media and by promoting effective communication through community uses of media" (The Alliance for Community Media, <<http://www.alliancecm.org/node/34>>).

Despite this, the United States' public access television through cable is unique in the world in terms of achieving community media, as it implies "the institutionalization of a process that provides people with the opportunity to create video programs and air them on local cable television channels – an oasis of "free speech" and "free ideas" in a commercialized, corporate global media desert" (Higgins 2007, p. 185).

Notes

- 1 The Research Group in Image, Sound and Synthesis (GRISS) is a research group established at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, set up in 1980 and recognised by the Catalan government (Grup 2009SGR1013) that belongs to the Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising I <<http://www.griss.org>>.
- 2 For a more detailed review of the historical development of public access in the United States, see Engelman 1996.

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Quebec's new television in the internet revolution

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Abstract

Nowadays, various studies or analyses predict the end of television. What are the causes? The digital revolution, the development of the internet, the proliferation of broadcasting and audiovisual platforms, the availability of new production and broadcasting tools, the discrediting of traditional financing models, the transformation of consumer habits regarding cultural products, etc. The author analyses the evolution of television in Quebec, taking into account technical, economical, and social transformations in the media: a third-generation television, the new face of instant information and culture.

In conclusion, we could say that this is a question of "personal" television which allows people to exist in the media.

Key words

Television, Quebec, internet, multi-broadcasting, convergence, instant culture.

Resum

En l'actualitat, podem trobar diferents estudis o anàlisis que auguren el final de la televisió. Quines en són les causes? La revolució digital, el desenvolupament d'internet, la proliferació de les plataformes de difusió i les plataformes audiovisuals, la disponibilitat de noves eines per a la producció i la difusió, el descrèdit dels models tradicionals de finançament, la transformació dels hàbits dels consumidors respecte dels productes culturals, etc. L'autor analitza l'evolució de la televisió al Quebec, tenint en compte les transformacions tècniques, econòmiques i socials dels mitjans de comunicació: una televisió de tercera generació, la nova cara de la informació i la cultura de la instantaneïtat.

En conclusió, podríem dir que es tracta d'una televisió "personal" que permet a les persones existir als mitjans de comunicació.

Paraules clau

Televisió, el Quebec, internet, multidifusió, convergència, cultura de la instantaneïtat.

Have we reached the end of television,² or only its implosion, as some people have claimed?³ Currently, reports on this issue are not positive, at least regarding general interest television. Television audiences have always been protected in Quebec because of the specific nature of the language (some seven million French speakers in a sea of three hundred million English speakers), and because of the specific nature of its Franco-Latin culture and the originality of its media creation, etc. But things might change.

An amazing paradox! Television is losing its audience but the public has never seen so many electronic images – on the internet, on their mobile phones, on videogames, on the subway, on the walls of their homes, in their neighbourhood... It's also important to stress that some programmes still enjoy enviable success, such as sports (the Football World Cup, American football, the Roland Garros tournament, the *Tour de France*, the *Giro* in Italy and the *Vuelta* in Spain, Canadian hockey), reality shows and popular series such as *Lost*, *Six Feet Under* or *Sex in the City*. Various alternative media such

as YouTube and blogs replace, by 80%, the content of the so-called traditional media. It's as if the public has never seen so many images produced by television, but **away from the small screen...**

But most media analysts still believe that the traditional media — especially general interest television — are doomed in the medium term. As the North American author Bob Garfield⁴ claims, "after records, newspapers and magazines, before books and the radio, television as we know it will disappear. The music industry has been the first to suffer because of iPod and MP3 files. Newspapers are in the eye of the storm now and are suffering greatly". Then, on the list of victims, comes magazines and, behind them, radio. In America, television viewers have decreased annually by 2% for the last ten years and advertising revenue on the main American channels has fallen by 15% this year".

What are the causes of this disaster? Everyone has their own theory, but all arrive at the same conclusions:

- The **digital revolution** allows the translation of all data into

a standard format, be they images, videos or films, sounds, texts and software, and makes it possible to process, combine, update and transmit all information at a lower cost and higher speed.

- The development of the internet, with its false free culture, allows everyone to share new media products, which leads to us witnessing a **globalisation of cultural industries**. Television is fragmented into multiple channels – 100, 200 or 300 – and, because of globalisation, each country brings its own share of channels to the grand banquet of images. To my knowledge, there are over 300 channels in the Middle East. How many general, local, themed, religious, sporting and film channels are offered on cable and satellite networks in the United States? Certainly more than 500. In Quebec, television viewers who subscribe to a cable or satellite system can access 100 different programmes, apart from radio broadcasts and video on demand.

- The multiplication of broadcasting platforms: the proliferation of audiovisual viewing platforms (television screens, PCs, mobile telephones, DVDs, iPods and iPads) and access to unregulated broadcasters (YouTube, Blogosphere, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) suggests that television content will migrate away from the small screen.

- The availability of new, miniature and easy-to-use production gadgets (video cameras, mobile telephones with cameras, editing software), publication tools (YouTube, MySpace, Flickr, Twitter, Blogosphere) and word and image audiovisual processing has enabled a certain degree of democratisation of production methods. Increasingly, young people know how to produce audiovisual content for their own purposes or distribution amongst friends, interest groups or for wider broadcasting.

- Since the advent of the internet, the technical ease of piracy has spread the **false free culture**. We may think that the traditional economic model of television is no longer valid, given the fragmentation of advertising in a world in which there are plenty of specialist television channels and radio stations, and, most importantly, the shift of an ever-increasing part of this range towards the internet and the loss of advertising revenue when going from one medium to another.⁵ On the other hand, what further diminishes the general television audience is the proliferation and popularity of channels (sports, news, films, culture, cookery, etc., on cable or satellite), which do not have the costs of general programming, with public service obligations.⁶

- The change in consumer habits of cultural products means that television viewers have the freedom to choose (the public no longer has to depend on a network, a schedule or a format) and they want to participate in the production of messages (public journalism, self-production, participative internet, social media). If a young person, aged 10 to 25, is a 'telenaut',⁷ they are someone who navigates between television, the internet and videogames. If they are older they can probably afford a large, high-definition digital screen to watch reruns of films or series like *Fortier*, *Desperate Housewives* or *Lost*. In reality,

telenauts always watch television, but in a distracted manner, while talking to friends, answering emails or playing *Sims 2* (if a girl) or, if a competitive boy, and into the latest crazes, he plays *World of Warcraft*, a multi-player game online. Television programmes are too slow for him, he wants to be proactive. It must be said: television has become a secondary medium; the computer, with its many facilities for expression, communication and production, takes pride of place.

In summary, as Olivier Ezratty⁸ says: television is the last step in media that is passing through the sieve of digital convergence. And yet we are already halfway there. Television is becoming multiform: from low resolution on mobiles to PCs, to high definition on large screens; from the big channels to amateur television to YouTube; from family television to personalised television you can watch anywhere, on any object, as well as the multiple input channels (cable, satellite, terrestrial, internet) and output (Wi-Fi, PC, mobiles, screens, internet). Consumers receive a veritable avalanche of free and pay-per-view programmes.

The necessary adaptation of today's television

The media are trying, intermittently, to adapt themselves to the digital world in which business models that have helped them to develop are no longer sustainable. Although, in these times of recession, the economic viability of different products offered to the public is surprising, this should not overshadow the fundamental debate: generalist television continues to be, by a long shot, the main producer of audiovisual content. But as the saying goes, we mustn't throw out the baby with the bathwater! What can we replace television with, since it's the main production source for media content, such as the newspapers, which provide us with largely original information? Generally, all the social networks are parasites that happily plagiarise what newspapers or television produce; in fact, they react to events, rather than inform or explain.⁹ This is evident with Twitter, which is a "great sounding box" of daily rumours, currently known as *buzz*.¹⁰

Everyone talks about headlines and reports in the press and on television, morning to night, and we all refer to images we have seen on television, especially on generalist television. As is shown by an American study carried out by the PEW Foundation, 80% of what is on YouTube has been copied from television broadcasts: new television content available on the internet, such as web-series,¹¹ is only profitable if they are bought by the large networks.

How does Radio Canada manage?:

1. Multi-broadcasting solution: images migrate from the small screen to a variety of supports, travelling through networks in new formats (web-series), through the internet or 3G telephone (such as iPod and iPad) or recorded on DVD. If television literally implodes, and increasingly loses its audiences, it bursts, on the other hand spreading images in our environ-

ment: this is its tragedy in the economic territory. The solution: to implement multimedia strategies in the respective media groups, which will help them recuperate all the production benefits by products being reproduced on television, radio, newspapers and magazines, on the internet, telephone, etc. Radio Canada¹² is improving its integration in three areas: television, radio and the internet.

2. The benefits of convergence: TVA, the private generalist Francophone channel, has created a powerful media group called the Québecor group: general and themed television, distributed by cable, telephone (fixed and mobile), news websites, newspapers, magazines, etc. According to the group's president, Pierre-Karl Péladeau: "Convergence is essentially a term used to describe a process which is used in all industries: integration. The term *convergence* has been in vogue for the past two years. Before, we spoke of synergy. It's the same."¹³ "In the past, we defended concentration; now it's time to integrate. Different times mean different ways. Content circulates from one medium to another... and the profits follow! It's the miracle recipe of reality television, which is financed by reuniting various media around the small screen, such as the internet, mobile phone, blogs, etc., and it knows, moreover, how to exploit its windows of opportunity, capitalising on the investment of the media empire which produces it: revenue that comes from websites, voting via the mobile network or cable subscriptions, from newspaper and magazine coverage, from the sale of products (records, CDs, shows, adverts of all kinds), etc.

3. Financial contribution of distributors: nowadays, in Canada, cable suppliers (cable and satellite companies) invest part of their clients' subscriptions but only for pay channels (\$1 or \$2 per subscriber, per theme, per themed channel). The CRTC¹⁴ has so far refused to do the same for conventional television. Although it will (eventually) allow private networks (TVA, Canwest, Global) to do so, this has not been the case with Radio Canada. Difficult to understand, right? However, the income gap between the generalist and specialist channels is growing ever wider. "According to last week's figures published by CRTC, the income of companies that distribute the signal (by cable or satellite) increased by \$1,100 million from the previous year (2009) to reach \$11,400 million. The profit margin (before tax) is, approximately, 25%, from a total of \$2,300 million in 2009. During the same period, the total income from private channels fell by around 8%, below \$2 million. The reduction in operating costs has not resulted in profits and these companies finally lost \$116 million in 2009."¹⁵

Television nowadays is third generation

To say that television has evolved in the last fifty years is nothing new. In line with Umberto Eco, researchers speak of 'arquetelevisión',¹⁶ 'neotelevisión'¹⁷ and 'post-television', or,

in fewer words, of television for grandparents, parents and, nowadays, children.

The beginnings of television (called *director television*) has resulted in the evolution of mindsets and is, undoubtedly, one of the most distinguishing aspects which in Quebec is called *the silent revolution* of the 1960s (which involved the secularisation of society, the creation of a public function and the unionisation of workers, the development of important cultural institutions such as Radio Canada, the resurgence of an independent newspaper such as *Le Devoir* and the sexual revolution), which helped to present the rural world (in a fictitious series that lasted twenty years: *Un homme et son péché*, for example) to city dwellers, and for city dwellers to people living in rural areas (*La plouffe*, another important soap opera);¹⁸ on a linguistic level, it has slowly removed regional accents and peculiarities; on a political scale it has "freed the mouths" (social and working revolution) and the heart (sexual revolution); in cultural terms, it has put the arts, painting and singing under the spotlight. We remember how grandmothers may have been surprised and, still, remain stupefied at seeing soap opera actors and actresses passionately kissing: it was like turning the light on for scenes that only normally happen in the bedroom. What a surprise it was to the people in the community television area of Saint-Félicien, in 1960, when they saw images of their main street on their screens; they not only saw the Eiffel Tower or the White House, they were also part of the world to watch and love; it was like having a mirror in front of them to see...

Above all, television in the 1980s and 1990s was, according to Dominique Mehl's¹⁹ nice turn of phrase, television of intimacy and family life, and allowed for the evolution of customs and the amicable settlement of familiar conflicts. In Janette Bertrand's soap operas (*Quelle famille*, *Grand-papa*) or Lise Payette's (*La bonne aventure*, *Des dames de coeur*, *Les machos*), many dramas have been avoided in relationships between parents and children, men and women, *L'amour avec un grand A*, feminine and feminist revolution, the questioning of religious taboos, homosexuality...

In its third generation, television has a more global perspective in which the problems that are dealt with include drugs, prostitution, marital infidelity, street-gang violence, ethnicity; the objective is more difficult, action is faster, in the style of action cinema: it is *Desperate Housewives* or *Beautés désespérées* (Quebec), *Lost* in the United States or *Perdus* in Quebec, *24*, *Fortier*, etc. But television nowadays is, above all, **television that cares about people**, that tells them how to take care of their health, how they can eat well, how to look after their children, how to live as a couple, how to lose weight, how to save the planet, how to travel. In short, how to be happy. In an era of insecurity, because of climate change, terrorist attacks, pandemics, environmental risks, diseases, traffic accidents, tobacco, alcohol or drug poisoning, television calms and advises. But if we are a little critical, television does two things at the same time: while it creates serenity it also spreads inse-

curity. It fits together all the pieces in the dreaded pandemic flu virus A (H1N1), the farmers in remote areas of Montana in the USA fear an attack by Al-Qaeda, travellers willingly accept physical examinations on planes just in case... Television is the best self-monitoring device that our post-modern society could apply.

The new face of news

Why is there news through the night, which allows people to go to bed after checking on how the planet is doing? Nowadays news is available all hours of the day and night. Paul Cauchon, from *Le Devoir*, believes that the news world is changing: "Is television news still the star programme of Radio Canada? Its content, maybe. Its traditional broadcasting mode, definitely not. Audience levels are not what they used to be (nor VAT)."²⁰ There are increasingly fewer people watching evening news on the television only to "get the headlines". Why? Because news is everywhere, at anytime and anywhere, on large media news websites, which constantly renew their home pages, to the 24-hour news channels that continue to multiply, to news feeds that circulate by computer (known as RSS), to free newspapers given out on the underground, to radios, etc. But this information is fragmented, divided, in sound bites, as flashes.

For example, in the case of sports news, cable channels have recently appeared with **news briefs**: sports results, but, above all, summaries of matches, notable figures, exploits. Contrary to written information, they bring spectacular images, 30-second videos, impressive tackles, fortunate pick-ups, unexpected shots, incredible car accidents — as sports commentators, we are short of superlatives! Nowadays, the audiovisual sector looks for virtual snapshots that the media can repeat automatically and ad nauseam: the images of the Twin Towers crumbling on 11 September 2001 captured by an amateur, the bird covered in oil during the Gulf War, J. F. Kennedy collapsing in his convertible, Zidane's header... Nowadays, there are millions of targets on the lookout for the supreme or sublime moment. We no longer live in the era of direct culture but in an **instantaneous culture**, which summarises an event in a clip, which stigmatises it. The abolition of duration, the idolatry of eternal time, the spectacular staging — this is how we destroy the continuation of things, transforming all events into different facts, into things that happen by chance, this is how man succumbs to image. There are increasingly more broadcasts (often coming from the United States and from police files themselves) that do nothing but show various spectacular events, unbelievable police chases, arrests that have ended badly or strange or unusual events, images of tornados or natural catastrophes.²¹ We see it, we are surprised, we say we are against it and we carry on as normal. Paraphrasing the title of a popular programme, *Drôles de vidéos!* ('Funny videos'), why would that person act like that, what is the context and what were the circumstances that explain the strange behaviour, is

explanation futile? As Jacques Brel said in his song, *Au suivant...*

Obviously, we say that information is interesting when it is new: as professors of communication say to their students, "dog bites man" is not an interesting piece of news, but "man bites dog" is... The problem is the speed images are projected and the amalgamation between different important events and facts, between so-called 'human interest' stories (the famous 'human interest') and the sociological nature of information. Too much information kills information!

Instant culture

The discovery of a new sociability less limited to the local and national environment of a person but also global, is very much inspired by social networks on the internet, mobile phones and online videogames. Online game players (playing things like *World of Warcraft*, *WoW*) used to be considered antisocial or neurotic, like schizophrenic nerds. They might even invent a new way of living, all together, of contacting each other and sharing a way of living, ultimately in a relatively superficial way, with no real commitment. A kind of being there, living for the moment alongside each other: I am, I exist, because I am talking to you, where are you, what are you doing, what's happening, what's new... A kind of social chatter, "small talk"²² as the Anglo-Saxons say, which hides a profound feeling of solitude, the tragic condition of being isolated and without depth, the painful feeling of not being able to delve into something to see the human condition of a human being in its finiteness. This is the message, both serious and terrified, from a journalist of a popular magazine:

"We are too informed. Over-informed? I have nothing against this, but..."

Now, when I sit with a book and I have read four or five pages, I can't help but look at the computer... There are a dozen new messages. It's obvious I am missing something if I don't read them, I feel displaced... "This is what's misleading. When we are not constantly connected to Twitter or Facebook, we have the sensation of being disconnected and we are scared people will say: "You're not with it; you've been away for two hours!"

Have I turned into a cyber-addict? I think and fear that I have..."²³

Through chat, Twitter or Facebook, we promise nothing, only **being there**; we share together, as adolescents, the desire to console ourselves of the world's insecurity, of things that happen, of the universe that we do not understand, of the disease that stalks us, of the death that comes to us...

In conclusion, we could talk at length about **personal television** that allows individuals to exist in the media, the idea of television being like a mirror that reflects the image of what I am or what I want to be... From the beginning of the 1990s

new television shows have appeared based on the speech of so-called "normal" people: reality shows, confessional programmes, TV forums... In France, these programmes are *Vie privée/vie publique*, *Toute une histoire*, amongst others. The precursor to all these is, without doubt, the gossip press, present in newspapers before.

But today people are going further and further: they reveal cases of incest, rape, physical and moral abuse, of parents abandoning their children, lives lived under the influence of drugs, torture in times of war, etc.; all these vices or deviations that used to be kept secret by families, couples or individuals.

It is fashionable to confess or "to come out of the closet". We talk less and less about homosexuality and transsexuality, since coming out of the closet is becoming more and more of a non-event; this behaviour is considered normal and we only show what's surprising or shocking. We are victims or executioners. It is the regime of "show all – see all"? Transparency is not only the whim of politicians... Television is becoming an open confessional that permits the absolution of all sins through the simple act of confessing in public. Television centred on the self, which feeds confusion between the public and private sphere.

Notes

- 1 J.-P. Lafrance is the author of various books, including three works on television: *La télévision à l'ère d'Internet* (Quebec: Septentrion, August 2009); *Le câble ou l'univers médiatique en mutation* (Montreal: Quebec-America, 1989), and *La télévision, un média en crise* (Montreal: Quebec-America, 1982), a chapter in *Presente y futuro de la televisión digital* [Bustamante, E; Álvarez Monzoncillo, J. M. (ed.), Madrid, 1999], as well as various scientific articles: "El fenómeno telenauta o la convergencia televisión/computadora entre los jóvenes". In: *Diálogos*. Lima, 2005; "La televisión y su público, un contrato en proceso de renegociación permanente". In: *TELOS*. Madrid (September–November 1994); "Le paradoxe canadien, expériences de communication participative". In: *Hermès*. Paris, Autumn 2008, reproduced in *Essentiels d'Hermès*, 2010.
- 2 MISSIKA, J. L. *La fin de la télévision*. Paris: Seuil, 2006.
- 3 MORANDINI, J. M. "Télé: l'implosion, enquête sur un naufrage annoncé". In: *L'Archipel*, November 2007.
- 4 GARFIELD, B. "The Chaos Scenario". Stielstra Publishing, August 2009, also published in *Paperback*.
- 5 Certainly, online advertising increases each month for news websites that belong to the public media channels, but is far from offsetting the losses suffered by these media. In response to this situation, television increases the number of adverts, which carries on contributing to its loss in audiences. Like a dog chasing its own tail.
- 6 According to Paul Cauchon, journalist with *Le Devoir*, the audience of the three largest Quebecois television networks - TVA, Radio Canada and V – always decrease from one year to the next. Cossette Media has calculated that, during the last season in 2009, the combined market share of the three main general networks fell by 13%. In an internal document prepared from BBM surveys for winter and spring 2008, TVA's search service has found that, in spring, the general networks had lost 9% of their audience to themed channels. This loss reached 15% amongst viewers aged 25 to 54 years – the advertisers' target audience. Specialist channels have increased their audience by 19%. In fact the global market share of all specialist channels is now around 40%. For example, everyone knows that RDS (the sports-themed channel) reached record audiences with hockey.
- 7 *Telenaut* is an acronym formed by the contraction of **tele**-vision and **inter-nauts**, created in a research paper entitled: "Télénautes et mobiles; analyse des pratiques communicationnelles des adolescents et des jeunes adultes", carried out under the Professorship of Unesco-Bell at the Université du Québec in Montréal by Pierre Brouillard, Magda Fusaro and J.-P. Lafrance. See J.-P. Lafrance, "Les télénautes, les pratiques mixtes de jeunes en télévision et sur Internet". In: *Réseaux*. Paris, 2005.
- 8 See <http://www.oezratty.net/wordpress/wp-content/WindowsLiveWriter/RapportCES2007>, 26 January 2007.
- 9 A study carried out by research institute PEW showed that 9 out of 10 stories presented to social networks came from traditional sources, which shows that these types of networks are repeating information instead of making it; the micro-blogger monitors political news (if they are a journalist) or personal (if they communicate with their many "young" friends). The PEW is a group of American thinkers (a Washington think tank) that analyses the trends and attitudes of North Americans regarding the media, journalism and the internet. The study mentioned, *How News Happens*, centres on the city of Baltimore (11 January 2010).
- 10 But what is this *buzz*? See the French definition in Wikipedia: *buzz* is a marketing technique which consists, as its name indicates, of making noise about a new product or offer. *Buzz* has grown considerably with the appearance of new information and media technologies. In fact, these types of broadcasting allow the multiple propagation of messages, at high rates and low cost. But the genre's limits lie in its chaotic mode of broadcasting, since *buzz* can be a dangerous broadcasting tool. In fact, consumers are the ones who grab messages and, as often happens with rumours, can change them, divert them, ridicule them or destroy them.
- 11 Web series are mini-series (fiction, TV reality and documentary) lasting approximately five minutes and made by young directors, which are broadcast across information websites on the large networks or even on YouTube. Sometimes they are so popular that large television networks buy them (for example, *Les têtes à claques*) or they are even published for free

(such as *Mère indigne*). There are more and more independent producers that make what the LEDEN laboratory at the Université Paris VIII calls "cross-media", in other words, audiovisual products that can be shown on one media or another, from one format to another, from one time to another. In this way, they are preparing new types of production for the internet or multimedia phone. These mini-series are very common in the United States, Quebec and, to a lesser extent, in France.

- 12 Curiously Radio Canada has maintained its original name, from the 1930s, from the era of radio...
- 13 InfoPresse, special 20 years: *Où en est la convergence*, 2007.
- 14 The Conseil de la Radiotélédiffusion Canadienne (CRTC) is a regulatory body that establishes electronic broadcasting standards in Canada. Overall, the CRTC has a very liberal policy, following the example of the Federal Commission of Communications (FCC) in the United States. It permits many licences for the creation of a multitude of specialised channels that compete with each other. So far it has refused to fix the amount of tax for generalist channels that belong to cable networks.
- 15 Stéphane Baillargeon. *Le Devoir*, 23 March 2010.
- 16 Umberto Eco (1985). "TV: la transparence perdue" (1983). In: *La guerre du faux*. Paris: Grasset.
- 17 Casetti, F.; Odin (1990) "De la paleo- à la néo-télévision". In: *Communications*. No. 51, Télévisions/mutations. Paris: Seuil. On the other hand, Ignacio Ramonet spoke of post-television in "Big brother". In: *Le Monde diplomatique*, June 2001.
- 18 For the people of Quebec, soap operas are like Latin American series. They are numerous and cover all sorts of sociocultural issues; even nowadays they continue to form the basis of television programming.
- 19 Mehl, D. *La télévision de l'intimité*. Paris: Seuil, 1996. See also, "La télévision relationnelle". In: *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*. Vol. 112, 2002.
- 20 Paul Cauchon. *Le Devoir*, June 2008.
- 21 The documentary channel Canal D, specialist in the rar-rar genre: *Histoire de crimes*, *Légendes urbaines*, *Faut le voir*, *Images-choc*, *Un tueur si proche*, *Dossiers justice*, *L'étrange*, *Affaires classées*, *Vidéo-patrouille*, etc.
- 22 "How can you be social or have small talk? How can we be social in nature?, or what we could translate as chatter, chat, such as teenagers' communication that never disconnects... Not to be confused with one of the first programming languages aimed at objects and called Smalltalk!
- 23 Geneviève Borne in the magazine *Clin d'oeil*, June 2009.

IP Syndication: Syndication and the new content distribution model in Catalan local TV networks

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Abstract

The new technological context, new forms of audiovisual uses and the crisis affecting media sector have been decisive factors in the transformation of the model of local television networks in Catalonia. Consequently, content syndication is emerging as an adaptation strategy. This article analyzes the syndicated production model, as well as the structure and new possibilities offered, in terms of transport and exchange of content, by the new IP-architecture of distribution implemented in these networks.

Key words

Local television, audiovisual production, syndication, IP net, media structure.

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Resum

El nou context tecnològic, les noves formes de consum audiovisual i la situació de crisi que afecta el sector dels mitjans de comunicació han estat factors decisius en el procés de transformació del model de les xarxes de televisions locals a Catalunya. En aquest sentit, la sindicació de continguts es perfila com a estratègia d'adaptació de les xarxes a l'escenari actual. En aquest article s'analitza el model de producció sindicada, així com l'estructura i les noves possibilitats que ofereix, quant a transport i intercanvi de continguts, la nova arquitectura IP de distribució d'aquestes xarxes a Catalunya.

Paraules clau

Televisió local, producció audiovisual, sindicació, xarxa IP, estructura dels mitjans.

Introduction

Since the granting of licences for local DTT and the analogue switch-off, Catalan proximity TV has had to face many challenges: the economic crisis, market saturation and difficulties in meeting production and programming commitments being just a few of them.¹ On the other hand, syndicated programming, a phenomenon with years of tradition in Catalan local TV, is an increasingly popular option for local TV stations as it means they can continue to meet their commitments to the territory at the same time as reducing costs. In fact, according to the Catalan Audiovisual Council itself, "content syndication is a formula that enables the system to be efficient and stable" (2009:74), and this was corroborated in 2008 with the emergence of two new private syndication networks (TDI and TVLocal.cat). The public's response has also helped: according to data from the Barometer of Communication and Culture, in 2009 25% of the accumulated audience for all stations in the Local Television Network (XTVL in Catalan) were viewers of syndicated programming. Moreover, 15.1% of the screen time for stations associated with this network corresponds to syndicated programming.²

To a certain extent, this phenomenon of syndicated programming becoming more important in local television might be characterised as institutional isomorphism. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), institutional isomorphism occurs

when several institutions gradually adopt the same way of organising themselves. In the case in point, the proliferation of new private syndication networks over the last few years is typical of this process of isomorphism. There are three mechanisms through which organisational structures tend to adopt similar operational models: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism (*ibid.* 150). In particular, Catalan local television has undergone mimetic isomorphism, occurring especially in situations of uncertainty, such as the current situation for local television, in which the problems faced by institutions have few evident solutions (*ibid.* 151). However, there are also signs of coercive isomorphism, produced when certain organisations apply pressure, formally or informally, on other dependent organisations to adopt certain operational mechanisms. The Catalan audiovisual regulatory authority, the CAC, might have indirectly encouraged Catalan local television stations to adopt the syndication method in light of certain decisions, such as the one to consider this kind of production as original programming (CAC Agreement 34/2008) or the highly favourable statements regarding this organisational model contained in its report entitled *Diagnòstic de la televisió digital terrestre local a Catalunya (setembre-octubre 2009)* [Diagnosis of local digital terrestrial television in Catalonia (September – October 2009)].

Given this situation, this article will analyse those specific traits of syndicated production that make it an option for the

future in order to overcome the challenges currently faced by local television.

The content syndication model

The model's defining features

CAC Agreement 34/2008 (2008:8-9) contains a definition of content syndication, proposed in decision PRE/2804/2005. According to this document, content syndication is "the broadcasting of programmes (especially public service programmes) produced or co-produced by local television stations". Consequently, we can conclude that, in our field, syndicated production is by local television stations and its main aim is to encourage cooperative production between the different local TV stations in Catalonia through the networks they're associated with.

This feature that characterises local television stations is only one of the features included by Enzensberger (1974:43) within the notion of the emancipatory use of the media, among which there were, apart from this collective production, decentralised programming, control by self-managing entities or the fact that each receiver can become a transmitter. In this section we will describe the main features of (syndicated) collective production by the local television stations in Catalonia in order to see how close they are to this emancipatory use of the media. However, this categorisation does not pretend to be exhaustive but is rather the result of our aim to highlight the model's most relevant features, in our opinion.

Decentralisation and autonomy

Most of the networks through which Catalan local television stations share content are characterised by being decentralised, with each of the operators being autonomous. So, although there are organisations (such as the XAL, Comunicàlia or TDI) that in some way act as central nodes for the network, the involvement of the stations that form part of this network depends solely and exclusively on their own wishes, as they decide when they want to broadcast syndicated content and which content they want to broadcast. So there's no hierarchical structure imposing programming on operators. This model is therefore the complete opposite to operators that chain broadcast shared content.³

Numerous authors have highlighted the advantages of decentralised organisation and autonomy in institutions (Ferejohn and Noll 1976; Adame 2003; Scolari 2008). In the case of proximity television stations, it's evident that sharing content through a decentralised system helps operators to take advantage of a wide range of content at a relatively low cost, without this leading to loss of decision-making powers. Consequently, operators are not tied to corporate policies decided in another distant location and therefore continue to be autonomous and able to offer the content they deem to be most suitable for their area. We can therefore distinguish two kinds of advantages pro-

vided by a decentralised operational structure in proximity TV networks: on the one hand, economic advantages that cannot be provided by content syndication through a "disconnection" structure (i.e. programming that contains both national and local slots), and advantages in terms of territory, society and even identity, not offered by a fully centralised structure based entirely on chain programming. Advantages that constitute the *raison d'être* of proximity TV.

Quality

Although not directly, a connection can be made between the existence of content syndication networks for local television stations and the quality of their programmes. Fundamentally for two reasons: firstly, because the fact that suppliers don't have to worry about filling the whole schedule with their own programming means they can devote more effort to producing their programmes, something which, *a priori*, should improve quality. Secondly, because having a syndication network in which all members can access what is produced by the others motivates operators to provide the network with good products. So the existence of *cooperative competition* between operators (part of the revenue they receive depends on the products they provide for syndication being used) impels them to place good products on the network that are chosen by other television stations. Consequently, although a content syndication network is obviously no guarantee per se, it does encourage quality.

On the other hand, if we see the diversity of programmes as a dimension of TV quality (Pujadas 2002), then this is a kind of quality that's encouraged by content syndication: the network encourages each operator to contribute innovative products, different from the rest as, in this way, they have a greater chance of being bought by stations using the network to find content they can't produce themselves. Notwithstanding the fact that Hotelling's law⁴ states that greater competition leads to less diversity in content, this phenomenon would be reversed in the case of syndication and the local TV market as competition becomes cooperation: TV stations are not keen to make the same programmes but rather, thanks to syndication, they can offer their viewers a much wider range of content than if they'd acted completely independently and without competing/cooperating with other stations.

Specialisation and horizontal structure

Very closely related to what we have just mentioned, one of the possible advantages of syndicated programming is that, among the members of the local TV station network, there is a tendency to specialise in content production. In this way, those TV stations with a greater knowledge, experience or skill in certain genres can specialise in producing them. In turn, specialisation of the network's components leads to a greater diversification in the overall content of the syndicated programming, as not all TV operators have to make an effort to produce the same programmes. Redundancies are therefore eliminated and, at the same time, synergies can be generated between different net-

work players. With specialisation (Doyle 2002:27), media companies can enjoy gains in productivity. In this respect, it should be noted that the syndication model, as well as that of the network itself, goes against media's current trend towards vertical integration, proposing a horizontal structure that facilitates such specialisation. A horizontal structure also means that no member needs to be dependent, in terms of programming, on any other member or organisation that runs the network.

Network

The network structure on which content syndication institutions are based in the field of local television means they have some specific characteristics shared with all organisational structures of this type. If we look at the definition given by Requena (1989) of the word *network* as an operational concept in the sphere of social science research, we can see that it's characterised by containing certain players that become central and powerful, depending on the kind of relations they have with the rest. It seems evident that the centrality of a television operator in a content syndication network is closely related to the degree of diversification of its programme exchanges with the rest of the operators, both output and input (i.e. both using content and offering content, reciprocally). A supplier that exchanges content with a lot of channels becomes central because it has a greater capacity to diversity its relations and, consequently, becomes less dependent, at the same time as producing dependency in the rest. If a central operator leaves the network, all the rest are affected. A large part of the content syndication networks operating in Catalonia have some central players that support the network and without whom they would probably disappear. This centrality is mostly related to the economic size of the suppliers, which translates into a greater capacity to produce more and better programmes.

Other network characteristics that are relevant within the context of TV content syndication are: density, which varies according to the number of links existing; directionality (depending on the degree of reciprocity in the exchange, an aspect dealt with at another point in this categorisation) and intensity, which refers to the degree in which the network members' behaviour is influenced by the behaviour of the rest. Evidently, the existing networks vary somewhat in terms of these characteristics, not only between each other but also in themselves over time. In general, networks become dense and intense during periods when exchanges are most frequent.

On the other hand, in a network perceived as an exchange structure, it's important to differentiate between the quantity and quality of these exchanges (Wellman 2000). Probably, in evaluating the contributions of each player within the network, we must always bear in mind the fact that, in addition to the hours of programming syndicated, it's also useful to assess their quality. This has yet to be achieved in most syndication networks, where contributions are evaluated economically only according to the number of hours (although there are some pri-

or requirements that must be met by all syndicated content, especially regarding the idea of public service and proximity). Seeing as, at an abstract level, the structure of syndication clearly fosters higher quality in programmes, it would be interesting to obtain information and evaluations, as this would help to assess the Catalan networks for proximity television.

Contribution – distribution

One of the main aims of syndicated production is to encourage contribution in creating audiovisual production on the part of all members of the local TV association. Participation is therefore encouraged through producing or co-producing, in the same sense as the model of mass self-communication defined by Castells (2009:101), by means of an exchange network of syndicated content and where each television station, like internet users, is both a creator and consumer of content. Syndication therefore supposes the creation of a horizontal network in which everyone contributes and distributes programmes (or fragments of programmes, which are added to the *container programme*) equally, following one of the basic principles in creating local TV networks in Catalonia (especially in the case of the XAL), namely the spirit of cooperation. In addition to distributing programmes, this network also helps to combine, modify and adapt content to the programming schedules of different stations, thereby adding an element of flexibility. The fact that all network members also provides for a local-local connection. However, as a factor we've already mentioned and also stated in the CAC report (2009), one of the aspects that can undermine the syndication model are suppliers that distribute content but that, on the other hand, do not make any contribution. In spite of the differences in terms of economic potential, the desire and spirit of a network is to attempt to avoid such differences.

Added to the contributory aspect of the model, a content syndication network is also a shop window where proximity TV stations display what they produce. This not only leads to a probable improvement in the quality of products, as we have seen, but also in mutual professional enrichment, in the sense that a network becomes a means of learning for all operators and for those working in proximity communication. Moreover, new formats designed specifically for a certain local audience are more likely to be circulated and improved thanks to structures of this kind.

Generating economies of scale

As stated by Doyle (2002:27), economies of scale are present in all media sectors, in spite of the large initial cost of audiovisual productions. Together with diversification and specialisation, we therefore find that syndicated programming, such as the co-productions proposed by the network itself, evidently help to generate economies of scale. In this respect, syndication products can benefit from more resources (economic but also technical and human) and undertake larger projects that boost product quality, especially with the crisis in economic

and investment terms that the sector is currently facing. The fact that syndicated content reaches a larger number of viewers also leads to a reduction in the average production cost (Doyle 2002:14). Realising these economies of scale (Doyle 2002:27) also makes it easier to invest more and to adopt new technologies on the part of media firms. An example of this is the adoption by IP technology networks, which we will analyse later on in this article.

Similarities between the Catalan syndication model and the North American public model

The syndication of programming between local TV stations is a phenomenon characteristic of Catalonia that's difficult to find in such an institutionalised and consolidated state in the rest of Spain or Europe. However, in the words of the CEO of the Xarxa Audiovisual Local (XAL), Marc Melillas,⁵ we can find a guiding principle in how television is organised in the United States, based on networks that serve programmes to local stations and, specifically, those affiliated with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) network. According to Melillas, the pioneers that decided to create the first syndication structures in Catalonia established a model, albeit intuitively, that's quite similar to the public system in the United States, particularly regarding the underlying community-oriented philosophy that can be observed (Prado and de Moragas 2002).

The PBS, set up in 1967 in the United States through the Public Broadcasting Act, is a network of independent local television stations that cooperate with each other and belong to public or private not-for-profit institutions. With the creation of this network, which provides content for its stations, the aim was to ensure the existence of completely non-commercial programming, with a public service mission, on North American TV. In Catalonia, the public local TV networks (XTVL and Comunicàlia) also express this desire to offer public service programmes and justify their existence, and the fact that they receive funds from the administration, precisely because they help to fill a gap of good quality information and entertainment designed for a local audience (López 2005:90 and Guimerà 2007:164). Both in the North American and in the Catalan case, at a local level the network structure to share content is seen as a good mechanism to guarantee the existence of public service television.

The PBS is partly financed by federal funds while, in the Catalan case, the public networks are connected to supra-municipal bodies: the provincial governments. But Catalonia also has private syndication networks such as TDI. On the other hand, as is also happening in Catalonia, among those stations that form part of the PBS, there are a few, those with the biggest budgets, that provide the structure with the greatest number of programmes (Bertrand 1992; Hilmes 2002). The PBS was also the first network to distribute content via satellite, as do most of the Catalan networks, pending the replace-

ment of this technology by IP transmission, as described below. It's important to note that, as an institution, the PBS does not produce anything; it simply limits itself to redistributing programmes to its broadcasters or to offering them products made externally and does not have the capacity to impose schedules. In the words of Michele Hilmes, the Act that set up the PBS aimed "to put production power and funding in the hands of the stations themselves, eschewing a central production facility in favor of dispersement production" (2002:232). In this respect, this is different from some of the Catalan syndication networks, which offer content produced by themselves. However, all these networks explicitly state their desire to respect the independence of their affiliated TV stations, which have the last word regarding the content they want to broadcast and when they want to broadcast it, as has already been mentioned.

One last similarity between the PBS and Catalan syndication networks can be found in how a price is established for syndicated programmes. In the United States, programmes are priced according to the revenue received by the broadcasters that buy them and the number of stations that want to broadcast them (the more stations, the lower the price). In the case of Catalonia, most networks establish prices according to the population census of the demarcation where the TV station that wants to buy the programme operates. In both cases, therefore, the networks adapt their product prices to what the stations can afford, something that highlights their cooperative nature.

Exchanging productions. The benefits of the new IP networks

One of the aspects in which local TV networks have invested most heavily in Catalonia in recent times is in modernising and adapting their content exchange networks to new technologies. Taking into account the improvements occurring over the last few years with regard to the quality of service (QoS) of the TCP/IP networks, these have become one of the technologies with the most projection in the audiovisual sector (one example is TDI, where associated television stations have created a server to hold programmes that can be accessed by all the stations). This technology, among other aspects, further enhances the possibilities of sharing syndicated productions and accentuates some of their characteristics. In this section we will analyse these benefits, closely related to those described before.

Immediacy and flexibility

The possibility of having a platform to circulate content is one of the most important factors in the success of syndicated production. The new communication networks installed in Comunicàlia, XTVL and TDI, with IP technology and symmetrical in terms of uploading/downloading content, mean that this distribution is almost immediate, a basic element in today's television as it competes with media such as the radio and the internet, where immediacy is one of their fundamental charac-

teristics. IP networks mean that contributions can be made as soon as the audiovisual piece has been generated, and they also mean that these pieces can be accessed by the rest of the network's members at the same time, which can download, modify and adapt them to their own programming.

Until very recently, the alternatives to this immediacy were transporting the recordings by land (with an economic cost that's very often higher than that of the production itself) or satellite transmission (uni-directional, from the centre to the periphery), also at a considerable cost. However, circulating programmes via IP networks currently has disadvantages due to connection technology. One of the main drawbacks is the technical impossibility of live connections being distributed to network members in real time and with optimum image quality. For this reason, and in spite of the cost, local TV networks still use satellite transmissions, while waiting for the technology to develop so that this kind of broadcast can be carried out using the same exchange network.

Circulation interface and IP-TV

The IP network also brings the circulation of syndicated production closer to its broadcast via internet-based local TV platforms (XipTV, in the case of XTVL, and the platform being prepared by TDI to offer the entire content from all the TV stations that form part of the network). In this way, syndicated content can be flexibly integrated within the different websites to access local TV programming. Moreover, distributing syndicated pieces using IP technology helps to generate interfaces to manage audiovisual products that are run via browsers and are therefore easy to adapt to the needs of all the members that make up the network. Finally, we should note that this characteristic of the network can facilitate the convergence of the management of both kinds of content distribution and can resolve some of the limitations of TV stations related to digital broadcasting.

As noted by Jenkins (2006:243), this convergence "represents a paradigm shift—a move from medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communication systems, toward multiple ways of accessing media content [...]". One of the important aspects in this respect is the progress made in local television in dialogue and proximity terms, as broadcasting television via the internet means, among other things, that there is greater interaction with the public and even a live dialogue, apart from the advantages related to the nature of the network per se, such as access to an audiovisual stock with all the programmes from the TV stations (Agnola and le Champion 2003:10), which we are not looking at in this article.

Statistical monitoring

Another of the great advantages of IP-TV is that network managers can have specific, detailed information on the uses and broadcasts of different syndicated pieces or productions that

are programmed on the different associated local TV stations, as well as the contributions made by each of the stations to this programming. This knowledge was much more complicated to obtain when programmes were distributed via satellite. It therefore offers the possibility to draw conclusions regarding the circulation of programming among the different network members, which can help to identify indicators of great use in improving the circulation of syndicated production, as well as of those pieces most requested or those members making a greater contribution to the syndicated programming.

Economic benefits

Finally, all these characteristics result in an evident economic benefit for networks of local TV stations. As has already been pointed out, they help to gradually eliminate much more expensive and inaccessible forms of content distribution,⁶ such as land transport and satellite transmission. Compared to these, the ADSL lines used in IP networks are much more economical. This is also a flexible and scalable solution, easily adaptable to any future changes that may be required in order to circulate content.

Conclusions

Seen in the abstract, the model of content syndication among proximity TV stations (a singular phenomenon in Europe, fully implemented in Catalonia and with interesting similarities to the North American PBS model) is an organisational form with huge potential for local TV stations. The network organisation on which the model is based means that the stations that form part of this network are in a better condition to take on the challenges posed by a complex and completely uncertain communicative and economic context, without having to abandon what is their main *raison d'être*: a link with the territory. In this article, we've attempted to show how content syndication, conceived as an experience based on community and on the philosophy of contribution/cooperation, helps local television viewers to enjoy higher quality and more diverse content, at the same time as allowing TV operators to generate economies of scale without losing their powers of decision. Moreover, this model brings local TV networks even closer to the emancipatory use of the media described by Enzensberger.

Nonetheless, this model is also vulnerable to certain abuse. For example, it might lead to some channels taking advantage of the structure to obtain content without providing any, something which highlights the need to establish corrective mechanisms in order to avoid such situations. In fact, on too many occasions there are just a few suppliers (those with the most economic capacity) that support the network with their high contributions of programmes. It would also be advisable to design transparent, homogeneous mechanisms to evaluate the quality and public service value of the programmes syndicated, an issue that is still quite opaque today.

The current syndication model would not make sense, or would not be able to function as it does, if it were not for the use of new technologies that allow the instantaneous circulation of data. The networks implemented at the different local television associations, both public (XTVL and Comunicàlia) and private (TDI), make it possible to share all the material produced or co-produced by associated television stations, as well as enabling convergence between the distribution platforms. Moreover, after investment has been made in IP connection devices, such networks help to noticeably reduce expenditure on connectivity, and make it noticeably more effective, than the technology used up to very recently. What we might call *IP syndication* is therefore one of the great hopes for the future and one of the solutions to ensure the viability of proximity television in Catalonia.

Notes

- 1 For an exhaustive analysis of the challenges facing Catalan local television, see the report entitled *Diagnòstic de la televisió digital terrestre local a Catalunya (setembre - octubre 2009)*, produced by the CAC in 2009.
- 2 One of the main problems in studying programming on Catalan local TV is the lack of public data on the percentages and minutes of syndicated programming. Moreover, when these data can be accessed, they are normally not comparable with those provided by other institutions. One last problem is that there is some confusion regarding the terms, making comparisons even more difficult.
- 3 The chain broadcasting of content consists of establishing identical programming in terms of content for all operators that belong to the same business structure, the result of a unilateral decision by this higher structure. Consequently, suppliers give up their editorial powers. In Catalonia, proximity television chains must broadcast a minimum of original programming and have a legal limit of 25% of weekly broadcasting time for chain programming. Syndicated programming, with prior authorisation from the CAC, is not subject to this limit as it is felt that it preserves the editorial powers of the suppliers and is therefore also original programming. (CAC Agreement 34/2008).
- 4 The Hotelling law, formulated in 1929, states that, in competitive markets, players tend to standardise their products more than in oligopoly markets. Pujadas and Oliva (2007) demonstrated, in a study on the diversity of TV programming in Spain, that the emergence of new chains effectively results in less diversity of genres in the TV system.
- 5 Interview held on 29 March 2010 at the offices of XAL, Barcelona.
- 6 As stated by Frederic Cano, President of Televisions Digitals Independents (TDI), in an interview published at the Observatory of Audiovisual Production (<http://www.upf.edu/depeca/opa/ds4_ent3.htm>).

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Diagnosis of local digital terrestrial television in Catalonia (September - October 2009)

CATALAN AUDIOVISUAL COUNCIL

Abstract

Diagnòstic de la televisió digital terrestre local a Catalunya (setembre – octubre 2009) [Diagnosis of local digital terrestrial television in Catalonia (September-October 2009)], it's a summary of a more extensive study of local digital terrestrial television (local DTT) in Catalonia presented to the Catalan Parliament on 23 October 2009. This study, produced by the Catalan Audiovisual Council, had the aim to get first-hand information about the situation of the sector, in order to guide the actions needed in the future.

This article here contains three sections from the summary document: the methodology conclusions and operational goals; Catalonia's strengths regarding the roll-out of local DTT; its conclusions and operational goals; and the opportunities provided for Catalonia by the implementation of this broadcasting system.

Key words

DTT, television, digital, local, local DTT, multiplex, programme.

Resum

El Diagnòstic de la televisió digital terrestre local a Catalunya (setembre - octubre 2009) és una síntesi d'un estudi més ampli sobre la televisió digital terrestre local (TDT-L) a Catalunya que es va presentar al Parlament el 23 d'octubre de 2009. Aquest estudi, elaborat pel Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya, tenia com a objectiu conèixer de primera mà l'estat del sector, per així poder orientar les actuacions necessàries en un futur.

Aquest article recull tres parts del text presentat al Parlament: la metodologia i les fortaleses de Catalunya davant de la implantació de la TDT-L; les conclusions i els objectius operatius, i les oportunitats que suposa per a Catalunya la implantació d'aquest sistema d'emissió.

Paraules clau

TDT, televisió, digital, local, TDT-L, múltiplex, programa.

Introduction

The survey of local DTT in Catalonia was due to the CAC's desire to know, at first-hand, the state of the sector as a guideline for the actions that need to be taken based on a situation that is, and is expected to be, complex.¹ The survey provides a global and demarcation-based diagnosis based on an analysis of each of the licence holders, both private and public, the situation of the different multiplex channels (MUX), their management, the broadcasting centres assigned and any problems of coverage. Finally, it evaluates the viability of the different suppliers based on the demography, economy and physical landscape of each of the 21 demarcations into which local digital terrestrial television (local DTT) is divided in Catalonia.

The most important part of the data from the survey on local digital terrestrial television in Catalonia comes from the players themselves by means of fieldwork, in which three CAC members took part as well as an academic specialising in this area from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, with the support of the CAC Research Area. For approximately one year, this working group visited the offices and production centres of each local supplier, holding interviews with those in charge, examining the situation on the ground and discussing their projects and concerns. Discussions were also held with other non-local suppliers, syndication networks, signal operators and

institutions related to the development and roll-out of local DTT in Catalonia. However, some of the information obtained is confidential and subject to data protection regulations and consequently cannot be disclosed.

The other part of the data comes from documents provided by the television service providers themselves and also from other surveys and sources of renowned authority. All the available documentation has been analysed on the procedures for granting licences to run programmes, as well as the parameters and technical variables of each demarcation, the corporate needs of local television stations to produce content and other information and statistics on the audiovisual sector in Catalonia in general, also referring to a range of academic literature on this subject.

The study of local digital terrestrial television (local DTT) was presented to the Catalan Parliament on 23 October 2009 through a summary document entitled *Diagnòstic de la televisió digital terrestre local a Catalunya (setembre - octubre 2009)*² [Diagnosis of local digital terrestrial television in Catalonia (September-October 2009)] and this text reproduces the following sections from the report: methodology, Catalonia's strengths regarding the roll-out of local digital terrestrial television (local DTT); its conclusions and operational goals; and, finally, the opportunities that are emerging for Catalonia by implementing this kind of broadcasting system.

Catalonia's strengths regarding the roll-out of DTT

1. Presence of numerous licence holders interested in local television in Catalonia

One of the fundamental features of Local Digital Terrestrial Television (local DTT) in Catalonia is the presence, among licence holders, of a large number of both private and public suppliers that are committed to continuing to offer local television.

In the private case, these are historical suppliers that have been in the sector a long time and have actually chosen local television as their business. These are small firms and local television is their way of life. They have a particular function depending on each case, far from acting at the levels of political economy of the large media groups. These players are a strong point in the switchover to local DTT, because they need it in order to survive.

With regard to public suppliers, those for towns with larger analogue television stations have clearly committed to local DTT. Other towns in the metropolitan area have started to set up consortiums; and large towns without a tradition of public television have decided to start one as a result of this process.

2. Presence of licence holders interested in the model of proximity television

Another strong point is the predisposition of a large proportion of suppliers, which converges with the model that public administrations want to promote: namely proximity television. If this weren't the case, the process would have probably been more conflictive. Public suppliers see the proximity model as a service for citizens and private suppliers have seen a correlation between proximity and good business prospects.

3. Link between suppliers and Catalan multimedia groups

It should be noted that some local DTT licence holders are linked to local and county communication groups, on the one hand, or Catalonia-wide groups on the other. This provides greater business muscle to tackle the various challenges and this multimedia dimension might even grow over the coming months.

4. The sector's tendency to form associations and the existence of Catalan syndication networks

The historically cooperative tradition of Catalan local television is also a strong point for the sector. This explains the existence of both public and private syndication networks, a key asset to meeting licence obligations and also to applying the Catalan local DTT model of proximity.

5. Public administrations sensitive to the sector and involved in the migration

Finally, one strong point for Catalonia in the switchover to local DTT is the historical sensitivity of its administrations towards

local television and its active involvement in the transition process, through dialogue and collaborating with the sector.

Conclusions and operational goals

1. The roll-out of local DTT (September-October 2009): complex and difficult

In September 2009, 18 of the 24 MUX contained in the National Technical Plan for local digital television were in operation. Of the 92 programmes that were meant to start up, only 47 had done so; 51% of the total. Not all the 70 programmes squeezed into the 18 MUX in operation are broadcasting: only 67.1%. These data indicate the complex and difficult situation presented by the roll-out of local DTT in Catalonia.

Three basic requirements need to be met to consider local digital terrestrial television as implemented in a demarcation: the technical projects must be approved; the MUX must be broadcasting, albeit only trial broadcasts, and the television market must be defined, so that we know which suppliers will provide the service and which won't. These three requirements, as of May 2009, were only met by 2 of the 21 demarcations planned.

The data also reveal that local television is behind schedule in terms of the Catalan government's plan for the digital switchover, and that the months prior to the analogue switch-off established by the Spanish government (April 2010) will be particularly intensive in terms of completing many roll-out projects.

In all, therefore, the background situation is one of transition. Both public and private television suppliers have expressed the urgent need to be able to broadcast digitally given the imminent analogue switch-off and the loss of a part of the audience that has already migrated to DTT. The technical conditions to broadcast are being resolved. The Catalan government is directing the digital switchover and the imminent analogue switch-off, and it has carried out actions to extend the coverage initially planned, so that DTT can reach all locations with more than 50 inhabitants. We should bear in mind the situation of suppliers that have to broadcast in local DTT within this context, both public and private.

It will therefore be necessary to continue carrying out actions related to the switchover to digital TV, stressing intensity in this last stage, and to guarantee the additional costs that ensure actual universal coverage under this system becomes well established. As the most specific aspect of broadcasting conditions for the different suppliers, the technical plan authorisation procedure must be improved to ensure that, in our quest for improved efficacy, we do not devalue the outcome of the tender.

2. The situation of suppliers and defining the market in demarcations

The industrial and financial situation in which both public and private suppliers find themselves is crucial to understanding the extent of local DTT roll-out in Catalonia. Far from all of

Table 1. State of the technical projects, of the MUX and of the local DTT programmes and a list of the schedules for digital switch-over and analogue switch-off (September-October 2009)

Demarcation	Technical project	MUX	Programmes broadcasting	Market defined	Synchronic switchover	Switch-off schedule
Balaguer* (Garrigues-Noguera-Pla d'Urgell-Segarra-Urgell)	Provisional approval	Does not broadcast	0/3	No	06/2009	31/12/2009
Barcelona (Barcelonès)	Approved (private)	Broadcasting	8/8	No	2008-2009	03/04/2010
	Approved (public)	Broadcasting			2008-2009	03/04/2010
Blanes* (Selva)	Partial provisional approval	Does not broadcast	1/3	No	06/2009	31/12/2009
Cornellà de Llobregat ** (Baix Llobregat)	Approved (private)	Broadcasting	3/8	No	2008-2009	03/04/2010
	Did not apply (public)	Does not broadcast			2008-2009	03/04/2010
Figueras (Alt Empordà)	Pending approval	Does not broadcast	4/4	No	06/2009	31/12/2009
Girona (Gironès-Pla de l'Estany)	Approved	Broadcasting	2/4	Yes	06/2008	31/12/2009
Granollers (Vallès Oriental)	Pending approval	Does not broadcast	2/4	No	12/2008	30/06/2009 – 03/04/2010
Igualada (Anoia)	Provisional approval	Does not broadcast	0/4	No	12/2008	31/12/2009
Lleida (Segrià)	Provisional approval	Does not broadcast	2/4	No	06/2009	31/12/2009
Manresa (Bages-Berguedà-Solsonès)	Partial provisional approval	Does not broadcast	0/4	No	12/2008	31/12/2009 – 03/04/2010
Mataró (Maresme)	Provisional approval	Broadcasting	4/4	No	12/2008	30/06/2009 – 03/04/2010
Olot (Garrotxa-Ripollès)	Partially approved	Broadcasting	2/4	Yes	12/2009	30/06/2009
Palafugell (Baix Empordà)	Partial provisional approval	Does not broadcast	1/4	No	12/2008	31/12/2009
Reus (Baix Camp-Priorat)	Partial provisional approval	Broadcasting	2/4	No	06/2008	31/12/2009
Sabadell (Vallès Occidental)	Pending approval	Broadcasting	5/8	No	2008-2009	03/04/2010
					2008-2009	03/04/2010
Seu d'Urgell (A.Ribagorça-A.Urgell-Cerdanya-P.Jussà-P.Sobirà)	Provisional approval	Broadcasting	1/4	No	12/2009	03/04/2010
Tarragona (Tarragonès-Conca de Barberà-Alt Camp)	Partially approved	Broadcasting	4/4	No	12/2008	31/12/2009
Tortosa (Baix Ebre-Montsià-Ribera d'Ebre-Terra Alta)	Partial provisional approval	Does not broadcast	0/4	No	12/2009	31/12/2009
Vic (Osona)	Approved	Broadcasting	3/4	No	06/2008	03/04/2010
Vielha e Mijaran* (Val d'Aran)	Provisional approval	Does not broadcast	0/4	No	12/2009	31/12/2009
Vilanova i la Geltrú (A.Penedès-B.Penedès-Garraf)	Partial provisional approval	Broadcasting	3/4	No	06/2008	31/12/2009

* One programme remained void in this demarcation in the tender for the indirect management of the service.

** By means of Agreement 101/2009, of 20 May, of the Plenary of the Catalan Audiovisual Council, the CAC accepted the renouncement made by Uniprex Televisió Digital Terrestre Catalana, SL and consequently terminated the contract to operate the local DTT service which this demarcation was a party to.

Source: authors, based on information gathered via fieldwork, that provided by the General Directorate of Communication and Audiovisual Circulation Services of the Catalan government on the state of the technical projects for local MUX as of October 2009, data from the Department of Culture and the Media [Online] (2007): "Catalunya encendrà la TDT de manera sincrònica i per demarcacions entre el 2008 i el 2009". <<http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/CulturaDepartament/menuitem.cc396c23f1b1adc20985bdb1b0c0e1a0/?vgnnextoid=a73e20d66949b010VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=a73e20d66949b010VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=detail&contentid=caf3732c89f16110VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD>>; and the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade [Online] (2007): "Acuerdo del Consejo de Ministros por el cual se aprueba el Plan Nacional de Transición a la Televisión Digital Terrestre". <http://www.coit.es/pub/ficheros/plan_nacional_de_transicion_a_latdt_1632863b.pdf> [Consulted: November 2010]

them being ready, research has highlighted the fact that there are suppliers with significant deficiencies and, in the case of public suppliers, consortiums that do not intend to start up the programme they have been assigned.

Adding together the programmes currently in operation, 47 were broadcasting as of September 2009, 51% of the 92 possible programmes. Of these, 36 are private and 11 public. The remaining 49% of the programmes are still in an uncertain situation, as their directors have stated that either they don't want to or can't produce television, or there are doubts regarding their sustainability or capacity to start operations. These are 45 programmes, of which 19 are private and 26 public.

Research has shown that, although a supplier may be broadcasting, this does not mean that it has consolidated DTT. So, when evaluating the degree of DTT roll-out, it's not enough to accept that a supplier has access to content and a broadcasting centre, but it must also have a production infrastructure in the demarcation and minimal economic solvency.

In this respect, a system of aid needs to be created for projects to support industrial and financial development, providing a basis for more solid projects.

3. The collegial nature of local DTT: a brake on the roll-out

The fact that local DTT has been organised into demarcations means that its roll-out has a strong collegial component, insofar as some players must come to an agreement to run a programme (councils that have to create a consortium) and everyone (public and private suppliers) must agree on how their joint MUX will be managed, although they often have very different systems and methods. Consequently, a supplier's problems do not only affect the service provider but can also affect the MUX's partners, as has been seen when a supplier has preferred to delay the start of broadcasting or even questions whether it should continue.

One of the factors that make it difficult to start up a MUX is perhaps related to its collegial nature: the start-up of consortiums on the one hand and the joint management of the MUX on the other. The need to clarify which suppliers are prepared to provide television and which are not is an urgent matter in many demarcations.

And formulas need to be established to ensure that these difficulties do not condemn to death those suppliers who, albeit wishing to be viable, cannot take on all or the non-individual parts of the multiple's costs.

4. The cost of transmitting the signal: a big concern

Although the cost of carrying the signal has gone down substantially since the first prices were published in 2005, this item of the budget is, at present, one of the most widespread concerns among Catalan suppliers. In practice, there's only one signal carrier (Abertis) and the absence of any real alternatives has led to a lot of tension in negotiations regarding costs and contract conditions.

If we place the concern for transmission prices within the collegial context of multiple channels, this becomes even more acute when some MUX partners don't broadcast, as the signal cost affects those that do broadcast. This issue is particularly critical in the case of the less populated demarcations and those with a complicated physical geography, as the costs of carrying the signal are very high in relation to the turnover.

To ensure the viability of local DTT, we need to ensure that the prices set by the operator carrying the signal are in line with those established by the CMT [Spanish Telecommunications Market Commission] in the case of operators with particular power in the market, i.e. cost-oriented prices and equal treatment or the principle of non-discrimination. While positions of dominance in the market are always questionable, the abuse of dominance is unacceptable when this can lead to the failure or non-viability of a policy committed to ensuring diversification and pluralism in Catalonia's broadcasting.

On the other hand, the cost of transmitting the signal also rises as a result of the extension of the municipalities planned in the demarcations of the national Plan and with the extension in coverage.

The fact that some demarcations have a rough terrain or low population density also has an effect in this case. On the other hand, extended coverage interests suppliers when broadcasts can be made from centres located in one of the large telecommunications towers in Catalonia, reaching a wider population at the same cost or at a very marginal additional cost.

The measures proposed in point 3 of this section should be able to resolve this problem as well, in addition to adapting state aid according to the difficulties encountered.

5. The crisis as an aggravating factor

The economic crisis makes this situation worse as the specific problems of DTT and the particular situation of each supplier are further damaged by a slump in advertising income and the tightening of government budgets. Advertising spend for private suppliers fell by 20% on average in 2008, and in 2009 some key advertisers (estate agents and car dealers) almost disappeared from the market. Public suppliers have also seen their budgets frozen or cut, as municipalities' revenue falls and, at the same time, they have to meet rising social costs. Although the crisis did not cause the situation affecting local DTT, it has aggravated its problems.

Regarding private suppliers, the measures proposed in point 2 of this section and other similar measures should help to tackle this temporary situation. It would not be good if local proximity television's coincidence with the economic crisis meant, in practice, its disappearance in Catalonia. With regard to public suppliers that have not broadcast in analogue, the citizen channel may be a provisional solution until budgets allow conventional broadcasts to be started up.

6. Some key players in the roll-out: suppliers determined to provide television

The collegial nature of the signal carrier system for local DTT and the existence of suppliers encountering problems in carrying out their projects might be leading some MUX up a blind alley. Given this context of limitations, the existence of a group of 36 private suppliers and 11 public that are determined to carry on with 47 local DTT programmes and to switch over to digital must be considered as one of the key factors in the process.

These are the players that promote the MUX where they are located and usually direct its start-up, as they believe they must begin digital broadcasts as soon as possible so as not to fall behind in the changeover. Quite often, they even act as a kind of pioneer and, so as not to depend on the more delayed situation of other suppliers, they sometimes set up the MUX alone or only with a part of the planned suppliers.

In the case of private suppliers, most are historical, having been in the sector for a long time and have actually taken up local broadcasting as their chosen business. These are small businesses that don't speculate with their county-based companies or multimedia groups that need television in order to be reference media players in their territory. In the case of public suppliers, most come from a tradition of analogue television, with the exception of a few that are interested in the new kind of public television that allows them to produce proximity programmes in their demarcations.

Within such a complex context, the existence of these suppliers must be considered as a strong point of Catalan local DTT, as they seem aimed at playing a key role in their demarcations and leading its roll-out in Catalonia.

It must be clear that these players need maximum institutional support, guaranteeing the proximity model and the desire to provide a public service.

7. Opportunities to develop what public local television can offer

There are two aspects to public local television during the digital switchover. The crisis, if we focus on those projects that finally come to fruition; and new opportunities, if we focus on the achievements of those that are broadcasting and the role they play in providing public service content.

Public local television is not undergoing a widespread crisis because there are many examples that appear to be dynamic and have strong leadership. In addition to the public local programmes that have been in operation up to now, new ones are also appearing in zones where there weren't any before, boosting economic activity and creating jobs. On the other hand, when any municipality from a consortium has an analogue television station in operation, new synergies are created with other municipalities between technical and human resources that were previously unrelated. The very fact that new councils are joining those that already produce television also makes it possible to improve available resources compared with those allocated to analogue broadcasts.

One of the most relevant facts obtained regarding public television is that those consortiums that manage to survive appear to be related to another phenomenon that local DTT helps to develop: the creation of local audiovisual clusters. Many of these projects, moreover, are related to different Catalan universities and some professional training centres. The aim is to create synergies between research and education in communication and telecommunications engineering, on the one hand, and the production and broadcasting of audiovisuals on the other. In fact, one thing confirmed by this study is that most of the public programmes being carried out in Catalonia appear to be related to projects that go way beyond local DTT per se.

This model of new industries needs to be promoted from all levels and linked to the quinary sector, related to education, new technologies, cultural industries and quality tourism.

8. Changing the size of public local television

In quantitative terms we can say that the relative presence of public local television in Catalonia is shrinking. At the end of the 1990s, this kind of television accounted for 50% of the sector, afterwards going down to 40% by the middle of 2000 and it seems possible that local DTT may even account for less than 25% of the existing supply if the current trend continues. This might imbalance the communication system, because public television is the only one to guarantee public service content and the standardised presence of Catalan. Some of the current municipal television stations are about to disappear as they belong to consortiums that are not in any condition to start up their television service. There are many reasons for this situation and a large number of these result from several municipalities having to share the same programme and set up a consortium to manage it, and the inherent difficulties. Political dynamics, differences between populations and historical rivalries are obstacles that come to light when attempting to define the complex kind of organisation required. And there is the added difficulty of the current economic crisis, with expected reductions in municipal revenue and priorities being redefined by councils.

Certainly this situation might change in the medium term as the overall situation improves and becomes a more favourable context for these projects to function. In any case, public space must be reserved in order to guarantee pluralism and diversity in the television provided.

9. Local television is proximity television

Act 22/2005, of 29 December on audiovisual communication in Catalonia (the LCA) defines local television as proximity television and, as such, it is "aimed at meeting the needs for information, communication and participation in society of the local communities comprised within the specific demarcation in question" (point *h* of article 1). The research carried out confirms the validity of this proximity television model. We can state that proximity is competitive at a local level and that it effectively complements what is provided by general television covering the autonomous community or country.

The economic viability of proximity television is therefore based on its specific nature and the fact that it complements the needs of the audience it's aimed at. This means it can attract advertising revenue in the municipalities where it's broadcast, which make up its own delimited market. However, proximity is a condition that is necessary but not enough, *per se*, to ensure viability. Public resources are also required for these television stations to be viable and, in turn, help to reinforce their profile of proximity. For this reason, those suppliers that are more closely related to the territory and its institutions are the most viable in terms of private television business.

On the other hand, television channels linked to big networks, with a low proportion of proximity content, have experienced serious problems of viability, possibly because, at a local level, they cannot hope to compete with autonomous community or state television stations that have a lot more resources and a much bigger market, and in particular because the audience expects local television to provide information, interviews and reports dealing with their most immediate environment.

In general terms, it can be said that, within the current context of economic crisis and low advertising spend, the picture painted by Catalan private television is a highly vulnerable one in general.

The measures mentioned so far can help to overcome this situation. In any case, it's necessary to ensure that local television respects its function of proximity, while applying the current legal framework and interpretative criteria regarding chain programming and content syndication.

10. Private local DTT: a fragile economy based on public subsidies

Historically, Catalan private television has been characterised by a precarious economy made up of small firms with tiny profits, volunteer workers and often operating losses.

The *Informe sobre l'audiovisual a Catalunya 2007*³ [Report on audiovisuals in Catalonia] produced by the CAC (2009) points out that the sector's basic characteristics are low liquidity and high debt. 70% of the revenue for local television stations comes from advertising, almost always local advertisers. The rest of the income, which in some cases is much higher than 30% and even reaches 50%, comes from public funds, be it in the form of subsidies, indirect aid, production contracts, etc. According to the study on the viability of private local television (Generalitat de Catalunya 2006), the resources provided by public sources (councils, provincial and Catalan governments) for private broadcasters in 2005 in Catalonia totalled 8.3 million euros. This amount, compared with the 19.3 million generated by the sector itself, accounts for 43% of the total.

The audiovisual sector therefore has aspects in common with the cultural sector in Catalonia, which benefits from a large amount of public involvement.

With regard to local DTT, the relevant bodies must bear in mind this relation between the public and private system when taking their decisions and establishing communication policies.

The current legal framework needs to be rationalised and adapted in terms of the economic relationship between private suppliers and public authorities to ensure that the principles of transparency are respected and that public funds are allocated to benefit public service.

11. Syndication as a key element in the sustainability of local DTT

The information gathered by the fieldwork suggests that the licence obligations regarding programming are of great concern to the vast majority of suppliers, given the extensive commitments taken on and the awareness of what is required of them.

In fact, the total hours of original programming proposed by the licence holders for the 55 private programmes⁴ entails an annual total of 4,142 hours of this kind of programming, with an average of 75.3 hours a week per licence holder, which have legal commitments from the tender; more than double the number of hours required by the legal minimums.

The interpretative criteria drawn up by the CAC in 2008 contain the requirements for syndicated production to be counted as original programming, so that it can be used to comply with the minimum of 4 hours a day and 32 hours a week for this kind of programming, and logically also for the additional hours a supplier must comply with depending on the contractual commitments taken out at the time of being granted the licence.⁵ This point is vital to the sustainability of local DTT, and the syndication of content is presented as a formula that helps to ensure the system is efficient and stable. These possibilities open up a considerable area for development for those suppliers that wish to use syndication, which is actually quite widespread among Catalan local DTT. There is no supplier that does not form part of at least one of the content syndication networks in Catalonia. Moreover, the appearance of two private networks in 2008 and the diversification of the two public ones (XAL, specialising in public suppliers, and Comunicàlia, aimed at private ones) must be considered as an opportunity for local DTT to develop, since this means that more programmes can be accessed and these can be more diversified. Nonetheless, we must remember that some suppliers may use a lot of syndicated content but don't provide any of their own content, something which could harm the model and which is one of the main challenges facing content syndication networks: ensuring that all suppliers play an active part in producing syndicated content.

The existence of support networks for proximity complete the specific Catalan model and help to sustain the system. Institutional aid must be maintained.

12. Overlapping between demarcations

Overlapping between demarcations, either due to overlapping coverage or to economic or demographic reasons, is a reality that cannot be ignored, as this makes up a different market to the one defined on paper in the national Plan. The authorisation of broadcasting centres outside the demarcation itself, so

that the signal can be broadcast more effectively, has led to such overlaps. Reasons of a historical and social nature, as well as the distribution of the population and even the physical geography of the area are in addition to the fact that demarcations are not sealed areas and there are different ways in which they can overlap. In some demarcations this is not a problem, as these connections are consistent with their demographics and help economic viability. This is therefore an aspect that must be taken into account in the actions carried out by the CAC and the government related to those suppliers operating in these overlapping areas. This is the context, for example, that will have to be taken into account in authorisations of the percentage of syndicated production or in the decisions concerning whether void licences should be filled.

In any case, in order to ensure the existing demarcations are rational and for greater transparency and objectivity, a legal reform might have to be undertaken so that the CAC can exceptionally authorise a larger percentage of chain broadcasts by those suppliers that broadcast in adjacent demarcations when wide zones of coverage are shared, there is a clear economic or demographic connection or for reasons of particular difficulty (terrain, low population), while preserving proximity within the context of the principles governing the corresponding licence tender.

13. The specific case of the metropolitan area

The demarcations of Barcelona, Cornellà de Llobregat and Sabadell have, as a common denominator, two MUX each and numerous elements linking them. They make up a fundamental part of what is called the Metropolitan Area.

Three of the four single municipality public suppliers (Barcelona, Badalona, l'Hospitalet del Llobregat) were already broadcasting in analogue and have switched over to DTT without any noticeable problems. However, the public suppliers that have organised themselves into consortiums have had more problems.

Paradoxically, and although these are, theoretically, the three most viable demarcations, they are also the ones with the most problems in terms of private suppliers finding their niche and producing proximity television. Neither was chain broadcasting a solution, in spite of belonging to large media groups in Spain. These are precisely the ones that have suffered an evident crisis, with one licence being returned for the Cornellà de Llobregat demarcation and a further two suppliers with licences in Barcelona, Cornellà de Llobregat and Granollers rethinking their business. The remaining private suppliers vary in terms of their situation and it is difficult to make predictions. For the moment, those that have based their business on proximity are managing to survive.

The different outcomes for different suppliers, added to the partial overlapping of coverage due to the authorisation of the Collserola broadcasting centre for Cornellà de Llobregat, might considerably alter the map of local DTT planned for the demarcations.

We therefore need to extensively rethink the map of channels for the metropolitan area, taking into account the specific nature of each of the demarcations it contains, the overlapping between them and the economic, political and social viability of each multiplex.

14. The viability of the local DTT sector as a whole

There are two relatively widespread impressions concerning local DTT: that Catalonia cannot economically support 92 local television stations and that there are demarcations with too small a population to be sustainable. The data back up these impressions and it certainly seems that the private local television sector is a small business that is encountering problems in switching over to and consolidating local DTT. There are two facts that point towards this. On the one hand, only 46 programmes had been started up before the analogue switch-off; and, on the other, public aid continues to be one of the main sources of funding.

In any case, we must note that, as from 2007, a series of political decisions have been taken that have made it possible for more players to become viable. To start with, the possibility that syndicated production become the ideal formula to ensure compliance with licence obligations, based on criteria defined by the CAC. And, finally, the option of the low-cost television model for public programmes which might find, in this system, a way to start up television channels that otherwise would not have seen the light of day. These readjustments to the model might open up a way for a system to exist with somewhat more suppliers than the forty something expected.

Regarding the viability of demarcations and its relation with the number of inhabitants, it would simplify the nature of DTT's unit of organisation if everything were reduced to a question of population density. In other words, effectively, a demarcation is a territory with a specific surface area and a population inside that gives rise to a specific population density. This is the basis on which suppliers need to make their initial economic calculations to see whether the demarcation is sustainable, but these data are not enough. A demarcation is also one or two MUX. It is therefore a telecommunications network (or two) with the corresponding technical broadcasting characteristics. The transmission costs will vary considerably depending on the physical geography of the demarcation, how its population is distributed and the transmission network required to cover this population. So, relating these data with the population, two demarcations with a similar number of inhabitants might have notable differences in terms of viability if one needs a much more complex network than the other.

Four programmes can fit into one MUX. Consequently, a demarcation can also prefigure its audiovisual market. In this respect, a zone might be viable in the sense of being able to economically support two programmes or unviable if four operate there. Or it might also be unviable if only one supplier operates but the telecommunications network is too costly for one

alone. Moreover, we should remember that ownership is a very important factor regarding viability.

But the suppliers' business model is also an important variable for evaluating the viability of each demarcation. Although the proximity model is proving to be the most viable, it is difficult to imagine demarcations with two, three or four television stations providing the same kind of programming. Moreover, we must also look at how extensively the suppliers are integrated within the territory in question and the opportunities open to new licence holders.

In this respect, a dynamic analysis is proposed of the viability of local DTT demarcations in Catalonia which takes into account all these elements: the number of inhabitants and their geographical distribution; the characteristics of the telecommunications network required; the physical geography and overlapping between demarcations; the economic viability of suppliers, and the diversity of the supply, both public and private.

This analysis should help to ensure local DTT suppliers are rational and sustainable, as well as helping to take decisions on whether vacant licences should be filled, authorising chain broadcasting and syndicated production and encouraging and supporting public and private stations that provide proximity television. It must ultimately be the inspiration for the goals to be pursued and the measures to be carried out over the coming months to consolidate local DTT.

Opportunities for Catalonia provided by the DTT roll-out

1. Opportunity to regulate part of the local audiovisual sector from the analogue era

When the process to roll out local DTT was started in 2004, one of the recurring statements on the part of the sector and Catalan administrations was that it would lead to the full regulation and legal recognition of Catalan local television.

2. Consolidation of supra-municipal multimedia groups

One of the evident aims of the private local DTT tender held in Catalonia was to help to create and reinforce Catalan multimedia groups through licensing.

3. Opportunity to reinforce the local DTT sector

Another objective of the local DTT licensing process in Catalonia was to help establish a competitive and economically sustainable local audiovisual sector.

4. Emergence and consolidation of content syndication networks

Within the context of rolling out DTT, public and private television networks have appeared that focus on the (co)production of content of a syndicated nature. These new formations must be seen as a product of the new requirements imposed by DTT but also as an opportunity to grow and consolidate a small production industry linked to Catalan local private television stations.

5. Diversification of the syndication networks' content

The emergence of two private networks and the diversification of public result in another opportunity when both processes come together. On the one hand, the volume of content that can be syndicated increases compared with previous years. On the other, the fact that there are different syndication networks in terms of origin and nature can lead to more plurality in this syndicated content.

6. An indirect opportunity: the emergence of multimedia proximity networks

There are sector players that have announced they are organising networks and collaboration agreements that go beyond television. In fact, they want to take advantage of syndicating television content and the multimedia dimension of the players involved in the project to set up multimedia platforms that make the most of the content and experience in managing radio, printed and online media.

7. Creation and strengthening of the local public audiovisual sector

New public television channels are appearing in areas without a tradition of public television. Different municipalities with public analogue television stations getting together and forming a consortium also creates synergies between technical and human resources that were not previously related.

8. Appearance of local audiovisual clusters and synergies with universities

The emergence of greater public supply and the consolidation of existing supply are related to another phenomenon that local DTT is helping to develop in Catalonia: the creation of local audiovisual clusters in various Catalan locations. Moreover, many of these projects are linked to different Catalan universities. The aim is to create synergies between academia and audiovisual production.

Notes

- 1 The legal framework for the technical Plan for local digital television that affects Catalonia is contained in Royal Decree 439/2004, of 12 March, subsequently amended by Royal Decree 2268/2004, of 3 December. In Catalonia 21 demarcations and 24 multiplexes (with 4 programmes each) are planned. Every demarcation has 1 MUX except Barcelona, Cornellà de Llobregat and Sabadell, with 2 MUX. On the other hand, of 96 programmes, the Catalan Government reserved 37 for public management and 59 for private broadcasters.
- 2 CONSELL DE L'AUDIOVISUAL DE CATALUNYA. *Diagnòstic de la televisió digital terrestre local a Catalunya (setembre - octubre 2009)*. Barcelona: CAC, 2009 [Online]:
<http://www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/recerca/estudis_recerca/Diagnostic_TDTLCat_231009.pdf> [Consulted: October 2010]
- 3 CONSELL DE L'AUDIOVISUAL DE CATALUNYA. *Informe sobre l'audiovisual a Catalunya 2007*. [Online]
<http://www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/recerca/altres/Informe_sector_2007.pdf> [Consulted: October 2010]
- 4 Uniprex Televisió Digital Terrestre Catalana, SLU is not counted, which gave up its licence (Agreement 101/2009, of 20 May, of the Plenary of the Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya, terminating the contract to operate the local DTT service for which it had a licence).
- 5 Point 4 of the conclusions from the document *Criteris d'interpretació de les obligacions que integren el règim dels prestadors del servei de televisió digital terrestre d'àmbit local en matèria de programació original, producció pròpia, emissió en cadena i sindicació de continguts*.

Cinema and prostitution: how prostitution is interpreted in cinematographic fiction

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Abstract

Prostitutes and prostitution have been widely represented in cinematographic narrative since the early days of cinema. Speaking about prostitution is a way of reflecting on human sexuality and how this dimension of human life has evolved from the beginning of the 20th century until now. This article is a summary of research currently underway into prostitution in the cinema, analysing the figure of the prostitute in more than 200 films, with a chapter that also tackles male prostitution and their similarities and differences.

Key words

Prostitution, cinema, sexuality, male prostitution.

Resum

La qüestió de la prostitució i la figura de la prostituta han estat un recurs àmpliament utilitzat en la ficció cinematogràfica des dels inicis del cinema. Parlar de la prostitució és, d'altra banda, reflexionar sobre la representació de la sexualitat i l'evolució que ha experimentat aquesta dimensió de la vida humana des de principis del segle xx fins a l'actualitat. Aquest article és un resum d'un treball de recerca en curs sobre el sexe de pagament al cinema que analitza la figura de la prostituta en més de 200 pel·lícules, amb un capítol en què també s'aborda la prostitució masculina i les similituds i les diferències entre totes dues.

Paraules clau

Prostitució, cine, sexualitat, prostitució masculina.

1. Introduction

If there is a fundamental female role in the history of cinema it's that of the prostitute. It must be admitted that, as an element of fiction, the life of a woman who, to coin a phrase from the past, is "decent" is much less interesting than the play provided by a whore. If the most controversial and stimulating aspect of human life is sexuality, what interest is there in women for whom this aspect of life has simply been annihilated, albeit leaving out the effects of repression? That's why, if a film director had to include a female character, even in an exclusively "male" film, for the most part he would turn to a prostitute as she could also incorporate all the other roles women have played or can play: mother, wife, friend, nurse, confidante, enemy and object of desire among others.¹

The images produced by the cinema form part of our system of representation and of our collective imaginary; they feed our need to order the world, to give it meaning and explain it. In some way, we think what we think of the different aspects of existence thanks to such powerful mechanisms of reproduction and recreation as fiction in literature, cinema, television, advertising, etc., while fiction also reflects and elaborates on what is suggested by everyday reality. Experiencing fiction always affects how we look at reality and, at the same time, how we look at

reality produces copious interpretations that will indefinitely produce new changes in how we look at it. And so on ad infinitum.

That's why it's important to study the representations that have been made and proposed for the different aspects of society and different models of men and women, because these proposals feed the substrate of our aspirations, longings, desires, hopes, fantasies and urges.

Seeing how cinema has represented the role of the prostitute also reveals how society has constructed the discourse of male and female sexuality, with double standards in terms of morals and judging people's behaviour and, in short, how society preserves its model, which has been called *patriarchy*.

That's why I felt it's appropriate to analyse the different narrative treatments generated by the figure of the prostitute in film. What kinds of prostitutes have been proposed? How have they been represented? What have different directors said about this subject? Are there any differences between the men and women interested in this subject? What positions have they taken regarding prostitution? How has this issue evolved throughout the history of cinema? Has there been any change in how prostitution is represented today? Is the cinematic representation anything like the reality? And what can we say about the representation of male prostitution? Is it the same or different to female prostitution?

All these questions are the ones I have asked on starting this work² (this article is an example from the study), considering that mentalities change when there are discourses that put forward new proposals and new ways of interpreting reality and, at the same time, new proposals arise from the realisation that things change and the same old stereotypes and the same out-of-date arguments can't go on being reproduced to represent existence.

2. Men's fascination with prostitutes

Prostitutes have inspired a huge range of artistic creations, starting with literature. They appear as the main character in many works but also as a secondary or fleeting character, even if only suggested or insinuated. We can see this in *La Celestina* [Tragicomedy of Calisto and Melibea] (1499), *Moll Flanders* (1722), *Manon Lescaut* (1753), created, no less, by Abbé Prévost, indicating that the clergy was already interested in the subject many years ago; *Margarita Gautier*, la *Dama de las Camelias* [the Lady of the Camellias] (1848), *Nana* (1879) and, closer to our own time, in *Pantaleón y las Visitadoras* [Captain Pantoja and the Special Service] (1973) or the inhabitants of *La Casa Verde* [The Green House] (1965) or even *La Cándida Eréndira* [Innocent Eréndira] (1972), exploited by her own, wicked grandmother, or the *Putas Tristes* [Memories of My Melancholy Whores] (2004) that García Márquez chooses for his memoirs.

Why have prostitutes enjoyed such a prestige as a motif or object of artistic creation? I will try to list some of the reasons I believe lie behind this universal male fascination for prostitutes.

I start from a basic premise: patriarchal society has established a basic, impassable frontier between those women who are considered to be decent and dishonest or *vicious* women. That's why credibility or verisimilitude is the first reason for using the figure of the prostitute.

A woman who is considered *honest* cannot embark upon certain adventures nor can she even be in certain places. Her good name and decency would prevent her from doing so, whereas most scenes come under this type. The only women who could undertake any kind of adventure without damaging their virtue were those who had already lost it. Those who had nothing to lose socially, neither a good name to maintain nor appearances to keep up nor modesty to preserve, and who were at the mercy of any scoundrel. It's true that cinema has provided us with some good, decent women who have had adventures (how can we forget the more than puritanical Rose from *African Queen* (1951)) but, in general, if directors had to place a woman in any scene or circumstance, it had to be a woman who was distanced from the concept of decency: a *streetwalker*, a *woman with a doubtful or dark past*, an *easy-living woman*, a *loose woman*, a *woman of ill repute*, a *bad-living woman*, a *woman of easy virtue*, a *prostitute*, a *hooker*, a *slag*, a *cocksucker*...

Names (increasingly more gross as we near the present) that are all applied to these women who were not even called prostitutes. Gloria, played by Elizabeth Taylor in *Una Mujer Marcada* [*Butterfield 8*] (1960) says how impossible it is for a woman to experience passion without being considered a prostitute for doing so. And I don't include here the so-called *femmes fatales*,³ as not all have been prostitutes.

Another of the reasons why men feel attracted by the figure of the prostitute is that, although prostitutes undoubtedly belong to the subordinate sex (women) and, among these, to those who are not respectable (and we should always remember this), I believe that, in a way, they see them as an equal once they can disassociate their sexuality from their feelings, in a similar way, for example, to how the police can admire the cleverness and intelligence of a criminal, although they are on opposite sides of the law.

If, on the one hand, so-called *decent* women must be respected, on the other men have perceived them as inferiors, limited, almost simpletons, always subjects, dependent on the work, on the affection, the consideration of a man and therefore subordinate to the hegemony imposed by them (or, on the other hand, authoritarian, castrating or bad women). Men do not conceive of sex and love as necessarily going hand in hand, and only a prostitute has made this separation explicit. The patriarchal discourse regarding honest women tells us that women cannot separate their feelings from sexuality, that both must be indivisibly united and that it's deviant or perverse to be otherwise. Meanwhile, prostitutes openly challenge this principle and show that it's not true, that sex is one thing and affection another. And men, in this respect and only in this respect, feel they are witnessing a person who feels like them. But, moreover, they are witnessing an equal because they do a deal that is fair, apart from those cases of deceit: how much do I have to pay you to do what I want. So much. OK. In many films, the exchange of money for sex is done naturally. In *Mujer Flambeada* [A Woman in Flames] (1983), the prostitute Yvonne instructs the beginner Eve on prices and attitudes and there's a moment when she says to her "Nada de sexo anal y no pidas más de 500 marcos, se sienten estafados [No anal sex and don't ask for more than 500 marks, they feel swindled]" (500 marks in 1983!). Sera, in *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995), tells the alcoholic Ben, "Por 500 dólares puedes hacer conmigo lo que quieras. Dame por el culo, correrte en mi cara, lo que quieras [For 500 bucks you can do pretty much whatever you want. You can fuck my ass. You can come on my face. Whatever you want to do]". Ben religiously pays her the 500 dollars, even though he doesn't use any of the prerogatives included in the price.

In some films, the client doesn't want to pay the prostitute or robs her but, in general, the financial agreement is represented impeccably. The cinema has provided an infinity of images of this exchange but, merely by taking out the wallet and paying a woman, viewers know that they are witnessing bought sex; if the money is thrown down or screwed up (as in *Canciones de Amor de Lolita's Club*), there's also an added dose of contempt.

If men didn't also need other affective components, such as love, affection, understanding or tenderness, then a relationship with a prostitute would be the ideal one. Woody Allen, in *Desmontando a Harry* [Deconstructing Harry] (1997), says exactly this. "Me encantan las putas. Es lo ideal: pagas y te vienen a casa. Sin tener que hablar de Proust, ni de cine ni de nada [I still love whores. It's ideal. You pay them and they come to the house... and you don't have to discuss Proust or films or anything]". Talking about Proust is obviously an example of Allen's delicacy, because you don't have to even know who Proust is to go with a prostitute, let alone talk about him.

If it were not because they have to share her with other men, contradiction permitted, a prostitute would be the perfect companion. This being able to see woman as prostitute as an equal is possible because a prostitute, in a certain way, does not form part of this female mystery or eternalness that adorned the women of 18th century romanticism. In *Desmontando a Harry*, we can see a revealing scene: an old man is instructing a young man about the use of prostitution and resolves his doubts. "¿Pero no es engañar a tu mujer? [Isn't that cheating on your wife?]", asks the young man, confused. "No, no es engañar. Es una puta. No es lo mismo que tener un lío. Una profesional llega, te unta sus ungüentos y al catre. Le sueltas 50 pavos y adiós muy buenas [No, it's not cheating. She's a hooker. It's not like a love affair... She comes over, rubs on her oils... and into the sack.... Lay half a C-note on her and she's history]". In other words, there is no involvement beyond coitus or screwing, in contemporary language.

For men, a prostitute is a woman dispossessed of a soul. I said before that, to a certain extent, a prostitute was an equal, but we must point out that she's an equal insofar as she can separate her sexuality from her feelings and, precisely because of this, she's half the woman, reduced only to her carnality, as it's taken for granted that women cannot disassociate these two things. In fact, prostitutes (and sometimes even women who aren't prostitutes) are often compared with an animal. For example, in *La Diligencia* [Stagecoach], the innkeeper where they are staying laments the loss of his horse more than the loss of his wife. In *Los Vividores* [McCabe and Mrs Miller], John McCabe complains "¿80 dólares por una furcia si por 50 puedo tener un caballo? [80 dollars for a chippy? I can get a goddam horse for 50]". In *Carne Viva* [Prime Cut], they say "carne de vaca, carne de chica, es todo lo mismo" ["cow flesh, girl flesh, it's all the same"]. In *Sin Perdón* [Unforgiven], Alice laments "igual no somos más que putas, pero, por el amor de dios, no somos caballos [maybe we ain't nothing but whores but by God we ain't horses]".

Because of this absence of a soul (especially in the first third of the history we're analysing, from 1930 to 1960, more or less), men feel so desperate and torn up inside when they fall in love with one of them. Then their desperation knows no bounds because they feel the prostitute's able to give herself in body but not in soul, because she doesn't have one.

At other times, love breaks down the barriers and the man falls in love, *forgetting* what she is and, from that moment on, she's his, exclusively. What doesn't normally happen is that the man who's fallen in love doesn't mind if his partner continues with her previous life. In fact, no film of those seen shows this possibility: the prostitute either continues with her previous life (without the man) or gives up that life. She's either a whore or she becomes decent: you can't be a whore and decent at the same time, not in the past and not now.

But men also see prostitutes as their equal in another sense, namely that they keep herself. They're self-sufficient and sufficiently so for them to pay a high price for it: the disdain of society. In their heart of hearts, men feel that *honest* women somehow represent a burden they had to bear, as they weren't able to support themselves. Naturally, all these obligations entailed some benefits: the woman, in exchange, looked after the man, was always at his side, "gave" him children that ensured his heritage would live on, if he had any, or satisfied his vanity and, at times, even really loved him.

He had sex when he wanted it, although always limited because of the *consideration* due to the woman's honesty. With a prostitute, all this disappears. And, moreover, his desires can be given free reign because he actually *pays* for it. He doesn't have to behave according to proper custom or keep up appearances and, once the deal is over, he doesn't have to put up with her presence. The prostitute accepts disdain as part of her way of life. The coarse settler Carson, in *Tierra de Pasión* [Red Dust] (1932) says to the sarcastic Vantine "¿Quieres que te eche a bofetadas de aquí? [Want me to throw you out on your ass?]" and, later on, referring to Barbara, the wife of the new surveyor: "Escucha, Vantine, ella es decente, así que mantén la boca cerrada y no te dejes ver [Listen, Vantine, she's decent, so keep your mouth shut and yourself out of the way]". That's why prostitutes also treat men as equals, with cheek, audacity and brazenness, without the air of modesty, decency or submission women usually had to have in front of men and with which they somehow ensured men's gentlemanly behaviour. Sadie Thompson in *Bajo la lluvia* [Rain] (1932), or the 1953 version (*La Bella del Pacífico*) [Miss Sadie Thompson], is lively, natural, daring and treats the soldiers as equals, while the decent woman keep their distance, scandalised: "No le hables, es una descarada [Don't talk to her, she's shameless]".

Prostitutes challenge the need for male exclusivity. When a man falls in love with one of them, he wants to take her away from everything, make her his, have her for himself, enjoy (even humiliate her, if necessary) exclusively. Often, the hero redeems and saves the prostitute and takes her away from a life that's almost always considered undesirable. "Cuando te conocí, eras una mujer de la vida, y ahora vas a convertirte en una esposa y una madre [When I met you, you were a streetwalker, and now you've become a wife and mother]", says Nestor (Jack Lemmon) to *Irma la Dulce* [Irma la Douce], contrasting two antithetic and seemingly irreconcilable themes.

But there are also other reasons for why men feel fascinated by prostitutes: men can express their best and worst feelings with a prostitute. They know they can show their best side even though they don't have to and in spite of the fact that no-one expects them to. A man who treats a hooker well always becomes a hero for her and, in turn, wins over the people watching the film. In *Sin Perdón* [Unforgiven] (1992), this can be seen in the defence of Delilah, the prostitute whose face is cut up.

But, on the other hand, men can also express their most perverse inclinations with prostitutes, insulting or harassing them, subjecting them to practices they wouldn't carry out with their wives or trafficking and making a profit from them, and all this *without feeling guilty or being called to account*. A man can be good or bad with her and will be equally accepted by society and by prostitutes themselves as part of the price they must pay for being on the margins of morality or conventionality of each era. In no film of the 200 analysed is the possibility shown of a beaten up prostitute filing a complaint with the police.

Given all these attributes, it's more than understandable that prostitutes have inspired so many artistic creators, especially men, although it also remains to be seen how this has been approached by the few women that have tackled it. So, let's see how fiction has attempted to reflect the figure of the prostitute.

3. From *La Gofa* to *Pretty Woman*

60 years passed between *La Gofa* [La Chienne] (1931) by Jean Renoir and *Pretty Woman* (1990), and both were women of ill repute, although the first took her man to hell and the second to heaven, to use two fossilised metaphors. The first was born in the first third of the 20th century and *Pretty Woman* almost at the end and between one model and the other the most important change occurred for women in society. In the century since cinema was invented, women are no longer what they once were, not even prostitutes. The greatest silent revolution has occurred in the history of humanity, relations have changed between the sexes, the family, our perception of sexuality and especially the concepts of decency and honesty, which I mentioned at the beginning.

Between *La Chienne* and *Pretty Woman* there's been a complete turnabout in how the same theme is approached: the prostitute against the pretty woman; *prostitute*, an insulting word, a pejorative way of referring to a woman who does not deserve our respect; *pretty woman*, a nice way of restoring dignity to someone who, yesterday, was a *loose* woman and today is a respectable sex worker, although most still carry out their work under conditions of semi-slavery and without a knight in shining armour to look out for them. It's clear in the titles of these films: we can see in the names given to the prostitutes that there's been a big change in how prostitutes are represented in cinema, and I'm not comparing the quality of the films but the

image proposed by the directors and how the prostitutes are represented in them.

In this period of almost 100 years of fictional prostitutes, I have catalogued more than 200 films that, in one way or another, tackle the theme or at least include a character working as a prostitute. Not all the films are included that deal with the theme, of course, especially those filmographies that are less closely related to our cultural environment or perhaps those that have not enjoyed a wide distribution or I have not been able to see. In writing this article, I have included only the 200 most representative films.

I have included a chapter on male prostitution, which I believe provides an important counterpoint and evidence of the changes I have just mentioned. 90% of the films that tackle prostitution refer to female prostitution. In watching these films, the different spaces have also emerged in which the different prostitutes can be placed, especially when prostitution is the main theme. These spaces, easily recognisable, were as follows: a) street prostitution, b) prostitution in a brothel or whorehouse, c) prostitution in clubs or cabarets, d) prostitution in luxury salons or related to high society, i) prostitution in mafia contexts or related to sexual trafficking, f) prostitution in homes, private flats or various erotic places (peep-shows, cabins, erotic phone lines, etc.), this last case to a far lesser extent. We should also differentiate another aspect, namely that of "courtesans or concubines" who, although they have relations with several men, do not exercise prostitution per se, as it's traditionally understood: here we could include the fiction created around Mata Hari, Nana, Margarita Gautier, Lola Montes or films about *geishas*.

Another interesting point has been whether the director is male or female, trying to establish some differences in treatment. In this respect, we can extract an initial quantitative piece of information: of the 200 films seen, only 14 were directed by women, accounting for about 7%, from the oldest *Trotacalles* (1951), by Matilde Landela, to Chantal Akerman, with her *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce* (1975); *Chicas de Nueva York* [Working Girls] (1986), by Lizzie Borden, and *Salaam Bombay* (1988), by Mira Nair, up to the most recent: *En la Puta Vida* [In this Tricky Life] (2001), by Beatriz Flores Silva; *Caos* [Chaos] (2001), by Coline Serreau; *Nathalie X* (2003), by Anne Fontaine; *Los Niños del Barrio Rojo* [Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids] (2004), by Zana Briski and Ross Kaufmann; *El Corazón es Mentiroso* [The Heart is Deceitful Above All Things] (2004), by Asia Argento; *Monster* (2004), by Patty Jenkins; *Yo, Puta* (2004), by Luna; *Alta Sociedad* [Chromophobia] (2005), by Martha Fiennes; *El Día de la Boda* [The Wedding Date] (2005), by Clare Kilner, and finally *La Cliente* [Client] (2009), by Josiane Balasko. I am aware of others, such as *The Red Kimono* (1925), by Dorothy D. Reid; *La Fiancée du Pirate* (1969), by Nelly Kaplan; *Dirty Daughters* (1981), by Dagmar Beiersdorf; *Broken Mirrors* (1984), by Marleen Gorris; *El Chico de la Noche* [Nettoyage à Sec] (1997), by Anne Fontaine, and *À Vendre* (1998), by

Laetitia Mansson, which I have not been able to see. In any case, even if we include these six films, we would have a total of 20 films directed by women out of 200, which would give us 10% of the films that tackle prostitution being directed by women.

By nationality, we can see that the majority (41.5%) are from North America, followed by Spain (14.5%), France (9.5%), Italy (9%), England (5.5%) and, to a lesser degree, Japan (3%), Germany (2.5%) and other countries, many of whose films I have only been able to see one or two. There are more than likely more films that tackle this theme but I have not been able to find more due to the limitations of my research.

4. A job like any other?

Many of the characters realise their job is indecent; all assume and accept that they are despicable, that they're not decent and therefore deserve contempt. This is most evident up to 1960, more or less. Female prostitutes have accepted that they're not like other women ("Si a las chicas decentes no les proponen en matrimonio, imagínate a nosotras [If decent girls don't get marriage proposals, then imagine us]", shouts Gracita Morales in *Maribel y La Extraña Familia* [Maribel and the Strange Family] (1960), but, at heart, they long to be "retired" by someone that loves them. Maribel says to her astonished companions "No sabéis lo maravilloso que es sentirse nueva, diferente, con un novio que te besa la mano con respeto [You don't know how wonderful it is to feel new, different, with a boyfriend who kisses your hand with respect]". They know that their occupation isn't a job like any other, that they can never aspire to be respected as women; it's part of the price they must pay for not being like the others. This situation starts to change around 1960. Ilia in *Nunca en Domingo* [Never on Sunday] (1959) resembles more a sacred vestal virgin than a prostitute and Marie in *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962) is a 22-year-old girl who naturally goes from selling records to being a professional prostitute without being morally sanctioned for it. However, at the end Marie is shot dead, when she's being exchanged for money by some pimps, something which definitely shows that this job is not an occupation like any other, as Marie can't leave prostitution whenever she wants.

Bree Daniels, from *Klute* (1970); Jeanne Dielman (1975), Eva, from *La Mujer Flambeada* (1983); Lauren, de *La Calle de la Media Luna* [Half Moon Street] (1986), and Molly, Diane and Liz, from *Chicas de Nueva York* (1986) see prostitution as a job or activity that doesn't cause them any moral problems or sense of guilt; however, for various reasons they all leave the occupation. This new perception of prostitution enters films of the 1970s and 1980s, when the women's liberation movement started to spread and the idea of decency or indecency started to disappear. *China Blue* (1985) is a strict fashion designer by day and a frenetic prostitute by night. These are women that apparently use their bodies without any hang-ups,

that don't hide their activity and don't feel guilty or inferior because of it. However, there's always the idea that, in actual fact, it's not a job like any other.

As from the 1990s, there's another change in how prostitution is handled. The strict division disappears between *honest* and *loose* women. Honesty or dishonesty is no longer measured socially according to how a woman uses her body and this taxonomic division therefore disappears between good and bad women defined by their sexuality. Men can now have relations with "decent" women without these women being judged negatively because of it. But prostitutes continue to exist in reality and in the cinema. Liz, the cheeky and tender prostitute in *Whore* (1991), explains her turbulent and agitated life as a streetwalker and uses a revealing coin of phrase when reflecting on what men are looking for when they go with prostitutes: "No buscan sexo, buscan venganza [They're not looking for sex, they're looking for revenge]". This phrase, skilfully put considering the outrages to which this likeable woman is subjected, summarises the change in men's attitude when they decide to go with prostitutes. It's no longer a way to release tension, a sexual urge or venting that cannot wait but the objective of a new kind of *fun* enters the scene. The excuse no longer exists that going with a prostitute is the only way for a man to satisfy his sexuality. Fortunately, women are no longer judged if they have sexual relations whenever they want and at least not to the point of being stigmatised for it. Now a prostitute is someone with whom they satisfy other desires or fantasies, for entertainment or fun. It's often decided in a group, as part of a game among friends. With prostitutes they can go further. This is what happens with Liz, picked up by a young man with an angelic face in a van but she then discovers that it's a trick used by a group of young men to rape her, abuse her, ridicule her and throw her from the moving van, more dead than alive.

Judy, the *Girl 6* (1996) who works for an erotic phone line, also uses prostitution, in this case oral and at a distance, as a job like any other, while the doors are closed to her in her chosen profession as an actress. This erotic game, which starts as something that's fun and innocent, will also become a source of suffering when a client forces her to say "Dilo, di: soy una zorra. Sólo soy una puta. No eres nadie, eres menos que nadie [Say it, say 'I'm a bitch. I'm just a whore'. You're no-one. You're less than no-one]". She leaves her job, frightened at just how much she can be emotionally affected by seeing herself as a prostitute. In this phase, the treatment of prostitution often involves harassing and humiliating the woman, because the innocuous sexual act of the past, which could only be carried out by paying, has now become a way of exercising power over another person (be it a woman or, as we will see, sometimes also a man).

Charo and Vanesa from *Días Contados* [Running Out of Time] (1993) are so innocent they don't even realise what they are: "No digas eso. Nosotras no somos prostitutas [Don't say that. We're not prostitutes]", Vanesa answers when Charo says that her mother, when there wasn't any money at home, said that

she would become a whore. "A lo mejor sí que somos putas [Maybe we are whores]", Charo asks herself. However, they're the only ones with any doubts about their profession, because everyone around them does see them as whores. In *Mediterráneo* (1991), we find an extremely beautiful Vassilissa who introduces herself to some soldiers lost on the island to offer her services in a very natural way. "yo trabajo de puta, ¿puede interesar? [I work as a whore. Might interested?]" she says to the soldiers who, after some slight hesitation, do seem to be interested. Of course *Mediterráneo*, although set in the Second World War, was made in 1991 and prostitutes were seen very differently at that time. They were no longer loose or morally sanctioned; rather it was recognised that they performed a social function that was not called into question.

Some more recent films even introduce a certain amount of humour in tackling this theme. Maggie, the unforgettable *Irina Palm* (2007), works as an effective masturbator just like someone who sells bread. She needs money and, overcoming all her initial objections and fears, becomes the best in the club. She never sees herself as a prostitute, nor does she let her son say so when he discovers how his mother has been able to earn so much money to pay for her grandson's medical treatment.

Almost all of them, however, dream or hope to be able to leave the profession at some point. They know it's a temporary job and many are very relieved when they give it up. Eva, from *La Mujer Flambeada*, however, seems to want to continue in the profession, in spite of her boyfriend's opposition. The teacher Lauren Slaughter seems to be going to devote herself to her studies, as she does have professional alternatives. Molly, from *Chicas de Nueva York*, throws down her work dress at the end of the day, as if distancing herself from that claustrophobic flat where she spends so many hours pleasing her clients. Judy, the *Girl 6*, goes to Los Angeles to try to relaunch her acting career. Elisa, from *En la Puta Vida*, dreams of setting up her own hairdresser's in the centre of Montevideo, and when Plácido says to her "Sos una buena puta [You're a good whore]", she replies "Yo no soy puta, trabajo de puta [I'm not a whore, I work as a whore]".

5. The most dangerous profession in the world

The world of prostitution seems to be represented most of the time as hell. A large number of prostitutes are murdered: Lulú from *La Chienne*; María, from *Trotacalles*; Lulu, from *La Caja de Pandora* [Pandora's Box], is murdered by Jack the Ripper; Debby from *Los Sobornados* [The Big Heat] is beaten up from time to time, burned with boiling coffee and finally murdered. The vivacious Gloria, from *Una Mujer Marcada*, dies in a car accident because of speeding. Nadia, from *Rocco y Sus Hermanos* [Rocco and His Brothers] (1960), is first raped and then murdered. Marie, from *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962), is shot dead, without seeking redemption but, in spite of the absence of moral condemnation, cannot escape her tragic end.

In *Peeping Tom* (1960), *La Commare Seca* [The Grim Reaper] (1962), *De la Vida de las Marionetas* [From the Life of the Marionettes] (1980) or even the sugary *Pretty Woman* (1990), even there we have a murdered prostitute at the beginning, just like in *Angel* (1984), where there's a serial killer, or in *El Beso del Dragón* [Kiss of the Dragon] (2001).

In the Spanish film *Bilbao* (1978), a prostitute is kidnapped, drugged, her pubic hair shaved off and, unconscious, she dies and is chopped up in a sausage factory without a second thought. Ana from *Batalla en el Cielo* [Battle in Heaven] (2005) is murdered by her chauffeur, Marcos, without us knowing why. It would be impossible to list all the examples because murdering a prostitute has, in many cases, been the catalyst for a film that, in principle, has nothing to do with this theme, such as *Scoop* (2006), by Woody Allen.

There are others that commit suicide or die from illness, such as Myra in *El Puente de Waterloo* [Waterloo Bridge], Berta in Bubu de Montparnasse and Satine in *Moulin Rouge*; Italia in *No Te Muevas* [Don't Move] is raped, sodomised and almost strangled in each sexual relation and, finally, dies from a back-street abortion. The poor Penélope Cruz, who plays Italia and also the marginalised Gloria in *Alta Sociedad*, dies this time from liver cancer. If they're not killed or they don't die from illness or accident, almost all cinematographic prostitutes are, at some time, beaten up, raped, abused or punched, such as Mary, whose face is carved up with a razor (*Mujer Marcada* [Marked Woman], 1937). They tried to drown Cabiria twice. Sadie Thompson is raped; Stella and Maddalena from *Accattone*; Séverine in *Belle de Jour*; Suzie, in *El Mundo de Suzie Wong* [The World of Suzie Wong]; Anna, in *El Bosque de los Placeres* [Tombolo]; Marie, in *París Bajos Fondos* [Golden Helmet], Bianca, in *La Viaccia* [The Lovemakers]; Hallie, in *La Gata Negra* [Walk on the Wild Side]... They are abused and hit by clients on some occasion. Even sweet Irma is treated horribly by the pimp she had when Nestor (Jack Lemmon) meets her, "Y el que tenía antes era aún peor... [And the one I had before was even worse]" she says. Even the despotic *Eva* (1964) by Joseph Losey, and the bourgeois Séverine, in *Belle de Jour* (1967) are hit at some point in the film. Some farmers cut up Delilah's face in *Sin Perdón* and in *Última Salida, Brooklyn* [Last Exit to Brooklyn], *Whore* and *Leaving Las Vegas* the three starring prostitutes, Tralala, Liz and Sera are respectively beaten up, sodomised and brutally gang banged. Eve's boyfriend (*La Mujer Flambeada*) tries to burn her alive, who is also a gigolo, working both sides. And Bree Daniels in *Klute* is beaten up and doesn't even report it. Even the sweet *Pretty Woman* is hit by Edward Lewis' partner, and she complains: "¿Por qué todos los hombres saben abofetear a una mujer? ¿Les enseñan en el instituto? [How come all men know how to hit a woman? Do they teach them at high school?]" But for malignity, there's that shown by Liz's pimp in *Whore*, who relentlessly looks for her to kill her, if she doesn't give in to his conditions. We also see an atrocious portrait of the world of drugs and the treatment given out to prostitutes in *Mona Lisa*.

Cathy, who Simone is in love with, is trapped by the trafficking networks, who drug her to handle her better, just like a lot of other girls, whom they beat up and abuse, although the clients still say they come out happy and satisfied.

More recently, the theme of the white slave trade and reducing prostitutes to sexual slaves has been included [a theme covered precociously by *Carne Viva* (1972)]. The most atrocious portrait of how a young woman can be sold as a slave is presented by *Lilja 4-Ever* (2002), about a 15-year-old Russian whose only way out, after being raped to a state of extreme weakness, is to jump off a bridge. Here we're not in 1940 but in the year 2000 and you don't have to be a martyr to get forgiveness. However, Lilja commits suicide out of desperation, because she can't go on being a sexual slave subjected to the brutality of pitiless men. Malika-Noemí in *Caos* and Jessica in *El Beso del Dragón* (both from 2001) are almost like slaves, forced to prostitute themselves and to inject heroin, something that makes them more dependent. The beatings and humiliations they are subjected to by their captors have not been seen since *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Elisa, in *En la Puta Vida* (2001), is brutally beaten up by Plácido, the man she thinks loves her, and her friend Lulú has even unluckier, as she's shot dead in the streets of Barcelona, and she isn't the only prostitute to die in this film.

More recent is the case of Tatiana, the 14-year-old who dies during childbirth at the start of the film *Promesas del Este* [Eastern Promises] (2007) after having been deceived and raped by the affable boss Semyon, a film that presents a horrifying picture of the Russian mafia in London, for whom prostituting girls from the different Soviet republics is just part of their business.

All these narrative liberties are much easier to justify if they occur to prostitutes. It's as if anything goes with them. On many occasions, the profession of prostitute is a necessary condition to keep the story coherent, but on many other occasions it's not strictly necessary and I would suggest that, if the film resorts to making the girl a prostitute, it's because this narrative liberty is better accepted by the director him or herself or even by the audience. We are ultimately more willing to accept, or even justify, prostitutes being killed or abused or beaten up or humiliated, prostitutes killing themselves or becoming desperate, prostitutes being deceived, swindled or harassed merely because these are the consequences that might result from them being prostitutes, from going where they shouldn't go, from having left the right path and crossed over to the other side, the side of freedom, which wasn't meant for them as they are women. In *Henry, Retrato de un Asesino* [Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer] (1986), the psychopath murderer of women even states that "cuando se mata a una prostituta, no pasa nada [when a prostitute is killed, it doesn't matter]". Perhaps it's this feeling of impunity that makes it so easy to kill prostitutes at the slightest excuse (cinematographically speaking, of course).

In spite of the beatings, abuse, fights, rapes, punches and sporadic or continued maltreatment, prostitutes never report it.

They put up and shut up. In many films, the guilty party ends up paying for the crimes or barbarities that have been the film's overall motif but they almost never end up paying for murdering, abusing, beating up or raping prostitutes.

As I claim in this work, cinema's treatment of prostitutes has got worse as from 1990: from considering them as *fallen* creatures that are nonetheless necessary and innocuous, who should be treated with sympathy and compassion (in the cinema of the 1940s and 1950s), they have gone to being represented as victims of all kinds of abuse, both physical and verbal.

6. About gigolos, transvestites and escorts

Cinema's treatment of male prostitutes has no point of comparison with how it has treated female prostitution. Not only is the number of films very small in quantitative terms (20 out of 200, 10% of the sample we have analysed) but how male or female directors have tackled this aspect is also qualitatively incomparable. To start with, male prostitution has never been a widespread phenomenon in all eras and all places. The history of male sexuality cannot be compared with the history of female sexuality. I refer back to what I said at the beginning of this article concerning the different consideration of sex for men and women.

Naturally, cinema could not help but cover some of these stories of women who *resort* to buying sex or, more accurately, love and companionship. From the start the word *gigolo* was used to refer to those men who lived off wealthy, lonely women and lately the term *prostituto* or *puto* [male forms of 'prostitute' and 'whore'] has started to be used, but they don't have, and don't even come near to the disdainful meaning of the term when used for women.

The first three films that deal with this hidden facet of sexuality and female sentimentality are *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), *La Primavera Romana de la Señora Stone* [The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone] (1961) and *Dulce Pájaro de Juventud* [Sweet Bird of Youth] (1962) and, curiously, all three have in common, as their protagonist, a film actress in decline. We have to wait until 1969 to see a new kind of male prostitute appear; the kind that, in *Cowboy de Medianoche* [Midnight Cowboy] believes all women are dying to go to bed with him.

American Gigolo (1980) is a film that transcends the limited circuits and establishes Richard Gere as a seducer. As from 2000, the theme of men who devote themselves to being escorts for women multiplies and we find *Servicio de Compañía* [The Man from Elysian Fields] (2001), where a selfless and loving father of a family, Byron Tyler, sacrifices himself consoling wealthy women because of his failure as a writer. In *Sonny* (2002), we're presented with a 26-year-old man who wants a change of scene, as since he was 12 "su madre ha vendido su rabo [his mother had sold his prick]", but always with women. In *El Día de la Boda* [The Wedding Date] (2005), we find the good-looking Nick, New York's most distinguished,

popular, cultivated and sought-after escort, madly in love with Kat, the woman that has hired him for 6,000 dollars to play the part of her boyfriend at her sister's wedding. All the women we've seen in the cinema who dare to hire one of these escorts come from the idle rich and we're left wondering whether poor women don't have the desire or money to afford a male prostitute. In *La Clienta* (2009), we see a new, contemporary perspective of how this issue is treated, presenting a female character, Judith, an attractive, independent and single 51-year-old, who presents a TV shopping programme, that has resorted, since she was 49, to an escort in a similar way to how men usually do when they want sex. However, the relationship established goes much further than a sexual encounter.

Another important aspect in how prostitution is represented is that of prostitution between men. As from the 1970s, approximately, with customs becoming much freer, male homosexuality also becomes more visible, as well as sex for money between men, with proposals such as the one by Paul Morrissey, *Flesh* (1968), which for the first time offers a perspective of male prostitution. We had to wait until 1990 for the phenomenon of male prostitution (between men) to be dealt with again and with more frequency. In *Mi Idaho Privado* [My Private Idaho] (1991), we find wealthy Scott (Keanu Reeves) and the drug addict Mike (River Phoenix), next to a gang of young men working as prostitutes in the streets of Portland (Oregon, USA).

En Casa con Claude [Being at home with Claude] and *Beznes*, both from 1992, show, in the first, a male prostitute who has killed his client and, in the second, the life of another that traffics with what he can in the traditional society of Tunisia. *Johns* (1996) portrays a male prostitution that's as unadorned as the female prostitution so frequently represented, including violence towards the young male prostitutes and the murder of one of them by a client who doesn't want to accept his homosexuality. Just like in *Ronda Nocturna* [Night Watch] (2005), where we find Víctor, a 19-year-old who walks around the streets of Buenos Aires looking for clients to satisfy for a few pesos.

And as regards Spain, there's the very early case of *El Diputado* [Confessions of a Congressman] (1977), where a homosexual politician from the Communist party secretly frequents male prostitutes, and *Hotel y Domicilio* [Hotel & Home] (1995), which shows a male prostitute or call boy and criticises class differences and the privileges of those with a certain power.

Paid sex between men follows the same patterns as paid sex between men and women: with fast penetration (active or passive), it's functional, instrumental, totally unrelated to the world of affection and often carried out with a large dose of violence whereas, for the women who ask for it, paid sex is full of apparent romanticism (on the screen, naturally).

7. Conclusions: prostitution, after two hundred films

I believe we can differentiate between stages in the development of prostitution in the cinema: **Firstly**, throughout the first

third of the history of cinema, from its birth to approximately the 1960s, the dividing line that underlies all the films is the existence of decent women, women for whom sexuality is only permitted (and with restrictions) within marriage, and "public" women used to satisfy the desires that marriage's sexual austerity disparages and prohibits.

Secondly, as from the 1960s and with the women's liberation movement, prostitutes begin to appear who have been released, who prostitute themselves by choice, without considering whether or not they need to economically. As from this time we can also see films that don't contain any moral or ethical sanction for prostitutes.

Thirdly, as from 1990, in addition to including what we've mentioned for the phase after 1960, the issue starts to appear of prostitution being related to the mafia and sexual trafficking and, on many occasions, related to drug-taking. More films also appear that deal with male prostitution between men, following a very similar pattern, with much more visually explicit sex and also more aggressive. Disgust and lack of consideration continue to dominate anything to do with female prostitutes, who are still called hookers, whores, slags and all kinds of *affectionate* names and adjectives.

In spite of this, women who charge for sex are mostly represented positively and idealised and embody women of great dignity, courage, bravery, generosity and devotion. The directors, who take so many narrative liberties with female prostitutes, thereby offset the scorn and ridicule suffered by them in film scripts by exalting these human values that, ultimately, end up redeeming them.

We should ask ourselves up to what point these fictitious representations have shaped the real behaviour of real people and have affected our conception of what desire, sexuality, love life and its satisfaction really mean. Fiction and reality combine, intertwine, interrelate in a dialectic symbiosis where it's difficult to know if social change came before or after its representation on film, or to what extent cinematographic stories have shaped and are shaping reality.

Notes

- 1 Russell Campbell, in his book *Marked Women*, typifies up to 15 models of prostitutes in cinema, namely: gigolette, siren, comrade, avenger, martyr, gold digger, nursemaid, captive, business woman, happy hooker, adventuress, junkie, baby doll, working girl and love story. I believe that almost all these roles are played, in a way, by each of them, so that it's difficult to separate one aspect from another.
- 2 Translator's note: Given the nature of the research, where the films have been seen and worked on mostly in their Spanish version, original or dubbed, the Spanish titles have been kept, and the English title added, when relevant.

- 3 Isabelle Cottenceau, "L'avant scene cinéma", April 2004; Jack Boozer, "The lethal femme fatale in the Noir Tradition". In: *Journal of Film and Video*, volume 51, no. 3-4, Autumn 1999, p. 20-33 (quoted in the programme of the Filmoteca de Catalunya, *Les Vamps*, in 2010, supplement number 5).

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Hypermodernity and the carnivalesque. Reality humour in television of change in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Study proposal

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Abstract

This article deals with the phenomenon of reality humour or realist humour within the framework of television over the last two decades. This humour supposes a basic expression of the carnivalesque in the hypermodernity in which we find ourselves today. To this end, this article first studies a key socio-historical process of modernity, namely dramatisation, which makes identities different to their originals and, from this point onwards, we establish the correlative evolution of carnival and the sense of carnivalesque. Finally, the text focuses on the study of this humour by highlighting the condition of freak.

Key words

Carnival(esque), modernity, late modernity, dramatisation of identity, television, reality humour (realist humour).

Resum

Aquest article aborda el fenomen del reality humour o humor realista en el marc de la televisió de les dues últimes dècades. Aquest humor suposa una expressió bàsica del carnavalesc en la modernitat extrema en què ens situem. Amb aquest fi, l'article repassa primer un procés sociohistòric clau de la modernitat —la teatralització que hom fa d'unes identitats altres que les primordials— i estableix, a partir d'aquí, l'evolució correlativa del carnaval i del sentit del carnavalesc. En acabat, el text se centra en l'estudi d'aquest humor, del qual en destaca —acotant-la conceptualment— la condició de friqui(tzant).

Paraules clau

Carnaval(esc), modernitat, modernitat tardana, teatralització identitària, televisió, reality humour (humor realista).

1. An introductory note

With cultural or social phenomena, we have always believed that, rather than dissecting them formally, what is missing, without minimising this aspect, is an investigation into the causes from which a particular topology originates, and we have likewise believed that, to understand these phenomena better, it's necessary to recompose (pre)history.

2. Modernity and carnival(esque)

2.1. Modernity and *dramatisation* in social relationships. Some new senses of carnival(esque)

In pre-modern societies, prior to the mutations associated with middle-class society and the modern state (and particularly in rural environments), carnival ultimately stems from extreme experiences and the limits of violating what is sacred.¹ This results from perceptions of extreme, imminent risk regarding the tender young shoots of the crop, of nature and, even further, of the cosmic cycle in general. This violation of what is sacred¹ is precisely what generates terrible fears of cosmic

chaos, together with the consequent cataclysms of the self and community, of their meaning, of what they are, founded on the cosmic rhythms and on a cosmos associated mainly with its own immediate context. These are what drive frenetic and crazy rituals (all the rites of purification, fertilisation and regeneration in the cosmic cycle, which is, in essence, the original carnival), characterised by extreme alterations of individual and collective identities, in both ordinary senses, while necessarily leading to the alteration or conversion of identity via a system of ritual, dramatic elements: masks, disguises, imitated or projected voices, shouts, cowbells...

In contrast, from the start of the nineteenth century, and particularly in Europe, carnival underwent some essential transformation and conformed to basic requirements, to modern society, to the bourgeois mould. There are three basic ways of modernising carnival: a) by celebrating it within the establishment; b) above all by turning it into a "joke" in the popular media or, in other words, turning it into jolly, farcical reversals: jokes and buffoonery; and, most importantly, c) its *para-dramatisation*: turning it into an exceptional occasion when the protagonists, thanks to masks, disguises and extras, can

assume other identities, different to their own passively subject identity (other identities such as those of “gentlemen”, regional stereotypes and cinematographic figures, among others, to mention some that were common to establishment carnivals of the Catalan Restoration).

But from the middle of the 19th century, and coinciding with the consecration of the modern carnival, some cultural identities emerged and developed in Europe that were markedly modern and visible given their singular nature, representing a clear desire on the part of the people assuming these identities to personalise or individualise them: for example, such prolific and well-known identities as bohemians and dandies, or the most prototypical of the modern woman: the *garçonne*. What do these identities have in common? Well, the desire to transgress and overcome the primordial identities of the subjects in question, their primordial self, their most basic identity, not breaking the link but rather affiliating with it. However, there was also a desire to over-identify with these identities. Or, in other words: agreeing some acts to alter or convert the identity's most primordial version into other, more suggestive identities of a cultural or civic nature, using dramatic fiction for this purpose (clothing, hairstyle, gestures and other ritual aspects, encoded and agreed so that they would represent these identities), but without this *dramatisation* overshadowing the more idiosyncratic identity, as can happen in the theatre or the cinema. And, given these elements, agreeing to establish a fictional pact (Eco 1996) (largely accepting the deception in assuming these super-identities as good and natural), and consequently to assume a certain reservation of role, a certain subjective caesura or discontinuity of the realer self with regard to these other identities; although in this case, contrary to what Goffman pointed out and Berger repeated, this state is not the product of any coercive condition (Berger 1988; Goffman 1981).

These identities, these characteristics have clear concomitants with modern carnival and especially with the aforementioned *para-dramatisation*, of cultural motives or identities. Although it's true that, in carnival, given the festive fictionality reserved for this celebration, the motives are more implausible, the fictional pact is more evident and the role reservation perhaps much less.

What we have already noted about identities such as the bohemian, dandy or *garçonne*, the aforementioned respect of modern carnival and the analogies between both phenomena, lead us to an absolutely central feature of modernity: the *dramatisation* of identities and, by extension, of social interactions, something which is made particularly clear with late modernity as from the middle of the 20th century. And we mean *dramatisation* in the sense of assuming - incorporating - from ritual, symbolic, specific elements, identities of a cultural nature in the broadest sense, which are superimposed onto a person's most primary identities with the desire to highlight them, signify them and, above all, reinforce their personal nature.

Where does this *dramatisation* of identities come from? What conditions it? Well, it comes from what must have surely been (in phenomenological terms and with regard to the sphere of human consciousness) the fundamental realities of modernity from the end of the 18th century onwards: a set of interrelated phenomena that, situated at a person's deepest level of perception and feelings concerning their own existential condition, have operated correlatively at the deepest level of the factors affecting the great changes and dynamics of modernity.

Specifically, we could say that these *dramatisations* of other identities ultimately come from the erosion and substitution of the sacred in modern society, an anthropological religiousness with primitive cultural roots (as the notion of the sacred mentioned above, which could well be assimilated, to a certain extent, with the Freudian Eros), which supposes, in the individual, the strongest principle in structuring one's own existential sense. Thus, while in archaic carnivals, evaluations of extreme violations of sacredness led to people dramatically changing their ordinary identities (an extreme risk is perceived with respect to the cosmic cycle and, further, with respect to a possible cosmic chaos and the symbolic annulment of the individual and the community), in the *dramatisations* we're now seeing, so typical of modernity and especially of its advanced phases, it's the deficits in this sacredness that are highlighted in these representations.

More concretely, and more directly related to what we're concerned with here, namely *dramatisations* capable of individually arousing identities that suggestively enhance the self, there's another specific phenomenon, largely as a consequence of the aforementioned devaluation of what is sacred (or de-veneration) in understanding the world; namely anomie, which could be defined as a crisis of meaning or plausibility of the self in relation to the world, its comprehension and action (Berger and Luckmann 1988, 129, 141, 146, 148-149 and others).

2.2. Late modernity. *Dramatisation* of everyday life and the *complexification* of identity. New carnivalesque manifestations

From the middle of the 1950s, in the United States (and, years later, in western Europe), in the midst of the profound restructuring of capitalist production relations (the genesis of post-industrial capitalism) and economic growth, some first-order structural changes occurred that have essentially influenced, with subsequent evolutions, the definition of late modernity up to today: the formation of a society (and a culture) of mass, democratic consumption; the total hegemony of audiovisual culture; the development of a symbolic economy that suggestively makes the collective semiosphere more dense, as well as some basic qualitative leaps with regard to globalisation (of experience), centred on pop music, cinema and sport idols.

First of all, these factors have had a fundamental impact on western societies in phenomenological terms, an impact that, in turn, feeds back into these factors. More concretely, we can

say that these structural factors provoke and generalise a series of phenomenological experiences in which two characteristic phenomena stand out, and which we have referred to previously: experiences of de-veneration and anomie, which in turn fundamentally affect identities, their nature, and their dynamic (these aspects also essentially define late modernity) and new carnivalesque experiences.

Given the particularly conflictive nature of identity in its most individual and radical sense, with which some groups experience the impact of the structural factors noted at the beginning of this section, the first few decades of late modernity, especially the 1950s and 1960s, provided a very clear example of both the most characteristic phenomenological experiences of the time and their impact on the area of identity, as well as the genesis of some new festive expressions that we might call *carnavalesque*.

During this period, these structural factors, especially within the context of certain groups (young people, university students the most *with-it* bourgeoisie), led to common experiences that resulted in fundamental — and paradoxical — feelings of anomie: of dislocation or existential disengagement. One of the basic consequences of these experiences are the attempts made by men and women to incorporate themselves into new identities and, above all, to dramatise them ritually in everyday life. The aim is to provoke a certain sense of enchantment with the world, with their own existence, and in order to get an identity that confers a markedly personal or individualising character to their own identity. And another consequence of these experiences is the emancipation they encourage, within a *deconflicted* capitalism, of libidinal energies, which makes interpersonal communication more informal and is an aspect that facilitates, in turn, a *do it yourself* identity, as the manifestation of the *dramatisations* of identities as from this stage.

In effect, what we have said implies that, from the 1950s to the 1970s, in western societies, new cultural identities were frequently assumed and, above all, (micro)dramatised in everyday life (thanks to clothing, hairstyles, gestures, etc.), which primarily reinforces the personal nature of personal identity. It must be said, moreover, that without this dramatic fictionality, one cannot understand (it largely comes from this) the great development of *show* as from this time.

2.2. 1. Collective *para-dramatisation* and new expressions of carnivalesque

During the decades we have already mentioned, a series of celebrations arises that could be considered carnivalesque. And they could be seen as such because, within some festive contexts, they are assumed to be dramatically different from primary identities, to those most taken for granted, being identities in which the mark of modern pop culture is already evident. These festivals have clear analogies with the modern *para-dramatised* carnival we referred to in the first section and also, often, with the ritual and cosmic nature of archaic or pre-modern carnival.

Many of these celebrations are strictly or strongly *para-dramatic* in nature. Thus, and merely by way of example, we can cite the *para-dramatised* street parades and entertainment in vogue during the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, and the first performances by La Fura dels Baus or the pieces staged by the Comediants or, by contrast, the large folk rock concerts and festivals of the time, dressed in a powerful liturgical charge. All these manifestations have one fundamental feature in common: the dramatisation — or dramatic fictionalisation — of different identities of the primordial identity, carried out in daily life and with a desire for naturalness. Hence the main feature of carnivalesque expressions of late modernity which we will get back to in the next section. Needless to say, this sense of the carnivalesque cannot be understood in isolation from phenomenological changes and the specific identities which we have previously mentioned.

2.3. Hypermodernity.² Perceptions of social derealisation and *hyper-dramatisation*. The carnivalesque in the hypermodern era

Particularly from the end of the 1980s, another series of far-reaching structural events occurred that significantly modified the more phenomenological area of the sociology of modernity; within, however, the basic logic started in the middle of what we have called *late modernity*. What are these events? Well, the information revolution caused, firstly, by the internet becoming widespread and, hereafter, the outbreak, the hyper-mass consumption and sophistication of other new information and communication technologies; the fall of the Eastern Bloc, the “fall of ideologies”, the fictions of worldwide uni-polarity, and of the triumph and uni-viability of neoliberalism, and the emergence in the opposite direction of anti-globalising movements; the strong globalisation supposed by these events and others, such as environmental awareness, or, finally, the long cycle of economic boom (with a strong educational effect), which ran out three years ago.

Seeing as they inaccurately complicate, and to a great extent, the panoramic imprecision of reality, of the world, of its boundaries and their relationships; of technological hypermediation in human connections, these events, among others, enhance two defining phenomena of modernity that became particularly incisive during late modernity and that have ruled, on the most immediate plane, the logic of identity of men and women during this period: we are, of course, referring to the de-veneration of the perception and evaluation of reality and, as a result of this phenomenon, to anomie, which Berger graphically referred to many years ago as “a homeless world” (Berger 1977).

At the same time, the heightening of these phenomena has brought about another set of basic experiences in today’s sociological phenomenology, which have, amongst many other things, a very direct influence on current expressions of carnivalesque (more specifically on the television expression), which is the most specific aim of this text. But without the extreme

escalations of the de-veneration and anomie of the past decades, we cannot understand phenomena such as perception and evaluation in terms of the *liquidity* of human relationships and institutions, and the different flexibilities and fears that this generates (Bauman 2006, 2010), or understand a phenomenon that underlies this: the perception of de-realisation — a loss of force in reality — of social and human reality, as far as roles, bonds, institutions or identities; its becoming irrelevant in terms of meaning, its ontic erosion, wear and fragmentation (Vattimo 1990, epilogue; Vattimo 1995, 56 and sub.; Jameson 1991; Imbert 2004, 76 and sub.).

On the other hand, these phenomena are essential to capturing sufficiently enhanced sensations during this historical cycle: sensations of little self-presentation in everyday life, of scarce relevance and projection as individuals, especially within the public sphere. This phenomenon, like the de-realisation of the social sphere, essentially facilitates the success of reality TV or extreme realism in today's television (Pross 1983, 93; Lipovetsky 2009, 143-162). The competition between these phenomena has fundamental consequences for identity, communication in the broad sense, for the arts, politics, organisational cultures, etc.

We would like to highlight four basic trends in the field of communication and identity. Firstly, reality TV, which, with early paradigmatic expressions in *The Truman Show* and *Big Brother* (Niccol 1998; Lacalle 2001, 140-153; Cáceres 2001), is characterised by a fictionalisation of the inner and emotional lives of others (*docu-realities* that have a wide range of formats, reality talks, humorous realities, reality shows...). Secondly, the intensification of everyday dramatisations of identities that are different from their primary identities or even a *hyper-dramatisation*, with some traits of generalisation, understatement, hyper-normalisation or greater social reification, highly diversified in terms of expression (closely associated with fashions that are increasingly conditioned by these hyper-dramatic needs and by a strong need to differentiate the underlying identities) and somatised (ritual fixation on their own bodies: tattoos, piercings, etc.), even regarding this phenomenon (Capdevila 2009). Thirdly, performances in the electronic sphere (Facebook and other networks, blogs, etc.) and, fourthly, the emergence and success of a multitude of *para-dramatised* collective performances (lipdubs, flashmobs, various rituals for young people, themed parties around films, comics or novels; dramatised (ethno)historical recreations; etc.) (Capdevila 2010).

What do these expressions have in common? A *dramatised* fictionalisation of everyday life, with everyone wanting to assume super-identities that are attached to the primary, and to be able to essentially benefit from strongly emotive and personalised identifications. This *dramatisation* of daily life is a basic necessity resulting from the experiences of anomie and social de-realisation we have already mentioned.

2.3.1. Carnavalesque and extreme phase of late modernity

In this socio-historic stage (the extreme phase of late modernity), two basic manifestations of the carnivalesque exist, a result

of the phenomenological logic we have just noted. One of these is the mass *para-dramatised* performances we have just referred to. And the other, the commonness of TV comedy programmes and spots from the 1990s up to the present day.

The fact that these programmes are mainly based on supposedly humorous transgressions or reversals, and the fact that the humorous nature of these programmes (the finite world of meaning typical of them and the tacit rules that come from them) makes these transgressions more or less plausible and makes one first assume a clear fictional component, means that these programmes or humorous sections can be placed in the carnivalesque field.

Regarding the features of this transgressing, carnivalesque TV humour, one is clear: this humour is based, primarily, on the breaking of patterns or the most ordinary senses (the most taken as read, the most basic) of our daily life, which leads to characteristic sensations or feelings in terms of absurdity, perplexity, loyalty, morbidity, vulgarity... A universe of features that come to define a distinct, single phenomenon which, in turn, we can call *freakism*. This type of humour has become the face *par excellence* of television humour since the end of the last century, although it goes beyond the field of television and its comedy.

3. Reality humour and carnivalesque in television from the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. *Freakism* and TV humour

We have said that *freak* or *freakifying* expressions have been clearly dominant in humorous television registers and formats in the last twenty years. But what do we understand by the term *freak*? Let's try to narrow it down to the most comprehensive and essential definition possible. The phenomenon of *freak*, applied to this humour, is based on (plays provocatively with) subverting the most ordinary patterns, principles or feelings, the most taken for granted, the most reified by society, of everyday life in society and therefore related to very basic spheres of common sociability and co-existence, such as propriety or politeness in the most basic sense (corporal aesthetics and, beyond, the semiosis of the body in terms of individual ethos and attitudes), acts of communication and especially interpersonal, attitudes in general or the patterns of personality.

However, these violations diversely provoke a universe of impressions, sensations or feelings that could be characterised in line with these categories: absurdity, strangeness, anomaly, ugliness and vulgarity, stupidity and debasement, morbidity and repulsiveness, and childishness. Some might say, and not without reason, that some of these categories (such as the taste for ugliness or morbidity, particularly exploited by this humorous *freakism*) are also characteristic features of other ages and cultural expressions: of the Baroque or Romanticism, above all. This is certainly the case; however, with

Romanticism, in which the ugly, deformed or grotesque often appear, the experiences found in the origin of these reflections and their meaning have a basic metaphysical vocation: i.e. they follow experiences and feelings from a world of great metaphysical depth, in which, admittedly, some anomic experiences can already clearly be seen (Bozal (ed) 2000, 202-203, 306).

A good example (out of many possible examples) of this reality humour, which we have characterised as *freakifying*, is this song ("Me he puesto tetas" [I've put on some tits]), which the humorist Berto sings in a clip with the Border Boys, sponsored by the Buenafuente programme: "Hey nena/me rompiste el corazón en mil pedazos/[...]pero he cambiado/y ya no te echo de menos/porque me he puesto tetas/y puedo tocarlas aunque no estés aquí./ Eran las dos únicas cosas que molaban de tí./Tengo tetas./ Ya no me haces falta para ser feliz/pues tengo tetas/ cómo te quedas/ y ahora es a mí a quien me miran en el metro./ Mi médico nunca me tuvo tasado el pecho..."³

[Hey, girl, you broke my heart into a thousand pieces... but I've changed and I don't miss you anymore because I've had some tits put on and I can touch them even though you're not here. They were the only two things I loved about you. I have tits. I don't need you anymore to be happy, cos I have tits, whaddya think? And now they look at me on the tube. My doctor never rated my chest...]

Much of the subversion in this type of humour (such as those that suppose the breaking of basic, obvious rules of how to behave on a TV set, as has characteristically happened on some humorous late shows) involve the violation of what Berger proposed as the first foundations of the social construction of reality, as the first – and most basic – fundamentals of an agreed and shared social reality: those most basic routines and senses on which, afterwards, roles, institutions and identities are built and developed (Berger 1988, 89). On the other hand, this kind of violation involves radical and definitive overcoming (thereby undermining their most basic social rules, naively assumed by everyone) of good custom, of good form, of elementary urbanity (Elias 1973), of what had been, in short, until the mid-20th century and the great changes that took place, the huge factor in the preservation of a predominantly conflicting capitalist social orders in terms of resources.

It must be said (and this is relevant) that (self-)awareness of this transgression tends to be basically unimportant. One lives this transgression, so to speak, in line with an essential feeling of gratuity or primordial justification in the very act of overturning the most basic fundamentals of ordinary life. That's why this is quite remote from the subverting of the ordinary senses of immediate reality, also characteristic of the carnivalesque of pre-modern societies, in the broad sense. And, in this way, both through the tradition of playful and humorous transgression (the mimes of medieval jesters such as the "Home del Pet" [Fart Man] carved in a corbel in the colonnaded street of Sant Roc de Bellpuig, who opens his bottom with his hands

and blows out of his mouth; some agricultural rites of powerful humoristic paradox; and the whole peasant culture of the 20th century, of mockery and banter) and also through the reversals of strict carnival festivities. In all these cases, transgression does not come, primarily, through the intrinsic pleasure of subverting the elementary logic of the most basic realities. These experiences have basic meanings to structure the cosmos and, related to these meanings, to structure identities themselves as community and individuals, and the function of regulating morals and economics, as well as, of course, an entertaining and performance function, in some cases.

Related to this aspect, it is important to highlight that this broad sense of freak humour is far from developing the most defining features of satirical humour of the pre-modern carnival tradition, such as those that were still abundantly seen in the satirical press at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th: namely, essential, radical, straight reversals (governed by a sense of where it must strike, precise, decisive, sometimes combative) and with a slight dose of malice, of the (apparently) most relevant features of the adversary's psychological idiosyncrasy, together with his actions and of the logic of these actions. These characteristics make powerful instruments of such deforming alternations (these far-reaching parodies) of the identity of the other one, instruments of symbolic annulment or segregation, and actually produce satires with a high Dionysian density. On the other hand, we can see that, in humorous TV programmes or spots since the 1990s, globally dominated by a *freaki(fying)* humour in the aforementioned sense, the transgression, not without a fundamental tendency for theatrical fiction, principally affect very basic, very specific senses, taken for granted and quite invisible, from everyday life and imminent reality, regarding the aesthetic patterns, the patterns of politeness and good taste, *ethos* and corporal attitudes, personality traits, etc., of the characters. This type of transgression results in parodies (or satirical counter-representations) which are not very erosive, which often incur or almost achieve frivolity, and that definitively result in satires of little Dionysian density. However, it should be noted that this kind of humour facilitates, in turn, some humorous (*self-*)*dramatisations* in terms of forms of expression and television formats.

And what we have said applies as much to journalists or humorists that eventually resort to self-parodies (such as those by X. Sardà in *Crónicas Marcianas*) as to those who habitually define themselves as self-parodying characters (Boris Izaguirre, in the same programme) and to fictional parody characters (the prolific saga of El Neng, the Follonero, Chikilicuate, Berto, etc., from the Buenafuente factory), as well as parodied characters such as the social and political satire programmes themselves; and applies to programmes of this last nature up to humorous meta-television programmes of the *APM* type, of TV3, including late shows of a humorous nature or with a humorous base, such as the aforementioned shows by Buenafuente and Sardà, amongst others.

And what most interests us even more than the 'what' is the

'why' of the phenomena: if we were to ask ourselves about the more latent motivations behind this humour that so defines hyper-modernity, we could find three fundamental, phenomenological reasons. First, a transformation in and relaxation of the Dionysian dimension in humour - of what is, according to Berger, eminently restless and obscure, with a signification of cosmic meaning that we all intuit in the fact of the world, referring to the notion of a counter-world and diversely characterising the different experiences of the humorous fact (Berger 1997), and which cannot be separated, we add, from transformations related to the sacred, in the aforementioned sense of sacred. A second motivation is what we previously pointed out concerning the perceptions and sensations of de-realisation of the social and, therefore, the human, so characteristic of our times (Imbert 2005). If we do not take this phenomenon into account, it's difficult to understand this humour's penchant (the humour we call *freakifying*) for disrupting and turning upside down the most accepted, most ordinary of reality (just as little can be understood without this factor regarding reality TV's dramatic fictionalisation of private and emotional life). And a third factor is a phenomenon that is ultimately as little noticed as it is basic: the *Thanatosisation* of Eros; i.e. an intensification of Freud's 'death drive', those inclinations and tastes that resort, in one way or another, to a greater or lesser extent, to violence or to death, symbolically speaking, also caused by the already mentioned heightening of de-veneration in the world, and assuming, as we have already mentioned, that this sacredness, with its primitive roots, is essentially similar to Freud's Eros (Eliade 1992; Freud 1995; Marcuse 1972). Ugliness, morbidity, the subverting of the most elementary decorum that is so characteristic of *freakism*; can these not, to a great extent, be explained by this phenomenon?

However, let us now try to establish the purposes of this type of comedy. It is possible to distinguish two types; the first relates to psycho-sociological factors and the second to more pragmatic reasons. Starting with the first, this is a desire to subvert, upset the most basic, invisible foundations of common, everyday reality. The second, and from the provocation entailed by these facts, would be to cause strong emotions — it was Dalcroix who warned of today's social hegemony of *emotionalism*, of the taste for strong emotions and sensations (Dalcroix 2005) formulated in the key of humour. And thirdly, based on this strong emotion, we find the primary purposes: the desire of presenters and actors who play comic roles on television to reaffirm the singular nature of their own identities, and their desire (and that of those in charge of programmes in general) to vicariously provide this same experience for the public watching the show.

Moreover, two practical reasons would have to be adduced. One very obvious one is the desire for maximum heteronomy regarding the real tastes of the public and, therefore, for the maximum returns that can be achieved; this is something that, as Bourdieu remarked, has been an essential feature of commercial literature ever since the 19th century (Bourdieu 1994).

And the other, a (certain) resorting to *freakism* — in its more aesthetic sense, above all — with the aim of conveying political and social satire more successfully. We have good, high quality examples of this in the current series *Polònia* or in Palomino's excellent monologues, dramatised by Oriol Grau in *Sense títol* or *La cosa nostra*, or even, apart from TV3's comedy programmes, in the humorous programmes led by Gran Wyoming: *Caiga quien caiga* (Telecinco) or *El intermedio* (laSexta), or also, in another format of satirical *infotainment*, satirical gags with puppets, in *El guiñol* on Canal +.

Now we have proposed a definition of this realist humour and have reviewed the basic logic of its parodic nature, we would now like, however briefly, to address its main manifestations: parodic characters, their types, their main mechanisms of construction or, which is the same, the basic models of (*self-*)*dramatisation* that help to build them. We believe, in this respect, that they can be differentiated into at least six basic models of parodic construction with distinct types of characters.

One clear model is represented by those clearly fictional characters who, at the limit of their acting role, nonetheless act in real/realist television media. They are characters created *ex profeso* as comic characters that serve comedy programmes. Examples of this type of characters are those in Buenafuente's programmes, mentioned above — of Toni Moog in *Boqueria 357* (TV3), or El Reportero Total on the pioneering night show *Esta noche cruzamos el Mississippi* (Telecinco). One related model is *parodic transformism*: the changing representation of new characters, of ephemeral characters, by actors and comedians. The prolixity of characters represented by Carlos Latre in *Crónicas marcianas* is a case in point. Another model — linked to this — is that of real life celebrities with a long or unique parodic history on the screen. The characters in the successful British comedy series *Little Britain* (BBC), *Polònia*, *La escobilla nacional* (Antena 3 TV), *Muchachada Nui* (La 2), or Ricardito Bofill made by Toni Clapés in *Crónicas*, among many other examples: all represent this model. Finally, with this same *para-dramatisation* nature, we should also mention characters that, as a part of the parameters of this realist, *freakifying*, carnivalesque humour, star in fictional TV comedies: Lo Cartanyà - TV3's eponymous series is highly indicative of this possibility.

Other parodic construction mechanisms are those presenters or guests of programmes that occasionally or habitually resort, humorously, to subverting very basic patterns of conduct, very much taken for granted, on television and in the public sphere in general: in cases such as those of Boris Yzaguirre in *Crónicas* or Torito in *Vitamina N* (Citytv) — to give two very well-known and emblematic examples; this behaviour follows a strategy of parodic (*self-*)construction. The new channels of audiovisual mediation associated with the internet — YouTube, social networks, etc. — and mobile telephones have for years supplied many concurrent cases, from *amateurism* to parodic fictional self-construction. There is one last model that must be men-

tioned: that which corresponds to those characters that were initially outside television: Bernardo Cortés, the “real Palomino”, for example, which, given television’s reconstruction of certain features in terms (as, moreover, in all models of parody) of transgression from some highly normalised patterns of immediate reality, they also achieve the level of parodic characters. Additionally in this field one would include the parodic outcomes of comedy meta-television programmes.

Very different models and characters of parody can be found in this type of comedy, characterised by the hybridisation of generations and the proliferation and dominance of formats (Imbert 2005; Gómez Martín 2005), genres and conveyed formats. Thus, and with respect to the latter, it’s worth noting the system, the monologue, the reality talk in the form of chats and interviews, essentially the transmission of sections of programmes (often of reality games), etc.

Up to this point, we have tried to show the defining features of realist humour in today’s television, and we have attempted to point out some of its historical and cultural fundamentals.

Notes

- 1 Here it is helpful to understand *sacred* in the sense of Eliade and other authors, as a dimension of the reality that is essentially different to “our world”, to the “secular world” that, revealed above all within the context of certain ritual moments and experienced as a numinous emotion, is seen as “saturation of being”, as the ultimate in ontological plenitude, while referring to a plane of cosmic signification (Eliade 1992) and assuming, on the other hand, that it is, as Durkheim points out, the original basis of religious experience.
- 2 We adopt this term and its essential conception as per Lipovetsky (Lipovetsky 2006).
- 3 <www.formulatv.com/videos/2227/berto-canta-me-he-puesto-tetas-en-buenafuente>

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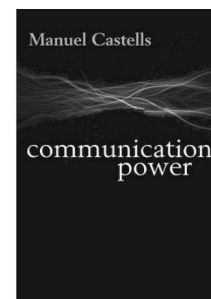
Critical Book Reviews

CASTELLS, M. *Communication power*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, 592 p.
ISBN: 978-0-19-956704-1

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* In Catalan: CASTELLS, M. *Comunicació i poder*. Barcelona: UOC. Col·lecció UOCpress, 14, 2009, 796 p. ISBN: 978-84-9788-856-1/ In Spanish: CASTELLS, M. *Comunicación y poder*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2009, 679 p. ISBN: 978-84-206-8499-4



What's new in the network society?

The situation of the world at the beginning of the new millennium is quite reminiscent of that other situation, in the middle of the 19th century, that led Marx and Engels to state that “all that is solid vanishes into air”, a diagnosis that Marshall Berman (1982) brought to the title of his impassioned work about that changing world driven by the workers’ movement and the creators of the first modernity. After a century and a half, everything that was solid then seems to be disappearing again and social sciences have been trying out, for a couple of decades now, what might be the spirit of the era: *multicultural society* (Kymlicka 1995), *liquid society* (Bauman 2000), *risk society* (Beck 1986) or *global society*.

Manuel Castells has tried to capture the renewed phenomenology of the social world from the conceptual category of *network society* to reveal the collapse of the received hierarchical structures (the nation state, patriarchal family, industrial economy and mass culture), gradually replaced by a new reticular space of nodes and flows generated by logics related to links and interaction. Just as there are no longer any fixed ways to live our lives or any secure conditions, it seems that the old hierarchies have also vanished into thin air. This is how Castells proposed to contribute to our understanding of the evanescence of the world we inherit.

Castells’ work is not put forward as a system because it does not propose a closed, complete category system; moreover this cannot be the way in which a reticular thinker works. But it does make a systematic effort to test the heuristic notion of network society, investigating social life to identify the networks that form part of it – economic, political, cultural, informational – and with a pertinacity that perhaps is only matched by Bauman in the research of social liquefactions. This desire for systematic exploration has now led him to tug on one of the strings that were uncovered in *The Power of Identity* (1998) against the background tapestry of the new “impotent” condition of the modern nation state: namely the crisis of representative democracy and the possibilities of reconstructing this.

The result is *Communication power*, a work that actually takes up again those questions asked by Castells at the end of that volume: “Where is power in this social structure? And what is the power in these situations?” (Castells 1998, 398).

Rather than a general theory about power, here Castells reflects on the constitution of power in contemporary societies and, in particular, on political power, giving communication a central role as a source and resource for making it. Castells starts (in chapter 1) by debating the conception of power, which he understands as an exclusive exercise in domination: “Power to do something [...] is *always power* to do something against someone [...]” (p. 13). A negative theory of power which is justified by the theoretical consensus that Castells looks for and finds (forcing Habermas, ignoring Arendt) concerning the idea that power is basically made by the mediation of two instruments: violence and discourse, above all in what Foucault would call *disciplinary discourses*. The State’s coercive capacity being reduced, the battle would now centre on discourses, on the signified, on disciplining minds: “Power in the network society is communication power” (p. 53).

Discourses need to be generated but they particularly need to be propagated in order to achieve their aim. Castells then directs his exploration (in chapter 2) towards the communication system in which this game of discourse plays out, and he discovers that unidirectional mass communication in the hands of large multimedia corporations is not the only way of organising and managing symbolic exchanges in this society. A “new historical form of communication” is now emerging, “mass self-communication” supported by interactive digital technologies. The sign of the times is autonomy in communication: self-generated content, self-directed emission and self-selected reception (p. 70). But in the analysis that follows this declaration, Castells wants to dispel any naive ideas regarding this question: “Yet, this potential for autonomy is shaped, controlled, and curtailed by the growing concentration and interlocking of corporate media and network operators around the world” (p. 135), which act with the complacency and the protection of some regulatory politicians that are privatising and

fragmenting the management of the “pipes of the Internet Galaxy” (p. 107).

But back to the discourses, to that discipline of the minds that Castells has placed at the heart of the exercise of power in network society. Faithful to his (obviously pure) radicalism, Castells bases this on the latest contributions from neuroscience regarding how the brain works (Damasio), and on cognitive psychology about the organisation of experience (Lakoff, but not Bateson, or Goffman). The mind works by generating frames to orient itself in its surroundings, interpreting what happens and deciding on what action to take, because this is how the neural networks of the brain function. Power, therefore, is the power to define these frames and the ability to communicate them. Saying that “power is generated in the windmills of the mind” (p. 145) is therefore a kind of poetic provocation that Castells then corrects with a pertinent analysis of the “conquering of minds”, employed to gain the North American public’s consent to go to war against Iraq. And this is how power functions, in effect: in the closed alliance between political system and the core media system – the mainstream media – to create and broadcast frames, without forgetting, obviously, the neural base that all this might have.

In the last two chapters, Castells investigates the mechanisms through which political power is constructed in contemporary societies. The key can be found in the role played by political life in the media, be it large professional corporations specialising in mass media or even those that allow mass self-communication supported by interactive digital technology. The former, associated primarily with distortions generated by *media policy*; the latter, to a promising *insurgent policy*. About this, (chapter 4), Castells notes the consequences that are offered by the convergence of interests between the political system and media organisations in terms of exercising democratic politics: the personalisation of politics, the professionalisation of campaigns, spin doctoring, political marketing, think tanks, info-entertainment, the politics of scandal, etc. In this (chapter 5), he explains several experiences in detail, the common denominator of which is the use of ICTs to promote “new form of insurgent politics with the potential of transforming the practice of politics altogether.” (p. 303): the campaign against climate change, the anti-globalisation movement, the demonstrations against government manipulation after the 11 March attacks and the electoral victory of the “unlikely candidate” Barack Hussein Obama.

All texts obviously have different levels of interpretation, which is just another way of saying that they have readers with different levels of expectation and demands. *Communication power* is a good and well documented state of affairs, centred basically on the distortions gradually accumulated by the workings of democratic political life due to the restrictions exercised by what Swanson (1992) called the *political-media complex* and on the possibilities offered by ICTs to change this situation. It would therefore be beneficial, for those approaching this for the first time, to explore this territory.

Nonetheless, those who are familiar with the contributions made in such fields as the political economy of communication or studies about political communication will probably find *Communication power* to be less stimulating intellectually. And they will also be tempted to ask themselves what is new in this network society, when specialised literature has been noting, for at least the last 25 or 30 years, most of the structures and processes that Castells has described here: the domination exercised by large media conglomerates (Schiller, Mosco, Hamelink, McChesney, Smythe), the mechanisms to manipulate public opinion and manufacture consensus (Kurt and Gladys Lang, Glasser and Salmon, Herman and Chomsky), the crisis of democracy induced by the way in which contemporary politics is carried out (Blumler, Gurevitch), marketing techniques that degrade modern electoral campaigns (Swanson, Mancini), the rule of political spectacle and scandal (Edelman, Thompson), not to mention the many works on agenda-setting, priming and framing.

In short, this type of reader will exhaust the interpretation of *Communication power* and will return once again to the crucial question Castells invites us to consider: where is power in this new network society? And he will find this response: “the owners of the multimedia business networks [...] are certainly among the power-holders of the network society because they program the decisive network: the meta-network of communication networks, the networks that process the ideational materials with which we feel, think, live, submit and fight” (p. 421). He will then think that, even if everything solid seems to vanish into the air with so much network, ultimately what is solid will always stay in its place.

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Beyond identity

Antonio García Gutiérrez is professor of journalism at the Faculty of Communication at the Universidad de Sevilla. His work is divided into two distinct stages: the first looks at informative documentation and the second at epistemology, starting with the new century. His publishing career starts with *La memoria subrogada. Mediación, cultura y conciencia en la red digital* (2002) and continues, amongst others, with *Desclasificados. Pluralismo lógico y violencia de la clasificación* (2007), arriving at this current work under review.

To summarise the concept of this text, we can do no better than to quote the author himself "[...] this work echoes risky and convergent proposals, of great epistemological depth, concerning the construction of a new paradigm from which we can consider culture, knowledge, memory or, in this case, identity." (p. 9). Such proposals include the emerging paradigm of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, the complex thoughts of Edgar Morin and the schizoanalysis of Gilles Deleuze. This is not an easy read, mostly because it seeks to break conceptual schemes and traditional ways of thinking. It is important, therefore, to make some preliminary comments.

An uninitiated reader might think this is an anti-modern work, but that would be an error in judgement. This work is modern precisely because of the self-criticism that modernity itself is subjected to and, consequently, it doesn't hide the darker aspects of modernity. As Josep Fontana (2005, p. 88) reminds us "We should not forget that, between 1700 and 1900, in the eras of illustration and modernity, Europeans and their American descendents – white, Christian and civilised – forced the emigration of some 10 million slaves from Africa."

This work isn't anti-identity either. Although it talks of identity, it doesn't refer to all *identities*. "The identity we therefore radically reject is that which comes from authoritative and unchallengeable debates built around individuals who hardly open their eyes to life and is inoculated through instruction via

the family, school, group, community, society, nation, state, world, without a single chance for singular development or divergence." (p. 13).

One last point: beyond the issue of identity, the most important aspect of this work is the epistemological break it proposes. In this respect, given the pure knowledge of classical epistemology, García Gutiérrez (2007, p. 19) continues with his line of thinking in his previous work that "all knowledge is dirty, contaminated by cognitive and non-cognitive elements, by emotions and passions, by vagueness, mixtures, ambiguities and contradictions." His project, which looks at new ways of thinking and declassifying, is frankly important. We should bear in mind the fact that, as Delgado states (2007, p. 200), "Any classifying entity, that's to say a superimposed entity definable by and in itself, does not serve as much to feed the basis of classification but rather constitutes its own product. In other words, it doesn't classify because there are things that need to be classified but because we classify whatever we discover. The difference is not what results in differentiation but rather differentiation creates and reifies this difference."

Looking at the content of the text, we should note that it's divided into two parts. The first includes chapters one and two; the second contains the third chapter of the book. The first part is called "Identity as conflict" and is a lucid reflection on the processes of identity, both their origins and their consequences.

The first chapter, "En torno a lo '*idem.titatio*'", talks about two identity-based geometries, "on the one hand, a pyramidal and vertical identity that's imposed on us by remote unidentified instances, impersonal both in origin and destination piercingly intimate. [...] On the other hand we can think about a horizontal identity, in other words, the identity built by subjects in their interior and exterior transits" (p. 36).

In the second chapter, "Microfísica de la identidad: pertenencias y marcas", the author opposes identity as a tool for oppression and subjugation of the person, without even being aware of this. For García Gutiérrez, "identity is written in the

pre-conscious and only here. If this were not the case, we would be talking about identifications, i.e. groups of belonging assumed by the subject with a greater or lesser degree of freedom and awareness." (p. 52).

In his analysis of the microphysics of identity, the author distinguishes two components. On the one hand, there would be identity-based attributions or labels, such as being Catalan or Spanish. On the other, there would be what is called "organisational categories or marks" (p. 54), which are more abstract and polyvalent, and enjoy an invisibility that ensures the identity will last. These marks are fundamental, since "the marks devise the real identity network that obliges us to remain loyal to a system" (p. 85). The author lists the following marks, while acknowledging that more exist: submission, totalism, totemisation, dichotomisation, resemanticisation *hic et nunc*, coherentism, normality, demarcationism and appropriationism.

The second part of the work is entitled "Declassifying identity" and starts with the third chapter, "Hacia el sujeto desclasificado". The author, referring to a previous work (García Gutiérrez 2007), proposes the strategy of self-dismantling the marks revealed. This concerns declassification but it should be clarified that "Declassification does not look to elaborate individual or differential identities but, instead, singular, solidarity-based identities." (p. 51). Research on the declassified subject does not imply a vacuum. "Such a subject is non-conformist but is not free from belonging. Or brands." (p. 90). The aim is an attitude of openness, of self-awakening, of understanding, flexibility, of metacognitive engagement, of "reinterpreting experience as experience progresses" (p. 93). In this effort to find a new way of thinking, of thinking of ourselves, he proposes a reconstruction of subjectivities through three methods. The first is the desire to declassify ourselves using strategies of self-vigilance, rebellion and escape. The second is reducing the marks' privileges (submission, totalism, totemisation...), "in the certainty that those of us who were tattooed with them can never get rid of them" (p.109). The third method is declassification through passivity (become surprised again by the accepted barbarity), compassion and solidarity

In summary, we cannot ignore the fact that, as García Gutiérrez says (2007, p. 132), "The history of identity and classification has only brought the world suffering, violence, misery and inequality." Social sciences, and not just anthropology, are partly responsible. Sen (2007, p. 236) recalls that "[...] theories can influence social thinking, political action and public policies. The artificial reduction of human beings into singular identities could have a dispersing effect and end up making the world a much more dangerous place." Maybe, therefore, it is necessary to have this "exo-immanent revolution, a revolution both without and within the everyday, without method or model, without nostalgia or hope of anything in exchange for the possible ruptures – in this lies our declassification. That which was always there, untouchable, immutable: language, customs, symbols, coherences, consistencies, moral and ethical principles, the deepest convictions, beliefs, rela-

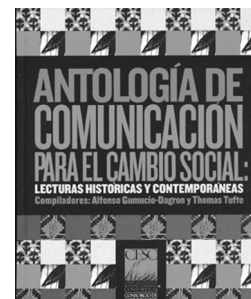
tionships, feelings, affections and dislikes. All will be offered up to declassification." (p. 114).

As can be seen, García Gutiérrez's proposal is not an easy one: "Choosing the road of self-denial, studying the argument we hate at first sight, fearlessly questioning some principles and breaking the inviolable rules of our symbolic universe." (p. 78). Neither is this the job of the reviewer, because a good review would have to double the number of pages of the work reviewed. This text is brimming with suggestions, debates, thought-provoking material... And this is its immense heuristic value.

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Conceptual maps for emancipating communication

At times of crisis and uncertainty, such as those we are currently undergoing, reflecting on the potential for generating change of the participatory processes of social communication becomes more current, pertinent and necessary than ever. Even more so when communication faculties and schools tend to reduce the understanding of communication in their curricula to the mere production and transmission of journalistic or persuasive information, weakening its etymological meaning (from the Latin *communicare*, “to make common”, “to share”) and ignoring its dialogic and “ritual” dimension (Carey 1989).

Thinking about the relationship between communication and social change requires us to go beyond the media and the message and pay attention to the flows, relations and processes of communication in which social and power relations are created, recreated, challenged and transformed (Castells 2009). This is the path that invites us to consider the accurate and rigorous selection of more than 200 historical and contemporary readings that comprise the *Communication for Social Change Anthology* compiled, with the collaboration of experts from the five continents, by Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron, a specialist in communication and development and former executive director of programmes of the Communication for Social Change Consortium, and the professor at Roskilde University in Denmark and co-director of Ørecomm, the Consortium for Communication and Global Change, Thomas Tufte.

An initial version of this work was published in English in 2006 and presented at the First World Congress on Communication for Development in October of that same year in Rome, jointly hosted by FAO, the World Bank and the Communication Initiative Network (a virtual community that groups together communication activists, practitioners and researchers into communication for development). The Spanish edition, which has come to light a little more than a year and a half later, has five new chapters and substantially extends the length of some passages from the first edition.

Throughout its more than 1,400 pages, the book traces and

presents, in the writings of 150 worldwide academics and experts, the thoughts and concepts that have contributed to the emergence and evolution, under the studies of communication for development, of the specific field of communication for social change. Communication for development emerged and evolved from the 1950s, linked to the increasing activity of international development cooperation (Melkote 1991; Servaes 1999; Waisbord 2001; Beltrán 2005). This is summarised and contextualised in a useful introductory chapter, in which Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte define communication for social change as “a process of public and private dialogue through which people determine who they are, what they need and what they want in order to improve their lives” (p. 44).

While the work’s editors explicitly state their preferences, from the beginning, regarding this approach, the selection of readings avoids favouring one theoretical focus over another, in such a way that the reader benefits from a wide range of approaches and arguments from which they can form their own criterion. The texts belong to such diverse areas as sociology, political science, media research, rural development, education, philosophy and anthropology. However, they share the conviction of the intrinsically dialogic and participatory nature of the different practices, flows and processes of communication with the potential to generate relevant social transformations.

The anthology is divided into two parts. The first brings together a hundred historical readings in chronological order. This starts with a classic Bertolt Brecht text from 1932 about radio as an apparatus of communication and continues up to the end of the 1990s. It presents the historical roots and pioneering thoughts of a proposal of communication for a development seen as emancipatory social change, highlighting the importance of the praxis of participatory communication as an inspiration for theory (Gumucio-Dagron 2001).

This first block of texts represents an exceptional effort to recap, highlight and, in some cases, recover the significant contribution made by Latin America, Asia and, to a lesser extent, Africa, not only to the edification of this tradition of

thought but also to that of the study and philosophy of communication. In this way, the compendium provides well-deserved recognition for the work of thinkers such as Pasquali, Beltrán, Díaz Bordenave, Boal, Prieto Castillo, Reyes Mata, Beltrão, Quebral, Feliciano, Jamias, Cádiz, Valbuena, Dissanayake, Ugboajah, Mowlana, Ascroft and Jayaweera, amongst many other non-Western authors, whose intellectual works have hardly had any projection in academic circles in Europe and the USA. This also includes distinguished conceptual works by western academics such as Berlo, Schramm, Rogers, Mattelart, Schiller, Nordenstreng, Gerbner, Servaes and Richeri.

In the second part, the anthology includes contemporary readings on issues that have characterised the research agenda and practice in this field since the middle of the 1990s. Back then, a generalised critical review was carried out of how development and social change was conceived to pay renewed attention to human rights, sustainability, participation, gender equality, good governance and social justice. The texts that make up this part of the work are ordered around five themes for discussion: “paradigms in communication for development”, “popular culture, narrative and identity”, “social movements and community participation” “power, media and the public sphere” and “information society and communication rights”.

It is perhaps in the selection of these themes, texts and authors where the reader can occasionally disagree with the editors since, given the necessity to limit the size of an already large work, they evade and exclude issues and approaches that nonetheless are also clearly profiled in the contemporary theoretical reflection and practice of communication for social change. They therefore obviate the impact of new information and communication technologies on displacing barriers to public participation in a range of political, cultural and economic processes, even the possibility of working for change in the field of the mass media (civic journalism, media advocacy, social mobilisation in favour of a new legal framework for the audiovisual sector, media observatories, etc.). Another omission, for example, is the absence of an interdisciplinary methodological approach such as critical discourse analysis (CDA), which has been used to show the discursive nature of most contemporary social and cultural changes (Fairclough 1992; Fairclough, Cortese and Ardizzone 2007).

Finally, it is surprising that little reference is made to the methodological challenge posed both by empirical research of the processes of participatory communication oriented towards achieving social transformation as well as by the subsequent interpretation of its findings — both tangible and intangible. This is one of the essential questions in order to further the foundations of this theoretical approach, to increase its visibility and strengthen its legitimacy, above all in the area of formulating strategies and policies for development and social change.

Thanks to the NWICO debate, studies of how communication, social change and development relate to one another went

beyond the area of interest of the so-called “developing” countries more than three decades ago. Today these studies are showing themselves to be strategic in confronting the collective construction of the future for our complex and dynamic societies. This compilation, the most exhaustive on this issue, is therefore destined to become an obligatory source of reference and consultation for all researchers and activists of communication as a factor in, platform for and process of change.

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NIELSEN, J.; PERNICE, K. *Eyetracking Web Usability*. New Riders Press, 2009. 437 p. ISBN 0321498364

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Eyetracking
Web Usability

Research that's relevant: insight into Web content display

As a professor of multimedia design, I am always striving to find books that offer insight into and reasons for making clear and solid Web design choices. Texts on usability testing offer information about a process that can provide good anecdotal information while books on eyetracking research (a technology that can follow a person's gaze) offer a perspective that focuses on where users look and their attention is placed.

This is why Nielsen and Pernice's book "Eyetracking Web Usability" is so intriguing. It combines these two research methodologies and gives user interface designers some excellent guidance in understanding how to draw users' attention to Web page elements.

The authors do an admirable job of portraying the strengths and weaknesses of data gathering using eyetracking. They go into an appropriate amount of detail about the equipment used, the Mind-Eye Hypothesis (a theory that indicates that people are thinking about what they are looking at) and their research design. They even give readers an indication of the cost of using this form of data collection themselves. This background gives the content of the book added credibility.

The chapters about their findings provide excellent guidance for making design decisions about Web page layouts, navigation choices, design elements, use of images, use of advertisements and overall viewing behaviour. There are some gems of knowledge in these pages. For example, readers can understand how most users tend to read Web pages in a pattern shaped like the letter "F". Or they can get confirmation about how rewriting and reformatting a Web story to include more white space, bulleted lists and meaningful icons can increase users' recall of story information. In addition they can see that "people ignore more images than they look at on the Web, and they look at images for just a fraction of a second" (p. 196). In particular *Chapter 6: Images* is full of excellent advice about the types of images that get attention (high contrast images that feature real people) and those that do not (images that

look like advertisements that are not related to content on the page).

Each results chapter outlines basic findings and presents visual screenshots of eyetracking data superimposed onto Web pages. These visual representations help to provide a clear, concrete understanding of the concepts and allow the reader to clearly see the reasons for the conclusions drawn by the authors. Moreover, the sites tested were not prototypes created for this study but rather popular, heavily used sites such as Skype, Sony, *New York Magazine* online, Neiman Marcus and J.C. Penney. The authors mention that they paid special attention to breadth and variety when choosing the sites to test. As they assert: "Only after you see the same pattern of behaviors repeated on multiple sites can you start feeling confident that you have discovered a usability guideline that is likely to apply to a site that you have not tested" (p. 38).

Each chapter starts out with an overview that summarizes the content. Within the text margins of each chapter are quick tips or results of particular interest. Therefore this book is not only for those who may want to read it cover-to-cover but also for those seeking a reference to consult when making design decisions. It has a complete, comprehensive index and a glossary of design elements that impact eye movements. It also contains an interesting appendix of how much (what percentage of their viewing time) users look at basic Web interface elements such as navigation, images and advertisements.

The book's limitations are outlined in the preface. The authors are clear that the sites they chose to test are those with a business goal that aim to support users getting something done. Therefore, their conclusions will not be all that helpful to those putting together purely artistic sites or sites where users go only to be entertained. In addition their test subjects were all adult users. The authors note that their other usability work has shown that children's online behaviour is markedly different from adults, resulting in different guidelines. This book does not discuss these differences. They also do not provide any insight into the online behaviour of older users or users with disabilities.

What the book does deliver, however, are some valuable design guidelines for those creating a site for an adult, mainstream audience. The breadth and depth of their work (more than 300 users asked to perform 85 tasks) allows for some solid observations. Although much of the authors' study methodology involves asking users to execute test tasks that are similar to those requested during a basic usability test, the marriage of this information with eyetracking data provides solid insight and clear guidelines.

AGUADO TERRÓN, J. M.; MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ, I. J. (coord.) *Sociedad móvil: tecnología, identidad y cultura*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2008. 330 p. ISBN 978-84-9742-875-0

BY JOSÉ ALBERTO GARCÍA AVILÉS

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An extensive portrayal of the mobile

The mobile telephone has unleashed a radical change in society's rituals of interaction and daily life, in managing groups and organisations and in how different personal spheres interact (Katz and Aarhus 2002). It also affects leisure consumption, the management of individual identity and even in initiatives of organised social action (Sampedro 2005). This book brings together different perspectives related to cultural studies and considers the relevance of the mobile telephone as a technological object, as an area of market strategies, and as an everyday cultural object, looking at everyday communication and new technologies. And it does so through dialogue, providing a space for debate about the trends, methodologies and themes of research into the mobile phone, going beyond the macroeconomic discussions and consumption forecasts that abound in this area.

Seventeen researchers from Spain, Australia, Germany, the USA, the United Kingdom, Italy and China are involved in this volume, providing an extremely enriching international dimension. The work's coordinators, professors Juan Miguel Aguado and Immaculada Martínez, have promoted two research projects from the Research Group of Social Communication, Culture and Technology (E-COM) at the University of Murcia. The first is "MOVILSOC. The social impact of the mobile phone in Spain: managing identity, mediatization and consumer patterns". In the second project, "MOVILIZAD@S: the mobile mechanism as a tool for equality in the information society", the universities of Alicante, Extremadura, Rovira and Virgili and Rey Juan Carlos worked together with the support of the Institute for Women.

In the last three years, Aguado and Martínez have published a series of articles (2006, 2009a, 2009b) that tackle the evolution of mobile technology and its implications for culture and communication. The term "mobile society" doesn't just refer to the functional impact of technological gadgets that offer connectivity and ubiquity but also to the mobile nature that affects identities, personal habits and social relations, and to the way

in which individuals communicate and behave. This volume brings together contributions from a wide network of researchers and provides a brilliant portrayal of the state of affairs.

This work is divided into three sections. The first – "Mobile culture" – reflects on the most recent research. The director of the Centre for Mobile Communication Studies at Rutgers University, James Katz, summarises a global view of a phenomenon which, until recently, was studied in a very fragmentary way or as a mere addition to research on the internet and digital technology. Related to this, different contributions debate the theories of "domestication" by Silverstone and Haddon, the appropriation of technological objects and the validity of ethnographic and transcultural perspectives in the study of the mobile medium.

The second section ("Technologies of identity") analyses the way in which the mobile phone has become a cultural object through its influence on how individual and collective identity is created, be it by interrelating public and private spaces, spreading roles through social uses, adopting behaviour associated with the capture and distribution of images and their implementation in a range of cultural contexts. There are ethnographic studies on the practices and rituals of mobile phone consumption amongst young Italians (pp. 243-261) and sociability in the way mobiles are used in Chinese society (pp. 144-160), reflecting how the mobile phone is "a resource that serves the need to nourish life-worlds and build social relations" (p. 261).

The third section ("Towards a new medium") examines technological developments and market strategies, together with the configuration of the mobile as a multimedia consumption platform, generating changes both in the brand image of the sector's players and in consumer habits and content. In the chapter "The fourth screen: cultural industries and mobile content", Aguado and Martínez describe the convergence between the mobile and its connectivity with other devices, while also analysing the transformation in business models. According to the authors, individuals appreciate the sociability values inher-

ent in the consumption of mobile content, such as showing and sharing experiences with others “as a kind of shop window of preferences, tastes and values in the construction and presentation of the user's identity” (p. 199). The chapter concludes with an interesting list of different mobile content drawn up around four main categories: journalism, entertainment, internet and information management, and marketing and advertising, as well as a conceptual map (p. 215) which includes the benefits of mobile technology as perceived by users and experts (multifunctionality, ubiquity, adaptability, involvement...). Aguado and Martínez claim that “the hybridisation of its private nature, related to identity, and the tendency towards standardisation of this link on conventional media, places the mobile medium in a privileged position in the development of the media ecosystem”(p. 218).

In this section Gerard Goggin (University of South Wales, Australia) intervenes, with his broad investigative trajectory on the mobile telephone, highlighting “Cell Phone Culture. Mobile Technology in Everyday Life” (2006). Goggin argues that, paradoxically, mobile content have undergone an “atrophied” development (p. 235) because firms are unable to satisfy the potential wide range that users demand. And that the recent developments in products and services have focused mostly on digital images, together with connectivity between devices and the capacity to produce and broadcast their own content.

The book ends with two chapters of a more descriptive nature: Feijoo, Gómez and Martín offer a panorama of mobile content, its strategies and expected evolution in Europe, while Adelantado looks at the current scenario of mobile entertainment in Spain.

As Hartmann states, there is a “split between academic and commercially funded research that is quite evident and that leads to research on the future” (p. 82). Prospective studies of the sector are often limited to describing economic opportunities and the degree of technological take-up in different countries. This work, however, constitutes a valuable contribution to the small amount of academic literature that rigorously examines the evolution of mobile communication.

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OJER GOÑI, T. *La BBC, un modelo de gestión audiovisual en tiempos de crisis*. Madrid: Euroeditions, 2009, 223 p. ISBN: 978-84-937376-2-7

BY ISABEL SARABIA ANDÚGAR

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The BBC and the keys to its excellence: financially safe and independent, well-run and committed to quality programming

In Europe's audiovisual industry, the BBC is considered a paradigm of audiovisual public service and a frame of reference for countries immersed in redefining their own public television, as is the case in Spain.

A lot of Anglo-Saxon authors have produced many scientific works on the BBC over the last three decades: Burns (1977), Briggs (1985), Madge (1989), Cockerell (1990), Blumler (1992), Cain (1992), Barnett (1993), Hargreaves (1993), Davies (1999), Peacock (2004), Elstein (2004), Born (2005) and O'Malley (2005), amongst others. In Spain, many researchers have been interested in the BBC, noticing any activity undertaken by the British public television company. The way in which the corporation has adapted to new technologies, the particular nature of its journalists, its singularity as a public service and its interest in the public are some of the issues considered. Texts by some authors (Villar (2005), Manfredi (2006, 2008), García Avilés (2006), Lamuedra (2008), Ojer (2008, 2009), Llorens (2008) or Medina (2009), amongst others) have been published as articles in various scientific communication journals, as papers in conferences, or as chapters in books. However, at the end of 2009 there was still no work in Spanish dedicated entirely to the BBC.

Teresa Ojer Goñi is a professor in the Media Business and Communication Structure of Communication Department at the Universidad San Jorge in Zaragoza. She is linked with the Media Business and Communication Market research group at the Universidad de Navarra, which explains why the framework for her doctorate is the purely economic and media management perspective. This book is a summary taken from her doctoral thesis defended at the aforementioned university.

La BBC, un modelo de gestión audiovisual en tiempos de crisis [The BBC, a model of audiovisual management in times of crisis] is a decisive addition to the scientific community because, on the one hand, it covers an important gap in liter-

ature (it's the first book in Spanish focusing solely on the BBC) and, on the other, it gives the reader insight into the current set-up of the corporation by studying how British broadcasting system has developed in general, and public service television in particular. In short, the author offers researchers a valuable overview of the reality of the BBC, which is the result of praiseworthy documentation, synthesis and systemisation of the information, and with a clear didactic purpose. In this work, the author does not reject analysis or reflection, although we sometimes fail to know her own position on certain questions that she herself raises, and she could also be more critical of her chosen subject. The BBC is not perfect: its commercial expansion, which strangles commercial radio as well as the private web content firms, or its journalistic scandals such as the Hunt case, is not dealt with in sufficient depth. She also does not look at the paradoxical fact that the British working classes prefer the paying platform BskyB, with its entertainment mainly made up of football and Hollywood, to the more 'snobbish' programming on the BBC, considered by some as television for the rich, paid for by the poor.

Despite this, excellence does exist. In this work, Teresa Ojer is of the opinion that the level of excellence enjoyed by the BBC is due to decisive issues, such as the conditions that the public corporation was created under, its management structure, its financing system and even the constant requirement of quality programmes. These are the aspects around which this work revolves, which is divided into five chapters.

As a point of departure, Teresa Ojer proposes an approach to the concept of public service television, which is not exhaustive, using the contributions of other reference works on this subject, thereby reviewing public service principles. She also decides to weigh up discussion on the legitimacy of public television in Europe, presenting the arguments for and against multi-channels.

The BBC's case study begins in the second chapter, in which analyses the most significant milestones that have affected the corporation's development since its origins in 1922 to 2008. The early years saw such crucial events as the status of public utility granted to the radio in the UK and, as a result of this

decision, its conversion from private radio company (British Broadcasting Company) to a public corporation. This transformation was by Royal Charter (a document which continues to protect the BBC as an independent public body, free from government influence) which is periodically renewed.

Teresa Ojer believes that it's fundamental to the British public television model that programming has remained the same since its inception, having been decided by non-governmental managers committed to public service, as well as the fact that its funding is based on a direct tax, independent of the state, through a levy on citizens. The author also highlights the BBC's crises, such as the break-up of the BBC's monopoly in 1955, the economic crisis of the 1970s, the implementation of cable and satellite broadcasting in the 1980s and the threat of privatisation by the British government in the 1990s.

For Ojer, the BBC's independence from the state, which makes it a benchmark for other countries, is due to its singular management structure which, as the researcher points out, "has remained constant for eighty years" (p. 87). In the third chapter, in order to evaluate the BBC's organisational model, Teresa Ojer examines the configuration of management tools in public television stations around Europe and presents current opinions on corporate governance — agency theory and stakeholder theory. Next, she explores the governing structure of the Corporation, explaining both the functions at the heart of management and the weaknesses in the management systems, and they way they have been rectified.

The BBC's main priority is to serve its viewers, particularly because British citizens are the Corporation's main stakeholders. In the fourth chapter, Professor Ojer, arguing that the BBC's activity depends on how they fund their public service, describes different, conventional forms of income (levies, commercial activities and grants) and new business avenues initiated by the BBC. The Corporation therefore relies on a mixed financing system, which the author openly supports and defines as "the most adequate, bearing in mind its public service nature" (p. 131).

In the final chapter, Ojer Goñi, who believes that the BBC's audiovisual products are the key feature to its identity, tackles the concept of quality, reviewing theories related to business size, television scheduling, and programmes. The author ends by exploring five BBC programmes. It is an analysis which confirms her hypothesis that "constant improvements in programming quality have contributed to its national and international prestige" (p. 14).

Despite doubts regarding the service's legitimacy and funding in a British television market that is increasingly more liberalised, Teresa Ojer concludes that, in the last few years, the BBC has continued to move towards excellence in such a way that it has not only remained strong as an independent, non-governmental public corporation, but has also intensified its commitments to citizens, has reaffirmed its commitment to quality content and it has assumed leadership in the UK's switchover from analogue to digital.

Undoubtedly, Teresa Ojer's book, both in the theme it tackles and the quality of its content, is essential reading for researchers of media business and management, as well as for those who work on aspects related to communication policies and the structure of the broadcasting system.

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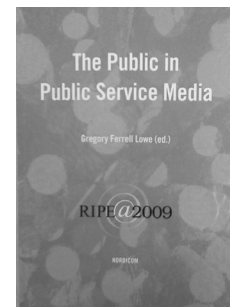
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Hamburg*



This is the fourth book in the series *Re-Visionary Interpretations of the Public Enterprise* (RIPE, <<http://ripeat.org>>), led by Gregory Ferrell Lowe, professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere (Finland), whose main purpose is to promote discussion and collaboration between academics, researchers and professionals interested in public service media (PSM). Every two years RIPE organises an international conference, hosted by a public service provider, which conceptually covers the main issues and challenges faced by the PSM. They also discuss possible theoretical contributions and propose practical solutions. As a result of each conference, RIPE and the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom) of the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) publish a volume in which they summarise the most relevant contributions.

The text under review comes out of the conference entitled *Public Service Media in the 21st Century: Participation, Partnership and Media Development*, held in October 2008 in Mainz (Germany) and organised by the German public broadcaster Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF), the programme Mediainelligenz of Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz and the Institut für Mediengestaltung at the University of Applied Sciences at Mainz. After the corresponding books from the 2002, 2004 and 2006 conferences, this fourth volume consolidates RIPE as a think tank for public service media. Undoubtedly, both the international conferences and the resulting publications have respectively become a meeting point and an essential point of reference for academics and for sector professionals. Moreover, it can be seen that both cases – meetings and publications – involve top-class, internationally renowned individuals and young researchers bringing new perspectives.

This fourth volume is entitled *The Public in Public Service Media* and its aim is to address the conception and current role of the audience, of citizens, in relation to public service media, focusing on television and occasionally online. The

main theory is that, in the current transformational context, digitalisation has led to the creation of a multiplatform environment, resulting in inevitable audience fragmentation and segmentation, so that the legitimacy and future development of public service media are inexorably going through a reconceptualisation of the public, with whom it must actively engage. Amongst the arguments mentioned, the need to take advantage of new technologies is emphasised in order to establish new links between public broadcasters and their users and thereby encourage more collaborative relationships. Only in this way can public services maintain their visibility amongst an increasingly abundant audiovisual market. This is essential to ensure its presence in the audiovisual market. Moreover, audience engagement is key to ensuring the public support that legitimises PSM. Both aspects – economic and social – are essential for guaranteeing the continuity of public service within a scenario where its relevance and necessity are systematically questioned.

As in earlier RIPE volumes, this book is designed as an anthology. Therefore, since each chapter is autonomous and deals with a specific theme, it does not need to be read in a linear manner. This makes the text a practical and functional source of reference. The book is organised into two sections. In the first (“Trends and Theorisation”), the focus is more conceptual and theoretical. It analyses what the current needs of public service media are and why, and what steps need to be taken to resolve these. The second part (“Audiences and Accountability”) looks at how to relocate the public, as audience, users or citizens, within the necessary definition required by PSM within the new context. To this end, it has chosen to present critical analyses and comparisons of experiences implemented in different European countries. Both the sections are preceded by an extensive introduction by the editor that brilliantly explains the status quo of public service and identifies the questions that establish how it will develop in the near future.

The contents of the chapters are worthy of a few comments.

First, there are noticeable differences in the formal quality of the various chapters. While some read fluently and the way ideas are organised stimulates curiosity, others are written in an excessively confusing manner, with a complex rhetoric that discourages the reader (such as in L. Jackson's chapter on participative audiences and PSM). Similarly, while the analysis in some parts is brilliant and illuminating, raising arguments that invite serious consideration of the theme in question and encourage readers to draw their own conclusions alongside those of the authors, other contributions are little more than mere descriptions of national experiences, which are usually related in a manner that hardly makes for compulsive reading and present data that, lacking adequate contextualisation, do not add much. In these cases, the lack of an elaborate analysis results in conclusions that sometimes seem rather arbitrary or questionable (such as the contribution from I. Costanera about the quality of television in public service media). Therefore, the reader might be under the impression that a case has been chosen simply because they wanted to publish the results of some research, regardless of its importance or suitability to the book's topic (an example is the chapter by D'Arma, Enli and Steemers, which analyses how public service media serve the infant audience).

Second, the volume suffers from an unexpected geographical bias considering the RIPE initiative, which encourages researchers and professionals from different countries to participate. Essentially, the work deals with national paradigmatic cases (United Kingdom and Germany) and takes a tour of Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway and Finland). Holland and Italy have been included, as well as the United States as a colourful note. The experiences of Mediterranean and Eastern European countries, which were represented at the conference, have been left out, when their inclusion could have contributed interesting results and ideas. Moreover, no attention has been paid to the regional situation in Europe or to the development of the idea of public service in other areas of the world.

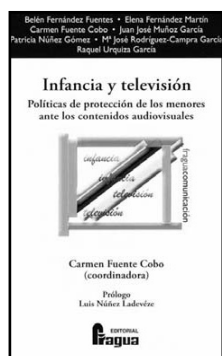
These negative points aside, the contributions by Josef Trappel, Richard Collins and Minna Aslama in the first part are noteworthy for their quality. The first systematically reviews the challenges faced by public service and identifies opportunities generated by the new technological context to renew its legitimacy. Richard Collins also looks at public service's apparent loss of legitimacy and reflects on how the internet could help to resolve this. Aslama adopts an interesting approach to the concept of audience participation and methods to drive this forward. In the second part of the book, the chapters by Uwe Hasebrink, Leurdijk and Leendertse and Hans Kleinsteuber stand out. Hasebrink provides a very solid framework for the conceptualisation of roles that spectators assume with the public media and proposes a model that is effectively validated using Germany as a case study. Meanwhile, Leurdijk and Leendertse contribute an interesting reflection that questions some of the preconceived ideas about the effects of technology on audience attitudes. Their contribution is interesting because

it reconsiders some of the principles that many broadcasters and professionals are blindly following when developing new services. Kleinsteuber, by means of acidic criticism and subtle irony, deconstructs one of the myths surrounding Germany's public service: the importance and efficacy of public broadcasters' internal boards as a tool that represents society's interests.

In conclusion, it should be said that, despite any shortcomings, this 2009 volume from the RIPE series is a highly valuable text in the debate and reflection on public service media. It covers a wide range of themes and experiences and provides important information for very different readers, from academics and professionals to students interested in the future of public service media.

Books Review

FUENTE COBO, C. (coord.) *Infancia y televisión. Políticas de protección de los menores ante los contenidos audiovisuales*. Madrid: Editorial La Fragua, 2009, 263 pages. ISBN: 978-84-7074-296-5



With a prologue by Luis Núñez Ladevéze and an introduction by José Antonio Ruiz San Román, this six-chapter book exhaustively describes the policies behind communication in the field of child protection, analysing existing experiences and suggesting future lines of action. In the first chapter, the editor, Carmen Fuente, outlines, from an ethic and regulatory point of view, the challenge of regulat-

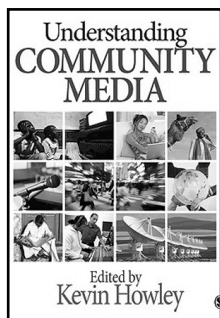
ing audiovisual content, taking into account the protection of children. Next, Rodríguez-Campra closely examines one of the most relevant aspects in the protection of childhood in audiovisual settings: advertising. He does so by revealing the effects of advertising on children, comparing cases from the European Union and United States. Next, Patricia Núñez and Elena Fernández review cases from audiovisual regulatory authorities in France, the United Kingdom and United States. They examine the regulatory situation at a state level and reveal the lack of an authority which, according to the authors, would protect the rights of television viewers if it did exist. In the fourth chapter, Juan José Muñoz compares Spanish, French, North American, Dutch and British regulations regarding their classification criteria for audiovisual content in the protection of minors. The author suggests standardising pan-European criteria in this field, with the aim of improving information directed at parents or teachers about content focusing on sex, drugs, alcohol, violence, fear, discrimination and foul language. The last two chapters answer useful technical questions on the general theme. First, Raquel Urquiza discusses technological tools that enable parental control over what children and teenagers watch, with particular emphasis on digital gadgets under development in the USA. And the last chapter, written by Belén Fernández, deals with the technical aspect of the labelling of audiovisual content, using metadata so parents or legal guardians can control it.

SHIMPACH, S. *Television in Transition*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 245 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4051-8535-6

Television in Transition analyses the transformations and continuities that predominantly occur in televisual content and programming, and focuses on the way in which this industry is being redefined by economic, political, cultural and technological changes. The book looks at different case studies based on one main thesis: the hero as a meta-idea and the main driving force of the author's reflections. It deals with various issues regarding four television series: *Highlander*, *Smallville*, *24* and *Doctor Who*. In each case, the way in which narrative language expresses different factors is considered, which are typical of what the author calls "the structural conditions and impediments to cosmopolitan existence". This is because each series is different, and uses an image of a hero who shows new ways of behaving, blurred by the usual domestic, public, work-related or leisure constraints, favouring the neo-liberal economic model. As well as from a cultural perspective, the author uses gender analysis since it can be seen, in the four cases studied, that the central figure of a white man is the basic matrix on which the hero is developed. Time and space are also central in the researcher's observational tools as, in each of the series, these are configured realistically for the plot, although not bearing any resemblance to reality per se. Moreover, all four series are characterised by a kind of "transcendental nostalgia" that permanently afflicts the protagonists. He combines the analysis of signified with observations about structure, and also looks at how television companies broadcast the series at the right time to economically benefit from its success, from merchandising items based on the characters of the series, to product placement strategies and the diversification of sales strategies that take advantage of the potential of new media. *Heroes* is also analysed, very apt given its subject matter, although it is not given its own chapter.



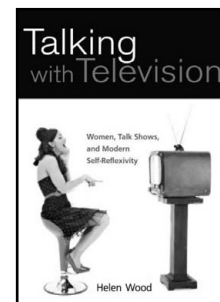
HOWLEY, K. (ed.) *Understanding Community Media*. London: Sage, 2010, 410 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4129-5905-6



This is a manual about community media, structured around the presentation of examples of alternative and community communication from around the world; a collective work divided into seven thematic sections. First, a rich panorama of theoretical perspectives that have come about, for example, because of terminology on community, alternative or radical media.

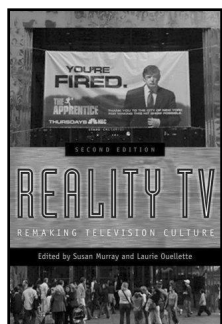
The following section looks at the role of this kind of communication in relation to civil society, the public sphere and democratic improvement in society. And the third section continues by looking further into experiences in the media to raise the idea of a "cultural resistance" to globalisation. Space has been dedicated to the promotion of community development by community media in the fourth section, with special attention paid to empowerment through these means and to specific cases in India, Scotland and Ghana. The fruitful relationship between community media and social movements is considered in the fifth section. The case studies move between Colombia, Mexico and the United States, where indigenous, ethnic minorities, urban and women's movements are analysed. The penultimate topic focuses on the position and relations of community media within the media system. The democratic nature of alternative media is again emphasised, but with specific cases in direct relation to politically adverse scenarios in Chile, Hungary, the EU in general and the USA. There is also talk of the technical transformation of the media system and its implications in the field of independent media. The book concludes with a section dedicated to the contexts created for community media in the era of economic globalisation, with contributions that provide, today, a certain perspective on phenomena such as the Independent Media Centers (Indymedia) or the innovative twist attributed to the Zapatistas of Chiapas in how they communicate.

WOOD, H. *Talking with television: women, talk shows, and modern self-reflexivity*. Urbana and Chicago (United States): University of Illinois Press, 2009, 238 pages. ISBN: 978-0-252-03391-9



Taking gender studies as its base, but from a multidisciplinary view that includes perspectives such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, social theory and cultural studies, this volume basically focuses on an analysis of relations between television and its audience. Helen Wood analyses British programming between 9 am and noon, a timetable dominated by talk shows, programmes mainly aimed at a female and heterosexual audience, in which a conservative discourse prevails. The first chapter reviews the existing debates concerning talk shows. The next traces the way in which media and audience research is moving away from an analysis of the rituals of communication and discourse. The author then offers an analysis of the programmes under study, in which she concludes that the traditional notions of the female viewer are being eroded with the emergence of a social sphere in which the female public is supposed to share space, time and cultural power. This highlights the fact that the genres of gossip, intimacy and revelations have become the structural frames for discourse. In chapter four, a research paradigm is presented that can take into account the temporary experience of broadcasting, which the author calls "text-in-action", a new methodology that analyses the broadcast and audience discourse at the same time and captures the life of text in the home. Chapter five includes a transcription of focus groups that the author carried out with a dozen women. Chapter six details the "text-in-action" of the study, where the responses of the women are shown after seeing the programmes being studied. Finally the author ends with a picture of how textuality and subjectivity are linked, how personal details and stories overlap within and through the televised discourse.

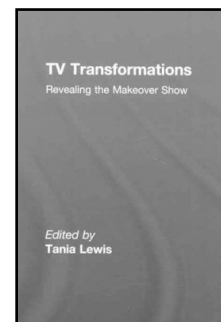
MURRAY, S.; OUELLETTE, L. (eds.). *Reality TV: remaking television culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2009, 377 pages. ISBN: 978-0-814-75733-8



Originally published in 2004, changes to TV programming and the rapid growth and omnipresence of reality television on networks have led to this volume being reviewed and updated. Of the seventeen authors who contributed to writing this book, Anna McCarthy's text is particularly of note, in which she takes a historical approach to reveal the roots of reality TV.

While John Corner suggests that our culture is moving towards a "post-documental" phase, Susan Murray's text questions the discursive differences between documentaries and reality television, suggesting that these are to be found in aesthetic aspects, brand images and audience expectation. Nick Couldry focuses on how reality television reformulates documentary reality. Next, Chad Raphael explores the economic origins of the reality television genre and attributes such factors as deregulation, the increase in competition and financial problems faced by television channels. Analysing these factors, the author dispels the myth that the audience is responsible for the growth in reality television and shows how political and economic forces have been key in their development. Likewise, John McMurria analyses trans-national trends in reality television beyond their production and concludes that reality television programming is a product of capitalism while, for Jon Kraszewski, reality television is a space for ideological manoeuvres. The structure of the reality television genre is studied in Heather Osborne-Thompson's article. The last part of the volume considers interactivity with the audience. Amber Watts reminds us that interactivity is not new to television, citing the participation of audiences in the post-war era. Mark Andrejevic questions the idea that reality television "democratises" culture and invites the masses into the area of cultural production. Finally, Henry Jenkins, taking as an example the case study *American Idol*, demonstrates how interactivity and branding have developed simultaneously.

LEWIS, T. (ed.) *TV Transformations. Revealing the Makeover Show*. New York: Routledge, 2009, 166 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-45148-2



"Programmes about 'changing image' have become a cultural phenomenon" and, based on this fact, Tania Lewis dedicates this volume to analysing the phenomenon of the "makeover show", which fills television programming in different countries. The volume, comprising thirteen articles, is organised into four distinct sections. The first deals with issues related to the industry. The second analyses the socio-cultural framework in which this type of programming has emerged. The third focuses on analysing the genres and sub-genres of these programmes, and the last section deals mainly with audiences. In the first part, Albert Moran's article is worthy of mention, as he describes the growth of this genre within the very development of televised and standardised formats, enabling franchises to be made worldwide, "indigenising" the product to meet local needs. In the second part, Laurie Ouellette and James Hay examine the changing relationship between television and social wellbeing. The authors suggest that life-intervention formats such as *Supernanny* play a central role because they lead viewers to new neo-liberal models of autonomous citizenship. In the third part, dedicated to sub-genres, an interesting article by Meredith Jones analyses cosmetic surgery programmes and relates this sub-genre to horror films. On the one hand, both focus on rebirth and, on the other, they share the permeability of the boundaries of skin-screen. Finally, the section dedicated to audience reception has, as a high point, Katherine Sender's and Margaret Sullivan's article about programmes that deal with obesity issues. The authors discovered that audiences were fairly critical of many aspects of these programmes, such as the humiliating representations made of obese people or the limitations to the advice offered by "experts" who appear on these programmes.

Other books of interest

MITTELL, J. *Television and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 465 pages. ISBN: 978-0-195-306675

TURNER, G., TAY, J. (eds.). *Televisión studies alter TV: understanding televisión in the post-broadcast era*. London: Routledge, 2009, 214 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-477697

RABOY, M., SHTERN, J. *Media Divides. Communication Rights and the Right to Communicate in Canada*. Vancouver (Canada): University of British Columbia - UBC Press, 2010, 408 pages. ISBN: 978-0-774-817745

ZAID, B. *Public Service Television Policy and National Development in Morocco: Contents, production, and audiences*. Saarbrücken (Germany): VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2010, 420 pages. ISBN: 978-3-639-246940

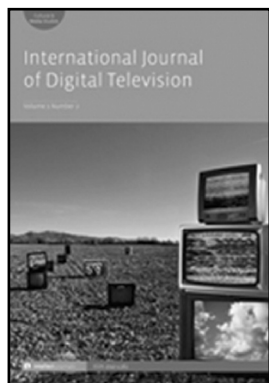
Journals Review

International Journal of Digital Television

Bristol, United Kingdom: Intellect Journals

Vol. 1 (2), 2010

ISSN: 2040-4182 / 2040-4190 [online]



The *International Journal of Digital Television* is one of this year's academic newcomers in the field of television studies. In the second issue of the journal, there are mainly case studies on the situation of digital television in different countries. First, an article by Geneviève A. Bonin describes the digital switchover in television in Canada from an economic and political point of view, highlighting

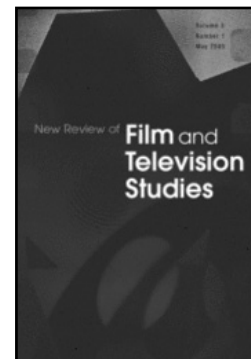
some legislative gaps. The next article presents cases of digital television migrations in Ireland, Greece, Finland, Austria and New Zealand. In this, Kenneth Murphy shows the conditions that affect media systems in each country, depending on the differentiating capacity of internal markets and the supposed regulatory neutrality in this respect. Krisztina Rozgonyi and Márk Lengyel analyse the situation in Hungary and describe the country's evolution regarding the implementation of DTT and other digital platforms. Then, Heikki Hellman exposes the Finnish case but, this time, emphasises what the author considers an acceleration of the commercialisation of the audiovisual sector, contrasting with the more protectionist tradition the country has experienced in recent years. There is also a work from researcher Michael Starks – a dissertation on various reports that look to discover how the digital switchover is affecting pluralism and free speech. In the same issue, the Russian situation is examined (Andrei Richter), as is the Danish (Erik Nordahl Svendsen). The rest of the articles go beyond analysing digital television's regulatory frameworks. For example, there is also research about the change in the way audiences are measured via technology using data feedback channels in research led by Els De Bens, from the Universiteit Gent, amongst other more technological research.

New Review of Film and Television Studies

Oxford, United Kingdom: Routledge

Vol. 8 (2), 2010

ISSN: 1740-0309 / 1740-7923 [online]

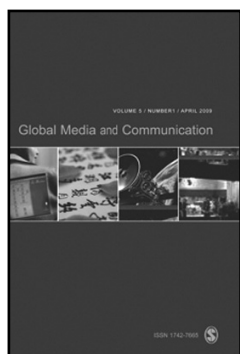


The *New Review of Film and Television Studies* opens its second issue with an article by Richard Misek, which presents the thesis of using white light in cinema as an example of certain ideological presuppositions that are dominant in Aristotle's western aesthetic principles. Paul Ramaeker then talks about the historical development of realism in North American detective films and the continuity of the genre's visual style, from a revisionist perspective. The following study, by Mark Jancovich, is based on a gender perspective which analyses the archetype of the *femme fatale* as someone emerging from the post-Second World War audiovisual world with various motives and certain contradictions. Tina Kendall publishes an article on the materialist theory of Siegfried Kracauer's cinema, and then Daniella Treveri Gennari and Marco Vanelli show how Italian Neorealism is the sub-product of the collaboration between left-wing intellectuals, filmmakers and even the Catholic Church. In this apparent contradiction, the authors glimpse a profound change in the relations between the Church and the film industry arising in the post-war era, resulting in the Church becoming a leading player and driving force in Italian cinema. The last of the articles in this issue is by Polona Petek and it deals with the contribution of contemporary road movies produced by Slovenian cinema from the onslaught of pro-European and "Yugonostalgia" debates in which the emergence of a certain non-Eurocentric cosmopolitanism is argued. The reviews section includes a work by Federico Pagello about the various books that have studied different phenomena arising from the film *The Lord of the Rings*. Another review looks at the book *Bakhtin and the Movies: New Ways of Understanding Hollywood Film* in which Martin Flanagan uses Bakhtin's linguistic theory to analyse the audiovisual language of films.

Global Media and Communication

London, United Kingdom / Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. Vol. 6 (1), 2010

ISSN: 1742-7665 / 1742-7673 [online]



Created in 2005, *Global Media and Communication* is one of the few magazines where one can find a space that encourages real critical debate on the changing world of communication. The last/latest issue highlights an interview with Lu Xinyu, a leading communications academic at the University of Fudan (China) and an important voice within the intellectual movement of China's "new

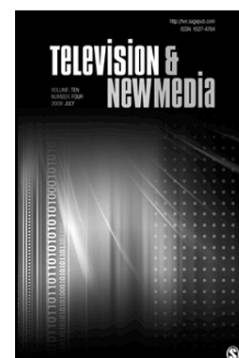
left" movement. The interview covers such issues as the New Documentary Movement (NDM) and underground narratives and the notion of class. Next, there is an article by Christian Fuchs (Universität Salzburg) which goes back to an analysis of Lenin's imperialism and applies it to contemporary society. Thus, a series of variables is used, such as the role of economic concentration, the predominance of financial capital, the importance of exporting capital, spatial stratification as a result of corporate domination and the political dimension of spatial stratification in the world. The author highlights that this theory is still relevant in media studies. The English channel Al-Jazeera is analysed in Mohammed el-Nawawy's and Shawn Powers' article (University of Southern California). The article describes the role of the international channel in a globalised world and points out that its journalistic model offers an alternative to the dominant model of the news media, which promote stereotypical attitudes towards culturally different "others". Tine Ustad Figenschou (Universitetet i Oslo) also takes Al-Jazeera as an object of study. The author analyses the channel's news content and concludes that it broadcasts more about the south, representing a potential counterflow for other news channels. As well as these articles, this issue also contains book reviews on indigenous media, Chinese television, the relationship between politics and the Venezuelan media, and cultural studies. The volume ends with Stijn Joye's reflection on the importance of alternative voices within the world of news.

Television & New Media

London, United Kingdom / Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. Vol. 11 (4), 2010

ISSN: 1527-4764 / 1552-8316 [online]

In the latest issue, the international journal *Television & New Media* offers a wide range of interesting articles. Dedicated to more recent trends in television studies and new media, among the articles that make up this issue, the one by Philip W. Sewell (Washington University in St. Louis) stands out, examining as it does the struggle for cultural power that took place in the critical and



political debate surrounding the so-called *dramedies* at the end of the 1980s, and which resulted in a change in practices and in redefining quality television. On the other hand, the article by Julie P. Elman (New York University) examines one of ABC's programmes, *After School Specials* (1972-1995), and suggests that the programme used a rehabilitative focus in representing problems faced by adolescents, tackling problems such as sexuality in a more proactive way, which has brought about a redefinition of teenage television. In "Exporting Exile on TV Martí", Mariana Johnson (University of North Carolina Wilmington) focuses on broadcasting by the United States in Cuba, more specifically on the *TV Martí* channel, which has no audience since the Cuban government cuts the signal to stop it from being broadcast on the island. The author argues that the existence of this channel can only be understood if one analyses Cuban exile while questioning its efficacy as propaganda and the United States' real need to export the imaginary of Cuban exile through this television channel. William M. Kunz's article (University of Washington Tacoma) addresses the flow of television across national borders, using broadcasting in the United States as a case study. The author points out, on the one hand, that there is a total absence of programming from outside the USA, and, on the other, that there is a predominance of just six large conglomerates in the North American audiovisual markets. This issue ends with a review of a book by Stuart Cunningham about Australian culture.

Science Communication

London, United Kingdom / Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. Vol. 32 (2), 2010
ISSN: 1075-5470 / 1552 – 8545 [online]



A veteran journal in the field of communication (the first issue dates back to 1979), *Science Communication* examines three rather broad and interrelated topics, namely communication between scientists, communicating scientific and technical news to the public and the spreading of knowledge. The first article in this issue examines the Mexican press's coverage of news about climate

change and the presence of certain frames and solutions in its coverage, pointing out that the dominant framing is from ecology/science. The article by Jen Schneider (Colorado School of Mines) presents an ethnographic study of communication and the uncertainty felt by journalists when dealing with environmental themes, suggesting that scientific training workshops aimed at journalists should focus more on metacommunication than seeking to improve communication between science and communication. On the other hand, a group of researchers from Johns Hopkins University presents a study on the representation of complex issues in the media, such as cancer, and points out that the media generally reports on scientific works but with limited objectives, which impedes the empowerment of the public or the effective promotion of preventative measures for this disease. The next article presents a study on the effects of priming and website interactivity in the development of certain attitudes in adolescents. The article by John C. Besley (University of South Carolina) looks at public engagement and the impact of fairness perceptions on decision favourability and acceptance. Finally, George Zarkadakis ("Feline Quanta", Greece) describes FameLab's initiative as a successful model in training young scientists as science communicators, which shows that science can generate emotion and interest in audiences with different cultural backgrounds, and that the key is to find suitable scientists, passionate about communicating science, and help them build and develop their communicative abilities.

Continuum. Journal of Media & Cultural Studies

Oxford, United Kingdom: Routledge
Vol. 24 (3), 2010
ISSN: 1030-4312 / 1469-3666 [online]



The latest issue of this well-established journal is devoted to a single theme and called *Television and the National*, focusing on the debate of the validity of Australian cultural expression on television, despite television being one of the most globalised fields. In this, Albert Moran proposes an interesting issue: "TV nation or TV city?", from the case of television in the city of Sydney as a platform for the development of nationwide television in Australia. Jane Landman also places us in the Australian sphere with a study on the use of television as a civic colonial education mechanism in Papua and New Guinea. Similarly, Pat Laughren presents a piece of research that, in some ways, is closely related to that of Landman but is situated as a case study some years later and general to all Australian documentary production. Chris Healy and Alison Huber also employ a historical perspective, but they look at a series from the 1960s (*Ask the Leyland Brothers*) and draw a connection between television and cultural memory. Felix Thompson analyses the intentionality of representing socially diverse debates and the construction of national identity by the BBC through analysing two series, *Coast* and *Spooks*. And Peter Hughes then returns to Australia to focus on pro-governmental aspects of the programme *Border Security: Australia's Front Line*, which is dedicated to describing the migratory phenomenon. The penultimate article in this issue is a work by Emma Prince about how reality shows are used to construct national cultural identity. Prince adds a certain gender perspective and analyses the system's infrastructure. And finally, Mark Balnaves and Tom O'Regan, from Curtin University of Technology and the University of Queensland in Brisbane, respectively, offer an analysis about how to measure audiences in Australia and America, and examine specifically the "professional culture" which has developed around broadcast ratings and the technical implications.

Websites Review

Futurelab

<<http://www.futurelab.org.uk/about-us>>

Futurelab is a British non-governmental organisation dedicated to transforming teaching and learning, making them more relevant and engaging to 21st century generations through the use of innovative practice and technology. As well as working in curriculum innovation, Futurelab also tackles issues such as digital inclusion, play and computer games, digital literacy and participation. Its website offers access to information about its current projects, multimedia resources (blogs, podcasts, videos, commercial resources or free online devices principally aimed at educators), a range of publications (from manuals, reports or articles to its own biannual magazine *VISION*) and a calendar of events.

International Engineering Consortium (IEC)

<<http://www.iec.org/>>

The International Engineering Consortium was founded in 1944 with the hope of building bridges between technological advances from the previous generation with academic research. Its website includes announcements on international fairs and events on digital technological innovation, a catalogue of publications on wireless technology, IP, broadband, electronic design, networking, fibre optics and content, applications and related services. Leading North American technological institutions have a presence here, as well as Mexican university centres and, to a lesser extent, European centres. In particular, the website highlights online education services, with downloadable podcasts and videocasts spreading the content of different events organised by the institution.

MPEG Industry Forum

<<http://www.m4if.org/>>

The MPEG Industry Forum is a not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to extend MPEG format standards in such a way that they continue to be accepted and used regularly by content creators, application developers, industry, service providers and users in general. Based on its corporate mission, it also serves as a platform that enables a range of industrial initiatives in the field of technological convergence to offer their services. The website publicises workshops, symposiums and congresses on systems for digital audiovisual coding, telephone technology and sector congresses on convergence between the entertainment and broadband industries, such as the TelcoTV Annual Conference.

Council for Media and Culture (New York University)

<<http://www.nyu.edu/media.culture/>>

The Council for Media and Culture, attached to New York University, provides a forum for scholarly and public ventures that probe the form and content of human communication in mediated environments. The Council promotes interdisciplinary research, innovation in teaching, and global dialogue, facilitating collaboration between researchers, academics, students, professionals and the public at large by promoting research in areas of media and cultural studies. On its website you can access a selection of publications by Council members and information on new research projects on the new media ("Trespassing Boundaries", "Carnivore" or "Molecules and Minds").

Media Smart

<<http://www.mediasmartworld.com/>>

Media Smart is a media literacy programme encompassing eight European countries (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Holland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom). Media Smart develops media literacy educational programmes and resources for primary schools with the aim of teaching children aged 6 to 11 to think critically about advertising. Through its website, you can access free resources, available in each of the member countries. These resources are aimed at teachers and tutors, and children can even access a series of online games which show them how to understand the meaning of advertising, all through play.

Infoscape Research Lab. Centre for the Study of Social Media (Ryerson University, Canada)

<<http://www.infoscapelab.ca/>>

The Infoscape Research Lab, founded in 2005 at Ryerson University in Toronto (Canada), was created with the aim of sponsoring research projects based on the cultural and political impact of the internet, especially in relation to social media. Amongst other things, this research centre develops software based on research tools, interface designs and experimental research methods that seek to analyse the content and use of new media. The website gives access to research projects in which the laboratory has participated, a list of conferences and congresses, information about publications and coverage on the lab's activities.

Community Media Network

<<http://www.cmn.ie/>>

Because of the recent economic crisis, the Irish Community Media Network website has become the main channel for communication between its members and the general public. The network has existed since 1993 and its pages contain news stories and resources available for community media projects which are often not-for-profit and work through the exchange or renting of technical material, for example. The resources are often distributed according to each medium: radio, television, photography, the press and internet, amongst others, and a list of organisations that could provide funding is also made available to users.

Comunicàlia

<<http://www.comunicalia.cat/>>

Comunicàlia's website contains an extensive catalogue of all its programmes and a map of all the television and radio stations that subscribe to it. Most of the content can be seen online from the section of programmes as well as through the "on demand area". The website also offers access to an intranet and, particularly interesting, a real-time news service provided by the Catalan News Agency (Agència Catalana de Notícies), with which Comunicàlia has an agreement to provide news content to the network. The magazine *Antena Local* can also be accessed from the same place.

Fédération des télévisions locales (FTL) [Federation of Local Television Stations]

<<http://www.inforegions.be/>>

The home page of the Federation of Local Television Stations for the French community in Belgium is a meeting place for professionals from federated television stations, as well as a means of communicating with the general public on today's local Francophone television stations in Belgium. On the website, programming catalogues, news and direct links to each of the member television stations can also be found. Once the user selects the content, they are normally redirected to the local Walloon television station's website where it has been produced. It is significant that, within the Federation, there is also a local Luxembourg television station.

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

<<http://www.cbaa.org.au/>>

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia is essentially the public body that supports local radio stations in the country. Its mission is to offer all kinds of services to the different media, above all legal training and improvement. The website acts as a link between different radio stations and there are job offers, scholarship programmes, calls for grant applications, competitions and awards on offer. It's also possible to access podcasts from associated radio stations and areas are provided for debate among users, as well as news, newsletter alerts and links of interest.

Center for Transformative Media (CTM)

<<http://ctm.parsons.edu/themes/>>

The Center for Transformative Media (CTM) is a research centre dedicated to the invention, critique and understanding of transformative media practices, including gaming, social networking, creative mobility, data mining and participatory learning. CTM projects focus mainly on the ecologies of change, with an emphasis on public networks as a space for ways of learning. Its website provides information on ongoing projects, such as the future of learning, participatory media practices, the issue of identity with new media, mobile platforms, information visualisation on new dynamic media and the pedagogy of play.

Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT)

<<http://www.cdt.org/>>

The Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) is a US non-profit public interest organisation working since 1995 to promote free speech and privacy in new information and communication technologies, for example by keeping the internet open, innovative and free. On its website you can access information about different issues related to the world of communication such as free speech, consumer privacy, the role of information technologies in health-related topics ("health IT") and the consequent privacy risks, the relationship between national security and individual rights, digital copyright and open government.

Xarxa de Televisions Locals (XTL) [Local Television Network]

<<http://www.xtvl.tv/>>

The XTL website serves both to promote the XTVL company within the audiovisual sector in general and its internal use by syndicated television stations. It contains a catalogue of content produced by the Barcelona Provincial Council's network, access to files with descriptions of both television stations that regularly broadcast this content and a list of the episodes made and often links to each project's producers or website. The website also has a section on live broadcasts, another on highlighted programmes, and a section to receive programme proposals.

Communications Consumer Panel

<<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/>>

Established under the British Communications Act of 2003 as the independent, policy advisory body, the Communications Consumer Panel analyses the interests of consumers on issues related to telecommunications, broadcasting and the audiovisual market, with the exception of content issues. Its website provides interesting information about different digital participation initiatives, media access, the digital switchover, consumer protection, new social networks, telecommunications, the digital divide and copyright. Ongoing projects and research publications carried out by the panel can also be accessed.

Global Media Research Center (Southern Illinois University)

<<http://gmrc.siu.edu/index.php>>

The Global Media Research Center is a research centre based at the United States' Southern Illinois University, directed by one of the leading scholars in community media, Dr. John Downing. It is currently carrying out several interdisciplinary projects in the field of communication, and one which particularly stands out is an encyclopaedia on alternative media and social movements, a complete study about the Nigerian Nollywood phenomenon, and research into the use of videogames in South East Asia. The website contains all the information on the centre and contact details, as well as a file of videos featuring seminars and presentations on each of the projects.

Comunitarias TV

<<http://www.comunitariastv.org/>>

Comunitarias TV is a network of community television for Latin America created in 2008 as part of the international cooperation between Spain and a range of community media initiatives in Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador, with the support of UNESCO's audiovisual and platform project. The network's mission is to share content and also experiences in general among various television networks, amongst which the pioneering Televisió de Cardedeu stands out. On the website you can look at the project "Con nuestros propios medios" [With our own media], consult related documents and access press releases about the impact of initiatives implemented on conventional media.

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**, notes and references not included. 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, the languages of diffusion of the journal.

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 (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 nonfulfilment of this warranty.

Articles should be addressed at:

Quaderns del CAC

Sancho d'Àvila, 25-129

08018 Barcelona

E-mail: quadernsdeldcac@gencat.cat

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. For example: (Buckingham 2007, 35-43).

Examples:

• Books

DE MORAGAS, M.; PRADO, E. *La televisió pública a l'era digital*. 1st ed. Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2000. (Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació; 4) ISBN 84-7306-617-0

El régimen jurídico del audiovisual. Madrid - Barcelona: Marcial Pons - Institut d'Estudis Autònoms, Generalitat de Catalunya, 2000.

• Articles in journals

HOFFNER, C. [et al.] "The Third-Person Effect in Perceptions of the Influence of Television Violence". In: *Journal of Communication*. Cary [United Kingdom]: Oxford University Press, June 2001, vol. 51, no 2, p. 283-299.

ISSN 0021-9916

• Contributions to books

CAMAUËR L. "Women's Movements, Public Spheres and the Media: A Research Strategy for Studying Women's Movements". In: SREVERNY, A; VAN ZONEN, L., eds. *Gender Politics and Communication*. 1st ed. Cresskill [New Jersey, USA]: Hampton Press, 2000, p. 161-182.

ISBN 1-57273-241-5

• Online documents

CONSELL DE L'AUDIOVISUAL DE CATALUNYA. *Informe sobre l'observança del pluralisme a la televisió i a la ràdio. Febrer de 2007*. [En línia]. Barcelona: CAC, 2007.

<http://www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/actuacions/Continguts/Informe_mensual_Febrer_2007.pdf> [Consulted 22nd March 2007]

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) and in **greyscale**.

Book reviews guidelines

1. The aim of the section 'Critical books review' is to review the most important new publications in the world of communication and particularly in the field of broadcasting.

2. Reviews must be original and previously unpublished.

3. Reviews must be adequate for readers to get a general idea of the content of the book under review, as well as providing a personal assessment of its interest. The review must therefore contain a description and analysis of the book, as well as some conclusions indicating its value and importance to readers.

4. The recommended length for reviews is around 1,000 words, not exceeding 1,300 words in any case.

5. Reviewed books must be contemporary, i.e. they must have been published during the last two full calendar years, although an earlier book may be included if duly justified.

6. The review must be given a title that summarises its content, with the bibliographical details and the author of the review below, including his or her position and the institution to which he or she belongs.

7. The model used for citing the bibliography must follow the criteria given by TERMCAT, which may be consulted at:
<<http://www.termcat.cat/productes/documents/citaciobiblio.pdf>>

Exemple:

DE MORAGAS, M.; PRADO, E. *La televisió pública a l'era digital*. 1a ed. Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2000. (Col·lecció Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació; 4). 350 p. ISBN 84-7306-617-0

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.

Exemple: "Xxxx xxx xxxx xxxx" (p. 45).

12. Bibliographical references to third parties cited in the text of the book under review must use the following model: (Surname year, p. for page number)

Exemple: (Hunt 1997, p. 251).

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: critica.cac@gencat.cat

15. The book review editor will evaluate every submitted review, in order to approve its publication or ask for some modification for its definitive publication

16. Reviews may be written in Catalan, Spanish, English or French. However, they will be published on paper in Catalan and, in PDF format, in English and Spanish on the CAC website.

17. After a review has been accepted, the author must authorise the CAC to publish his or her review in any of its written publications and on its website, by means of a signed letter sent by post.

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