

ABSTRACTS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CATALAN JOURNALISTS AND THE SOCIETAT CATALANA DE COMUNICACIÓ: *PUBLIC RADIO AND TELEVISION IN THE XXI CENTURY*

These summarized proceedings are a collection of the papers and round-table sessions of the Annual Conference of Catalan Journalists and the Societat Catalana de Comunicació (Barcelona, December 11 – 12, 1998). The Conference this year was entitled *Public Radio and Television in the XXI Century*. The President of the Societat Catalana de Comunicació, Josep M. Martí; the Dean of the Society of Catalan Journalists, Salvador Alsius; and the organizer of the conference, Lúcia Oliva, gave the introduction, presentation, objectives and acknowledgements on behalf of their organizations.

PAPERS GIVEN AT THE CONFERENCE

PUBLIC TELEVISION IN THE MULTI-CHANNEL CONTEXT

EMILI PRADO

The author gives an introductory historical overview of European television as a public service, with special mention of the Italian case, bringing us up to the present mixed system (of classical open television). This mixed system is part of the new scenario, characterized, basically, by the advent of deregulation and technological advances, all of which has had an impact on programming and has led, according to Prado, to a situation in which the prime objective is economic. This, combined with the fierce competition to increase audience quota, results in a strategy of «every man for himself,» which also affects public television. A clear example of this is the counter-programming of Spanish TV. Most definitely, deregula-

tion of European television means similarities between European and North American television. Further similarity is curbed thanks only to our different historical backgrounds.

This paper, containing data which sheds light on the previous statements, concludes with a reminder: if market forces are the only regulators in the television industry, even public TV will be affected. Nevertheless, if we could find other sources of financing for this public service, thus limiting market logic, conditions could become conducive for greater creativity.

PUBLIC SERVICE TELEVISION AND THE NEW COMPETITIVE SCENARIO: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

PAOLO BALDI

Baldi, Head of the Service d'Information Stratégique of the UER, outlines the risks and opportunities involved in public television within the context of the new competitive scenario. His outline is based upon the two big changes going on simultaneously in the field: increased specialization (the appearance of more single-theme channels) and other, complementary use of audiovisuals (on-line shopping, multimedia).

He then gives an overview of the main networks, with the support of statistics that show the increase in single-theme channels and examples of such networks and the most significant genre or subgenre which fills their programming. He describes the situation of the most important networks, making it evident that the so-called diversity is mere rhetoric. He deals with exclusivity rights, an arm which networks must have, above and beyond their own productive capacity. He emphasizes how important it is for networks to have tools for analyzing viewer behavior in a global, integrated way, instead of continuing in the methodological error of studying media consumption in separate compartments.

THE SITUATION OF PUBLIC TELEVISION IN SPAIN: BETWEEN VAPIDITY AND MISGUIDANCE

ALEJANDRO PERALES

With a complete overview of the main laws regulating both public television (on state and autonomous community levels) and commercial television in Spain, the author explains the principle motives underlying the general non-fulfillment of the precepts which should be in effect in public

television as a public service. This paper also points out that the main characteristics of public television are social participation and the right to access, and that the main factors which most need strengthening in order to ensure the survival of public TV are quality, diversity, innovation of content, double financing, social participation, etc. The old concept of public television is in crisis. This is aggravated by the contradictory attitude of certain segments of society toward public TV. Consequently, a rethinking of public TV is the *conditio sine qua non* in order to help overcome this crisis.

BETWEEN THE AUDIT AND THE MARKET: RECENT TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE BBC

GEORGINA BORN

In the past decade, the BBC has been through an unprecedented series of major changes. In this lecture, Georgina Born outlines these developments and how they have transformed the BBC. The basis of her report is a unique, 3-year independent study of the changing nature of the BBC based on anthropological fieldwork inside the Corporation. In the main part, she shows how the Corporation has been tempered by the introduction of market forces and an aggressive managerialism. The thrust has been towards a semi-commercial model. Georgina Born indicates key problems arising and shows how the BBC epitomises the problems of a mixed economy in culture. Later, she says a little on recent changes to the BBC's News output and she ends with a few remarks on the future.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN THE «INFORMATION SOCIETY.» NOTES FOR A NEW INTERPRETATION

MIGUEL DE MORAGAS

The author takes a socio-political approach to a controversial subject matter: public service television in which counterposed political and economic interests are at play. Nevertheless, the object of study is no longer only a question of public or commercial television, but also the other large sectors in communication (telecommunications, Internet, etc.). In order to contextualize the debate, the author points out the three main factors which characterize the transition from the era of broadcasting to the era of webcasting as well as the effects of deregulation and the need to justify the

legitimacy of public television. This legitimacy is, as Moragas mentions, supported by numerous documents issued by the European Parliament.

The author goes deeper into the subject, presenting and explaining the six factors which he considers basic in justifying the legitimacy of public television in the new information society. He finishes by emphasizing the importance of having various forms of public information services.

THE NEED FOR A NEW CATALAN PUBLIC SERVICE

JOSEP GIFREU

The author gives an overview of the specific situation of the case of public service in Catalonia and proposes the fundamental lines of reform needed to overcome the crisis, given these two facts: public service is a must and public service reform is needed. As to the latter, the author emphasizes three main factors which impede reform: the status of the Catalan public service, the delay in political debate in the State of Spain, and the difficulty in understanding the necessities for space for Catalan culture. Gifreu finishes by listing eight specific propositions which help redefine the new model of public service in Catalonia in the XXI century. These range from the creation of a powerful public holding, to the need for synergy between Catalan space and European space, to the jump to the digital era, among others(

ROUND TABLES HELD AT THE CONFERENCE ROUND TABLE: *THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND FINANCING, MANAGEMENT, AND CONTROL OF PUBLIC RTVs*

This round table was presided over and moderated by **Antoni Esteve**, Director of LAVÍNIA TV and teaching at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra. The participants were spokesmen from the Parliamentary television control commission of the (CCRTV): **Enric Castellnou** (CiU); **Josep Maria Carbonell** (PSC); **Jacint Vilardaga** (PP); **Jordi Cuillot** (IC); **Pep Bargalló** (ERC); and **Benet Tugues** (Grup Mixt).

Enric Castellnou i Alberch spoke of the benefits of reforming the present RTV law or the CC/RTV law; the willingness to reach a consensus in the writing up and passing of a new RTV law for Catalonia; the need for a Catalan public TV, especially for the normalization of the Catalan language; the possibility that the financing of this TV be mixed (50-50); the need for control of the public RTV in two areas: content and staff.

Josep Maria Carbonell believed that, to the list of objectives of informing, forming, and entertaining, another objective should be added: stimulating the Catalan audiovisual industry. For RTVE-Catalonia, he called for a relationship close to the federal, in essence. He defended a mixed financial model, in which public funds would be decided on through a five-year program contract. His opinion regarding control was that the public corporation statutes should be rethought, as well as the CAC reform.

Jacint Vilardaga called for an urgent halt to incurring further debt, a definition of public service, and a decision as to whether the financing should be charged to government budgets or to user quotas – not to mention income from publicity or sale of programs. He argued that it would be of interest to leave the financing of commercial activities to the market in competition with other companies in the sector. His opinion on the subject of control was that the present mechanisms are insufficient for insuring complete independence from the government.

Josep Bargalló asked for public service with a different model, which would be within the framework of the new context (the presence of commercial networks, the advent of new technologies). He defended the mixed model as to financing and proposed a greater influence of Parliament in choosing the Director General and the Administrative Council, and a greater influence of CAC in the control and management of the public media.

Benet Tugues claimed that it was necessary to promote media in Catalan within the new global context in order to maintain a safeguard for the language. He was against a user rate to finance this, favoring, rather, a budget quota for TVC which would complement the income from publicity in order to offer quality programs which would interest the audience.

ROUND TABLE: SPOKESPERSONS FOR CATALAN PUBLIC MEDIA

This round table was presided over and moderated by **Milagros Pérez Oliva**, Assistant Dean of the Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya. It was composed of six representatives of the Catalan public media: **Antoni Vidal**, Assistant Director of Radio Nacional de España (RNE); **Enric Sopena**, Director of COM Radio; **Enric Frigola**, Acting Director of TV Española (TVE) in Catalonia; and **Albert Broggi**, Director of the Institut de Comunicació de Barcelona and head of the entity which manages Barcelona TV (BTV).

Antoni Vidal focused on the concept of what public service is, the need for a new system of financing, autonomy for the public communications media in relation to political power, and the imperative that these media include mechanisms for direct citizen participation.

Jordi Joan Català focused more on the radio medium. He presented some basic questions which need answering: what kind of public radio do we want? What do we understand as service, in the radio medium? Do we prioritize audience over content? What kind of financing would be the best?

Enric Sopena asked why the concept of public is «out» and the concept of commercial is «in.» He talked about the repercussions of this mentality, which is permeating society. It is necessary, according to him, to avoid demonizing what is public and to also reflect on whether the independence of commercial television is real. He also agreed that the citizenship should take part in a democratic control of the public media.

Enric Frigola talked about the lack of a clear definition of public television, resulting from the fact that there had still been no serious debate which would mark the parameters. Such a debate would have to include everyone and, furthermore, be on-going.

Albert Broggi formulated questions more than gave answers. These questions had to do with, for example, the impact of satellite and cable television, the transition from analog to digital, whether the audience really wanted more channels than we already have, and how to control public television.

ROUND TABLE: CIVIL SOCIETY AND PUBLIC TELEVISION

This round table was presided over and moderated by **Montserrat Llinés**, Vice President of *Tecnologies de la Informació i de la Comunicació* of the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)*. Participating were **Lluís de Carreras**, President of the *Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya*; **Josep M. Múgica**, Spokesman for the *Organització de Consumidors i Usuaris*; **Albert Sáez**, teaching at the *Universitat Ramon Llull*; **Marc Carrillo**, Professor of Constitutional Law at the *Universitat Pompeu Fabra*; and **Manuel Andreu**, President of the *Federació d'Associacions de Veïns de Barcelona*.

Lluís de Carreras spoke about whether society really needs public media and, if so, what should it be like? He gave an overview of legislation relative to the subject. At another point in the round table session, Carreras brought up the question: what should public television do? What kind of programs should it offer?

Marc Carrillo responded affirmatively to the question of whether public television was meaningful in a democratic society, provided this medium respected the constitutional principles which defined it. He included in these principles the concept of pluralism, necessary for ensuring that public television not become a political channel for majority groups only.

Josep M. Múgica spoke from the point of view of the consumer on the theoretical role of public media as informers and educators of the consumer and user through programming space not devoted to publicity. He went on to relate this aspect to the role and influence of publicity as a source of financing.

Albert Sáez started with three questions: Does civil society exist today? Does public television exist? If so, is public television of interest to civil society? He proposed that, because the type of criticism from the opposition is basically quantitative as to minutes and the time of day when the leaders of the parties in government appear, we must switch the debate model to three new questions: Who's in control? What do they control? And, how do they control?

Manuel Andreu defended public television as a significant means of communication which should be a tool for promoting certain ethical values to foment participation, culture, solidarity, and convivence among people. This would be a public television in which the citizens could participate in its control.

ROUND TABLE: REPORTERS AND THE MEDIA

This round table was presided over and moderated by **Neus Bonet**, member of the Governing Board of the Col·legi de Periodistes. Taking part were six professionals in the branch of public media: **Carles Francino** (TV3); **David Barbero**, (ETB); **Montserrat Minobis**, Radio 4, of the Radio Nacional de España (RNE); **Josep Cuní**, COM Radio; **Llúcia Oliva**, TV Española (TVE); and **Julià Álvaro**, Channel 9.

Llúcia Oliva spoke on the effects of two factors on the information process: the lack of a definite model and the fact that public radio and television, as they work in Spain, do not offer journalists the conditions propitious to fulfilling all the functions which a democratic society expects of them. In her opinion, a series of measures should be urgently put into effect so that public media journalists can report information as they should. (One of these measures is that professionalism be top priority when choosing the heads of news divisions.)

Carles Francino made a clear defense in favor of public media but also in favor of the necessity for Parliament to work together with public media professionals toward an all-encompassing reform of the mechanism of management and control. Francino believed that this was the historic moment to ask the political parties to cede some of their protagonism to civil society and also to demand greater self-criticism on the part of the media professionals.

Montserrat Minobis, on the other hand, was more sceptical. She

reminded the listeners that for twenty years the same cases and the same petitions have been proposed to different governments. Minobis also reminded us of the specific problems of those who work for Spanish national public radio and television, but in Catalonia. At any rate, she agreed that a compromise with the parties in power was indispensable.

Josep Cuní started with a description which helped to clarify the present situation (especially concerning the disloyal competition of which the public media are accused). He defended the public media, but, at the same time, pointed out the need for self-criticism because, according to Cuní, it is easier to declare that a public medium is being manipulated than it is to analyze who said so. Journalists are, for the most part, responsible for such demonizing.

David Barbero structured his exposé around 10 points to illustrate the situation of journalists in the public media. For example: that it is indispensable for journalists, no matter where they work, to be competent professionals capable of effective self-criticism; that no medium, whether public or private, should be manipulated; that, in fact, these media are manipulated by the political parties and, besides, they suffer a clear servitude in respect to the audience.

Julià Álvaro defended public television. He claimed that public television does indeed have a future and that it might be competitive as long as it complies with two requirements: quality programming and plurality of information. However, a serious problem exists, according to Álvaro, and that is the mentality that the public media are controlled by the political parties has so permeated society and media professionals that the situation is considered axiomatic, that no other scenario is possible. Álvaro believed that the way to win the present was to create audiovisual commissions with clear-cut supervisory and executive powers – far and above the mere consulting tasks of the present.

Report: NEWSPAPERS: HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION IN DANGER

LLUÍS COSTA

(Debate session organized by the Aula d'Història del Periodisme *Diari de Barcelona* of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in collaboration with the Associació d'Arxivers de Catalunya, the 25 of May, 1998.)

The preservation of our newspaper libraries is in danger due to the ever-increasing degradation of the basic support of written press. In a word: paper. In recent years, professionals in the sector of archives and documentation centers have, in general, become aware of the problem

and have commenced to alert society of the risks of the possible loss of a source of basic, substantial information for knowledge of contemporary history. Nevertheless, these professionals have pointed out some measures directed toward guaranteeing the accessibility and preservation of this source of information. Despite the advent of the new technologies – which do not guarantee permanence either – most of the information continues to be edited on support paper, with all the inconveniences of the poor quality of the paper used for the press. The problem of preservation is compounded by the increase in number of users of newspaper libraries for purposes of historic research. It is imperative that accessibility of our newspaper heritage to researchers be made compatible with the preservation of this source. The present article analyzes the problems involved and suggests some possible solutions for the future based on contributions made at a conference dealing with this subject at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra and based on the author's own experience.

**Article: *EL PUNT* IN EL PAÍS VALENCIÀ.
A JOURNALISM PROJECT**

JOAN GARÍ

With the publishing, in April, 1998, of a Valencia edition of the Girona newspaper, *El Punt*, the author began his article with a review of the other cases of written press in the towns and cities of Valencia, especially the important changes occurring during the last two decades, including the publishing of some local editions of nationwide newspapers (*El País*) and the appearance of public radio and television. The article also tells about the birth of this edition of the newspaper, *El Punt*, its transition from a monthly to a weekly, the effort made by the publisher, the need for a greater professionalism, and, above all, the significance of the first Valencian newspaper in Catalan, *El Punt*, in that socio-political context, which the author also describes so as to convey the significance of this Valencian edition of the Girona newspaper.