

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).

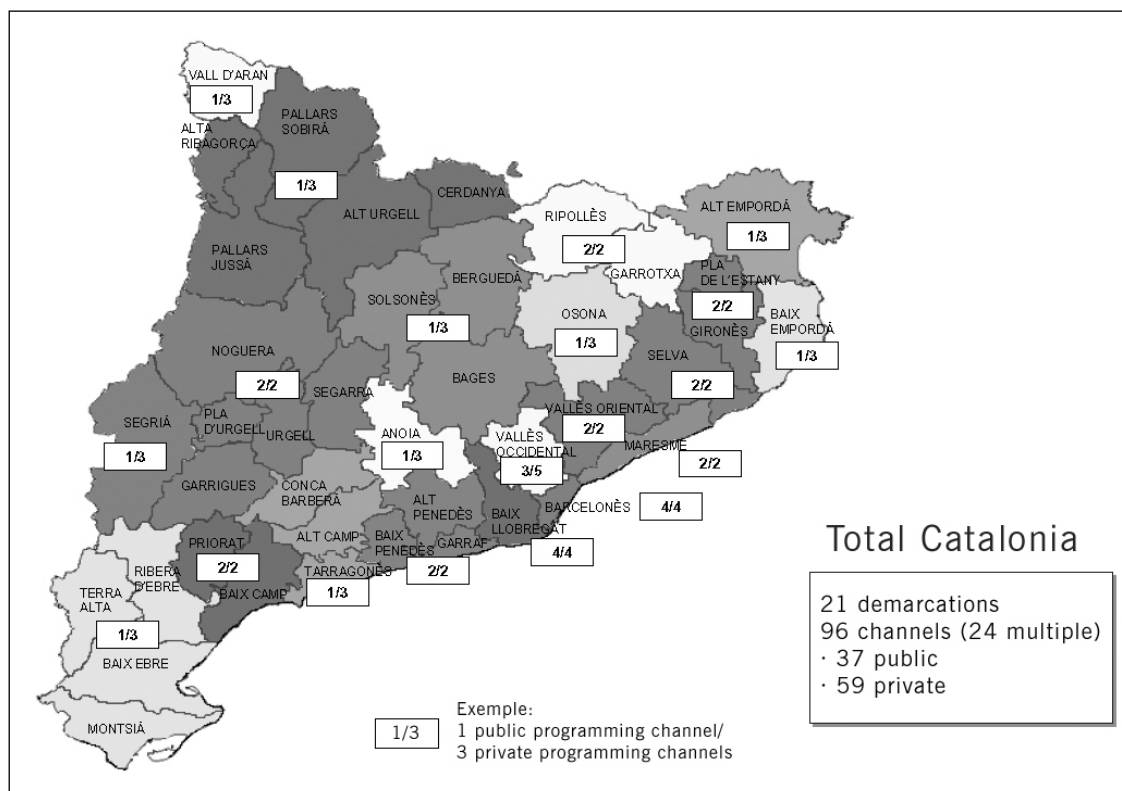
This article has two aims. Firstly, to explain the basic features of the digital switchover policies for local TV developed by Spain and Catalonia. And, secondly, to show how these policies have transformed the Catalan local sector's structure, both

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]
<<http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/CulturaDepartament/menuitem.4f810f50a62de38a5a2a63a7b0c0e1a0/?vgnextoid=a73e20d66949b010VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextchannel=a73e20d66949b010VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextfmt=detall&contentid=f488aee5d8875210VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD>> [Consulted: 20 June 2010]
- 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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