Citizen participation and public media. Results of focus groups on academics, professionals and experts in social dynamization

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Abstract

In the current context of distrust towards the public media, "citizen participation" is one of the most relevant concerns in the agendas of those responsible for it and among media researchers, as a key to recovering its social relevance. In order to deepen the understanding of the concept of participation, three Focus Groups have been organised, formed respectively by academics, professionals and experts in social dynamization, carried out in Castellón in November 2019. The results are presented and the main recommendations on management of "citizen participation" in the public media are discussed.

Keywords
Citizen participation, public media, co-creation, social media, audiences.

Resum

En l'actual context de desconfiança cap als mitjans de comunicació públics, la "participació ciutadana" constitueix una de les preocupacions més rellevants en l'agenda dels seus responsables i entre els investigadors dels mitjans, com a element clau per recuperar la seva rellevància social. Per tal d'aprofundir en el coneixement del concepte de participació, s'han organitzat tres grups de discussió, formats respectivament per acadèmics, professionals i experts en dinamització social, desenvolupats a Castelló el novembre de 2019. S'hi presenten els resultats i s'hi debaten les principals recomanacions sorgides per gestionar la "participació ciutadana" en els mitjans públics.

Paraules clau
Participació ciutadana, mitjans de comunicació públics, cocreació, mitjans socials, audiències.

1.Introduction

1.1 The media content

In the last decade, the public media (PM) have been strongly questioned by many citizens of a good part of the European continent and, very especially, in Spain. Many experts agree that the causes of the crisis of public broadcasting corporations are multiple, and coincide in time, thus forming a kind of "perfect storm" (Bustamante 2015; Prado 2015; Zallo 2015; López-Olano 2018; Freedman & Goblot 2018).

On the one hand, the economic and financial crisis of 2008 has reduced, in an extremely sensitive way, public media corporation's budgets: for example, in RTVE there were cuts in the financing of up to 48% during the Popular Party government

(López-Olano 2016). This has affected the quality of RTV's offer and has had very significant consequences on the loss of the audience and the deterioration of the reputation of these entities (Berry 2019).

Secondly, and as a consequence of digitalization, radio and television offer has multiplied very significantly in the last decades, which has led to a fragmentation of the audience (Campos Freire 2013). To this circumstance, we must add the transformation in the ways of consuming audiovisual content, with a significant boom in on-demand and online consumption, as well as the growing expansion of social networks in radio and television media, which has implied new management of human resources.

Finally, public media have been subjected to a strong smear

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campaign, within the framework of the discredit of public management promoted by neoliberal thinking. The prestige of the PM has been aggravated by the corruption scandals of recent years, which are the result of the "governmentality" of the media by the political power and the absence of mechanisms to regulate the communication space. Political control of the media and corruption took over the Greek public broadcaster ERT in 2013 (recovered in 2014), and RTVV, the public service of RTV of the Valencian Community (recovered in 2018, under the name *À Punt Mèdia*, a trading company of the Valencian Media Corporation). As we have analyzed in different works (Marzal-Felici & Soler-Campillo 2015; Marzal-Felici 2016; Marzal-Felici & Soler-Campillo 2017; Soler-Campillo, Galán-Cubillo & Marzal-Felici 2019), the closure of the Valencian public radio and television has had devastating consequences for the Valencian territory, both in the economic field, for the development of cultural and creative industries, for the audiovisual sector, for the regional economy as a whole, and in the loss of informative, political and cultural plurality.

The economic crisis has also consolidated a duopoly in Spain, where two private media groups, Atresmedia and Mediaset, are hegemonic and in practice dominate the advertising market in Spain (García Santamaría 2016), while public radio and television stations, from RTVE to the regional broadcasters, have been losing relevance in the face of mistrust of the public media, which can be seen as part of a general trend to question the effectiveness of public management (Newman *et al*. 2019).

In recent years, the RTVE Group and the large regional public radio and television stations (CCMA, EITB, CRTVG, RTVA, and RTVM) have been undertaking far-reaching reforms to adapt to the new digital context, which many professionals in these corporations view negatively (Galán-Cubillo, Gil-Soldevilla, Soler-Campillo & Marzal-Felici 2018). The impossibility of being able to incorporate new generations of professionals and the low budgets that are being managed due to the economic crisis (Miguel de Bustos & Casado del Río 2015; Soler & Marzal 2015) make it difficult for the PM to adapt to the new transmedia environment, in which it is necessary to adopt new workflows and routines, in a context in which radio and television broadcasts have even less relevance than their multimedia platforms or the management of their social networks.

In the last decade, organizations such as the *Media Intelligence Service (*MIS) of the *European Broadcasting Union (*EBU) have been alerting to the need to increase the quality of the radio and television offer, by renewing public service media, which are faced with the challenge of adapting their structures to the new digital scenario, to recover, in particular, the younger public (whose consumption is multiplatform and online) as well as the lost prestige. Roberto Suárez, Director of the MIS, already warned in 2012 about the need to boost citizen participation, beyond online consumption, as a strategy to re-legitimize public media, and to boost their development and leadership (Suárez 2012: 76-79).

1.2 The demand for "citizen participation"

María Lamuedra (2012) reminds us that in liberal-representative democracies, citizen participation has been limited to the exercise of the right to vote, in a context in which, as Habermas (1975), Nino (1997) or Dryzek (2000) have pointed out, a "deficit of social legitimacy" of the current democracy is taking place. And one of the most efficient "antidotes" to protect our democracy is precisely to promote greater social participation, which the public media have a responsibility to promote, in a media environment in which social media are increasingly important. In this way, it can be affirmed, as a framework for debate, that the notion of participation has an intrinsically political nature (Delwiche 2013). Indeed, the concept of "citizen participation" is essential to the very idea of democracy. But, as with the loss of credibility towards political parties, and towards the public institutions that control governments, under the model of "participatory democracy" in force (Fuchs 2009, 2013), the modes of participation that are often articulated in the media, both public and private, have shortcomings and deficits that require the development of forms of participation beyond the traditional ones.

Thus, we can say that "citizen participation" is one of the most relevant concerns on public media managers' agendas, but also among media scholars. For Bergillos, the concept of "participation", like that of "audience" or "television" is very broad and has a clear multi-dimensional reading (Bergillos 2015; Jenkins & Carpentier 2013). In a way, it is a concept that sinks its roots in the debate on the role of the media for the development of countries (MacBride 1980), and that crystallises in the debate on the nature of the so-called "community media", "inherited from the experience in community and alternative media, which defends that this participation is real, effective, horizontal and beneficial for all" (Bergillos 2015: 64). For Prado, "participation is the maximum guarantee of pluralism and consists essentially in the possibility of intervening in the production, in facilitating the conversion of the social actors in authors of their discourses" (Prado 1986: 180).

However, when talking about participation and the media, distinctions can be made between real and symbolic participation (Prado 1986), partial and full participation (Pateman 1970), genuine and authentic participation (Servaes 1999) or real and pseudo-participation (Verba 1961) and even between participation in the media and through the media (Carpentier 2011). From the perspective of critical theory of communication, in the debate on the relevance of participation in the media one cannot ignore that there are an over-utilisation and an abusive use of the term, which has been attributed to dilettantes, manipulators, and demagogues (Bourdieu 1996). In short, the concept of "citizen participation" must be related to the possibilities that the new media offer to empower users, in order to become *produsers* or *prosumers,* who are building the current digital culture (Deuze 2006; Castells 2009).

Juan Carlos Miguel de Bustos and Miguel Ángel Casado del Río have analysed the forms of "citizen participation" in public RTVs, as well as the evolution of the concept in our days (2012). And once again, the technological change represented by the emergence of new media –especially interactivity– is at the origin of the need to redefine "citizen participation" in public media. Miguel de Bustos and Casado del Río, following Resmann's approach (2009), ask themselves what fundamental characteristic a communication programme or product has in order to be considered "participatory", concluding that in this type of programme the protagonists are "ordinary people". However, it is obvious that quality "citizen participation" cannot be identified solely with the typical audience attendance in entertainment programmes, with the role of viewers participating in radio or television competitions, with the sending of photographs or messages via Twitter or Facebook, with interviews with anonymous people, etc. The key lies in the interaction of "ordinary people" (citizens, in short), in the ability to interact and make decisions about the content of the programme, even participating in its pre-production, production and post-production.

In a fashion, some creative practices that are in the wake of the fan phenomenon, and that have to do with the expansion of narratives and contents generated by audiences and spectators, from famous fiction franchises such as *Star Wars*, *Matrix*, *Lost*, *Fringe*, *The Ministry of Time*, etc., could be identified, in our opinion, as expressions of "citizen participation". The development of fan communities, a phenomenon related to the expansion of transmedia narratives, which has been analysed by scholars such as Jenkins (1992, 2008), Scolari (2013) or Guerrero-Picó (2015), among others, has drawn the attention of the directors of audiovisual media corporations (public and private) and researchers to the status of public RTVs in the current context.

1.3. The case of À Punt Mèdia, the new PM in the Community of Valencia

In the debate on the nature of "citizen participation" in the context of PM, we believe it is necessary to refer to the recent appearance of À Punt Mèdia, a new public service broadcaster in the Valencian Community, which will fill the significant gap left by the closure of RTVV, in 2013, after 24 years of history. The new public media corporation has come into being 4 years later, following a rather unique model of governance and broadcasting company, even at international level. The Corporación Valenciana de Medios de Comunicación (CVMC) – whose Creation Law was approved in July 2016 after an intense debate that included the participation of the universities and the Valencian audiovisual sector– was born from the beginning with the firm will to be transmedia, as confirmed by the existence of a unique editorial office in À Punt Mèdia that supports the multimedia platform, radio and TV broadcasts of the new media corporation. In this sense, it should be noted that the fundamental reason for adopting a transmedia strategy is the need to adapt the new public RTV to the public's consumption patterns (Bustamante 2008).

But this change in the model of RTV, in the case of À Punt Mèdia, is also accompanied by assuming a new governance model, which is clearly set out in Law 16/2016 on the Creation of the CVMC. The system of election of the General Direction is through a public contest; the candidacies are proposed by the Audiovisual Council of the Valencian Community (CACV), whose law is already published in the BOE, in the absence of its implementation; the members of the Governing Council of the CVMC (equivalent to the Board of Directors of the RTV) are not only elected by the regional Parliament but also at the proposal of the CACV and other bodies; and the News Council arises as a body of participation of the professionals involved in the production of the news of the corporation.. The creation of the CVMC has also meant the implementation of the Citizenship Council, a body created in April 2018, composed of thirteen members, nine of which are to be proposed by associations and social entities of the Valencian society, by the universities, by associations in defence of the LGTB rights and gender equality, by the Valencian Academy of Language, by the Valencian Council of Culture, by the Youth Council, etc. It is precisely the creation of bodies such as the Audiovisual Council of the Valencian Community or the Citizens' Council that have been set up to reinforce the depoliticization of the public corporation's management bodies, which has been particularly dramatic in this territory during RTVV's 24-year history.

In this context, the Citizenship Council constitutes an advisory body on programming and contents of the CVMC which, as stated in the CVMC Creation Law, is presented as a necessary tool to advance in a governance model of public communication service that can guarantee "the expression of social, ideological, cultural, political and democratic plurality in information through the exercise of the right of access to the media", as stated in the CVMC Style Paper. This body's objective is to convey to the CVMC the concerns and requests of organisations with a proven track record in the Valencian political life such as Escola Valenciana, the Publishers and Booksellers Guild of the Valencian Community, the Federation of Musical Societies of the Valencian Community, the Federation of Valencian Pelota, the Association of Users of Communication, the Associations of Festivals (Magdalena, Fallas, Fogatas, Moors and Christians, etc.), among others.

In this way, the citizen participation is a fundamental vector for defining the nature of the media corporation's public service. As stated in the Report *Current Situation and Trends in Public Broadcasting in Europe,* coordinated by Francisco Campos Freire for FORTA in 2016, the social networks have led to a transformation of the media, where the new radio and TV must be based on interactivity between the medium and the user, in order to break with the traditional passive role of the viewer. It should be remembered that social networks are a valuable tool for getting to know the audience better, and that the management of social networks in a RTVP should serve to

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"encourage conversation" with citizens. As Campos warns in his report, "the obsession with increasing the number of followers on the networks eclipses their true purpose: interactivity" and, in this area, much remains to be done.

1.4. Participation and co-creation: for real, full and genuine participation

The conventional media are thus witnessing an acceleration of cultural change whereby younger audiences are demanding greater interactivity from the media, which they usually channel through social networks. Overcoming this process means that media corporations face a challenge of reorganising and assuming a transformation of their role at three levels: as institutions, in the field of professional practice and with respect to the type of content they have to produce (Van Dijck & Poell 2015). Traditional media need to attract attention and find ways to accommodate the audiovisual production of millions of citizens. In this context, the prosumer concept has long been increasing its relevance in complex perspectives (Van Dijck 2009) with respect to its different roles in the media context and also progressively increasing the value of its activity.

2. Methodology and objectives

This research is part of the Research Project, "Citizen Participation and Public Media. Analysis of audiovisual co-creation experiences in Spain and Europe (PARCICOM)", with code RTI2018-093649-B-I00, with which we propose determining know-how that can be useful for the people in charge of the PM, and even for privately owned media corporations and production companies, that will allow for clarifying how citizen participation is articulated in the Spanish and European context, including the elaboration of a catalogue of good practices, recommendations, work routines and tools that will be helpful in expanding and increasing citizen participation in public media. Basically, this is a strategy that aims to re-legitimise the public media, in a context marked by the major crisis that the public media are suffering, on a global scale.

The methodology used in this article is based on use of qualitative research techniques that have been widely tested in the field of sociology, such as that of the Focus Groups, combined with the choice of group members using the tool of semi-standardised or flexible interviews with experts. Focus Groups create opportunities for co-construction of meaning (Lunt & Livingstone 1993) and have been widely used in research in the fields of marketing (Kvale & Brinkman 2009), and also in political science since the 1990s in both the US and the UK (Wring 2007). Using this group tool also favours interaction in response to the questions posed by the researcher leading the group (Morgan 1993). The data collection took place on 4 November 2019 during the celebration of the "1st Conference on Digital Culture, Citizen Participation and Public Media", held

in the Menador building in the city of Castellón, headquarters of the Universitat Jaume I in the centre of the city, and was distributed in three simultaneous and parallel sessions in which the different participants were divided into three working groups: academics from the field of university research and teaching, professionals from the fields of communication and audiovisual and experts from the field of social dynamization.

The Audenhove and Donders classification (2019) was taken into account to elect the members of the groups among elite interviewees, who may offer more biased perspectives, and who are or have been responsible in different degrees for departments related to participation in regulatory bodies or various Spanish public media corporations, and on the other hand, professional or university experts dissociated from direct management, who would correspond to more neutral sources of information. The election of experts, which include renowned specialists from the academic world, points to their responsibility as part of the Habermasian public sphere as authoritative voices (Van den Bulck, Puppis, Donders & Van Audenhove 2019).

In the three groups, the same open-ended questionnaire of questions was posed, coordinated in sessions moderated by members of the PARCICOM research group, which were finally aggregated into two blocks:

1. What is meant by participation in the context in relation to public media? Can participation be considered an essential part of public service communication?
2. What space do new platforms and technological giants leave to public media to continue to be relevant? Examples of good practice in projects with citizen participation in the media. Examples of success stories.

The sessions were recorded and later transcribed for processing. Individual beliefs, attitudes and expressions articulated in a group context (Lunt 2019) were considered as basic units of the research and were grouped according to the preconceived order of the initial questions posed.

3. Discussion and results

In the analysis of the transcriptions of the different Focus Groups, numerous coincidences can be observed on some subjects, and dissensions on others. For example, with regard to considering participation as an essential part of public communication service, there is general agreement among the different participants, regardless of their affiliation to one table or another, but with nuances in the development of the idea: at the professionals' table, with representatives of positions with direct responsibility for participation management within public media corporations, allusions were made to the regulatory framework, and how it has changed in recent times, and specifically referring to the current À Punt, with respect to the previous Radiotelevisió Valenciana (RTVV). Reference was also made to the Citizenship Councils, as bodies considered

Table 1. Members of the focus groups

Focus Group 1. Academics	
Luis A. Albornoz	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad Carlos III.
Emili Prado	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
Juan Carlos Miguel de Bustos	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad del País Vasco.
Maria Lamuedra	Full Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Sevilla.
Ana López Cepeda	Full Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.
Carmen Caffarel	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.
Manuel Ángel Vázquez Medel	Professor of Literary Theory. Universidad de Sevilla.
Francisco Campos Freire	Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Santiago de Compostela
Javier Marzal Felici	Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universitat Jaume I. Moderator
Teresa Sorolla Romero	Assistant Professor PhD in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universitat Jaume I. Moderator
Focus Group 2. Professionals	
Albert Arnau (APM)	Head of Innovation at À Punt Mèdia.
Alex Badía	Barret Films Production Company
Juan Miguel Aguado	Professor of Journalism. Universidad de Murcia. Former Director of RTVM
Paloma Mora	Manager of TVOn Producciones
Lontzo Sainz	Director of Digital Transformation at EiTB
Juli Esteve	Info TV Manager
Carlos Bazarra	Editor of the EFE Agency in the Valencian Community
Magdalena Rodríguez Fernández	Part-time Professor Doctor of Marketing and Market Research. Universidad de A Coruña. Moderator.
Carlos López Olano	Assistant Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad de Valencia. Moderator
Focus Group 3. Social Dynamization	
Albert Vicent	Head of Social Outreach of À Punt Mèdia.
José Ignacio Pastor	President of the Association for Citizenship and Communication (ACICOM)
Alejandro Perales	Association of Communication Users (ACU)
Julia Sevilla Merino	President of the Consell de la Ciutadania
Ximo Montañés	Director of the Centre for Training, Innovation and Expressive-Artistic Educational Resources of the Valencian Community
Giovanna Ribes	President of the Association of Valencian Audiovisual Producers (PAV)
Fernando Vilar	Member representing the Valencian Universities at the Consell de la Ciutadania
Carles López Cerezuela	President Ciutadania in Xarxa
Clide Rodríguez Vázquez	Assistant Professor of Marketing and Market Research. Universidad de A Coruña. Moderator.
José Martínez Sáez	Collaborating Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. Universidad Cardenal Herrera-CEU. Moderator.

Source: Authors.

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important in ensuring the implementation and extension of citizen participation, and it was recalled that despite being provided for in various laws in Spain, advisory councils were never set up, which were supposed to ensure participation and the right of access.

In contrast, from the academic perspective, the phenomenon of citizen participation was also framed as essential in the context of public service media, which must be linked to the Habermasian concept that relates it to democratic quality, although its character as a "wild card", "talisman" or "emerging value" was also highlighted. However, it was made clear that participation only really has a chance of building alternative discourses to those generated by the communication system if citizens are capable of controlling everything from creation to dissemination and, of course, if they manage to connect with the public to transmit their messages *en masse*. Public media corporations must be able to generate a citizenship that feels recognised as such and that feels its voice or voices are recognised. Other participants called for a more holistic conception of the concept, establishing a ladder of participation, including different degrees, and going beyond governance issues. Democratic involvement is important, and goes beyond the so-called representative governance, i.e. the Hearing and Advisory Boards. At this academic table, unlike the professional one, these bodies were described as absolutely bureaucratic, obsolete and unrepresentative. On the other hand, it warned of the risk of participation becoming hyperparticipation, with a neutralising effect on the messages, highlighting the principle of "enantiodromia", which arises when a reality is transformed into its opposite. In other words, that the phenomenon known and conveniently studied in social networks is repeated, that massification of information can become noise that, in the end, prevents perception of a coherent and balanced message.

Also for the social promoters, pedagogy is intimately related to the exercise of participation, and it was highlighted that the most difficult thing is the how, and not the what. It was criticised that the Spanish educational system does not favour participation, which makes it exceedingly difficult for citizens to become broadcasters and participate normally in the public media. There is a lack of tools for collaborative and cooperative work. This group also expressed concern that participation should be understood simply as giving a voice to groups that have little to do with democratic quality and the public sphere, and asked to leave behind a bucolic image of participation, highlighting the important role as a mediator that the associative world can play, which in Spain is underdeveloped.

3.1 Participation and public media in the platform era

The second block of questions specifically asked about the space that new platforms and technological giants leave to public media to remain relevant. The participation concept was not mentioned in the questions, although it obviously forms part of the context as the Focus Groups take place in academic conferences dedicated to the issue. Thus, all the participating

groups indicated that this is one of the advantages that public corporations must develop in order to continue to be competitive. Among the academics, the false appearance of participation offered by platforms such as *Netflix*, *Amazon Prime Video* or *Disney+* was especially highlighted, in which apparently each one chooses what they want, to make an alternative proposal to programming television, linear television, and instead, what they have done is a practice that has been evolving towards replacing linear television, becoming traditional television macro entities. Also, several researchers agreed that if today a public television were to be made, it would possibly have the form of a platform, rather than a conventional radio and television, which responds to a historical tradition inserted in the European democratic culture. The space left for public television by the platforms was defined as very small but must be vehemently claimed.

At the professionals' table, some participants said that in the field of fiction production the battle against platforms is lost: "When we move and innovate, the technological giants have already done this a hundred times. What is the way out for us? We can create from closeness, because we are public media." Proximity, live broadcasts (of cultural and sporting events), debates, etc., were proposed as alternatives, as events that interest the audience and in which the large platforms cannot compete. Concepts such as niche, proximity, identity and closeness were repeated many times.

For several of the social promoters, the most direct solution to the asphyxiation that the public corporations risk suffering is through proximity, broadcasts, debates rooted in the territory and educational content.

3.2 Examples of public participation good practices in the public media

With regard to the second question raised in the block on examples of good practice in audiovisual programmes and content with citizen participation in the media, several success stories were cited, especially the professionals, who used their personal background to identify these cases, which is to be expected given their recognised elite nature, which conditions a biased viewpoint foreseen beforehand to their participation in the Focus Group. For example, the representatives from À Punt cited what they considered to be examples of good use, such as in *La Colla*,1 the children's and youth platform, with a lot of participation from the educational community. They also gave the example of *Una habitació propia*,2 which they defined as 360 transmedia content since it includes Facebook live when the programme ends. On the other hand, they also acknowledged the failure of other initiatives such as the programme *A tu què t'importa*,3 which, in some chapters, tried to encourage ordinary citizens to ask the different candidates for the 2019 elections questions, through social networks, but which did not get a good response from the audience.

An initiative of EiTB, the radio station called *Gaztea*,4 was also vindicated. This is a formula radio station aimed at a

young audience that is phenomenally successful in the Basque Country, as it is above traditional stations such as Los 40 Principales. In this brand, specific content is being created for different media (especially for Instagram) with a large part of the content being ludic that works very well with a young audience (with filters, stickers, challenges, etc.).

In the professionals Focus Group some content creators highlighted what they considered to be paradoxes. For example, the initiative *0 responsables*,5 which began as an innovative and exemplary interactive and multimedia web that claimed justice in the case of the Valencia Metro accident in July 2006, experienced the most powerful moment of citizen participation, when it had the media support of the successful and influential programme *Salvados* by Jordi Évole in La Sexta, broadcast on 23 April 2013. From that explosion of information after the linear broadcast of the programme, they highlighted the importance of physical contact, the Friday concentrations in the Plaza de la Virgen in Valencia, which were filled for months and which caused a social phenomenon of participation that also greatly infected the social networks.

In the social promoters group negative examples were given of how sometimes good intentions can fail in the attempt to promote participation: in an experience of creation with a webseries for adolescents in the Casal Jove in Puerto de Sagunto (Valencia), the young people had to take part in all the phases of the creation process, from definition of the characters and the story, writing of the content, performance, editing and socialisation. It was considered an absolute failure, as there was a lack of adequate previous audiovisual literacy among the participants in order to achieve any result.

In the academics' Focus Group, the participatory process of EiTB's renewal was highlighted as being exemplary on paper. This renewal was carried out in three phases: the first consisted of a consultation with the Basque citizens, in which quantitative and qualitative studies were carried out; in the second, discussion groups were organised to gather information from professionals, trade union organisations, public institutions such as the Basque Language Academy, civil society associations, etc. Finally, a survey was carried out with the citizens to find out their opinion on different issues related to Basque public RTV, among others, on its financing, raising the issue of the royalty, a matter that even university students of communication are unaware of.

4. Some conclusions

The "citizen participation" concept is a multi-dimensional notion, affecting a wide range of perspectives of approach, including the legal framework, media governance, technology, economy, political framework, media economy, political model, social and cultural development. From the study carried out, we believe it is appropriate to highlight the following aspects:

• Need to claim participation as a core value of public media

(Hutchinson 2015; Gómez-Domínguez 2018), to add to the six values that the EBU has so far established, namely universality, independence, excellence, diversity, accountability and innovation. At this stage of the debate, we believe that citizen participation in PM should be considered as another essential value, the complex nature of which has yet to be defined, in all its breadth.

• It is considered necessary to emphasise that participation is a tool that can contribute to promoting authentic audiovisual diversity (Servaes 1961; Albornoz & García Leiva 2017).

• Need to deepen the study of the citizen participation concept. The Focus Groups have allowed us to detect the existence of important gaps in the definition of this notion in the public media context. There is an urgent need to define issues such as: conditions for talking about citizen participation in PM; definition or establishment of a scale of degrees of participation; etc.

• It is urgent to identify successful experiences of citizen participation in the public media. Future empirical analyses can be extremely useful for recognition of good practices, in short, to distinguish between *empowering* experiences, as opposed to other forms of participation that can be described as "pseudo-participation".

• It will be necessary to define a model for analysing citizen participation experiences in order to determine how they can be qualified as successful, i.e. what requirements these experiences must meet in order to be qualified in this way. In recent years, research has been carried out on case studies, which we consider to be truly relevant (Bergillos 2015; Vanhaeght 2019; Andersen & Sundet 2019).

Public radio and television corporations have the challenge and opportunity to intensify the fulfilment of their social communication objectives through more direct citizen participation. In this scenario the introduction of the concept of co-creation acquires a growing interest. The origin and introduction of this concept is considered from the industry and it is extending to multiple environments in the consultancy, design and cultural fields. Likewise, there is a main thematic division in the intentionality of the initiatives that are protected by this concept, as a way to achieve social objectives, or as an opportunity for companies to converge with the needs of their clients by working with them (San Cornelio & Gómez Cruz 2014).

The evolution of the co-creation concept has been concentrated precisely in the vision of creation and circulation of media content (Banks & Deuze 2009). Thus, co-creation has become one of the references for innovation in the production of audiovisual content linked to an axis of generation of greater commitment to users who become producers. Co-creation of audiovisual content is therefore proposed as an opportunity with great potential for loyalty and creation of more agile formats consistent with the social media scenario (Hwang & Holtzman 2012; Rodríguez-Vázquez, Lago-Vázquez & Direito-

Rebollal 2017; Walvaart, Van den Bulck & Dhoest 2017). In this context, it should be taken into account that the consumption of content is carried out in a mobile media environment, which also conditions them (Scolari, Aguado & Feijoo 2012; Sørensen 2016; Aguado, Martínez & Cañete 2017).

In line with what different authors have pointed out (Fuchs 2013; Carpentier & Dahlgren 2013; Carpentier 2014), real, authentic and full participation is only possible if a communication model is imposed, in the environment of public media, in which there is a determined commitment to empowering citizens, and this inevitably involves education-communication. Literacy, so that the spectators stop being passive, and are no longer just an audience or an audience, but see naturally that they have in their hands the possibility of participating through their own audiovisual creativity. For this to happen, we believe that not only is freedom of expression enough, but more importantly "freedom of thought", as the professor José Luis Sampedro proclaimed.

5. Financing

Notes

1. Name of the children's club of the new public media À Punt. Available at <https://apuntmedia.es/va/la-colla> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]
2. Literary divulgation programme that has diffusion in À Punt, with a lot of repercussion in social networks. Available at: <https://apuntmedia.es/va/a-la-carta/programes/escoltat-en-la-radio/una-habitacio-propia> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]
3. This is an informative and documentary programme that has travelled around the regions of the Valencian Community to get to know people and life stories in the first person, through questions posed to citizens, and with a transmedia approach. Available at: <https://apuntmedia.es/va/a-la-carta/programes/exclusiu-en-linia/a-tu-que-t'importa> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]
4. Available at: <https://www.eitb.eus/eu/gaztea> [Accessed on: 12/04/2020]

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