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E Alonso, M A Broullón-Lozano, M Lamuedra-Graván (2016): “Empirical analysis of the dynamics of remediation between television and the Internet in Spain: the discourses of users”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 71, pp. 179 to 196.
<http://www.revistalatinacs.org/071/paper/1090/10en.html>
DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2016-1090en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2016-1090en)

Empirical analysis of the dynamics of remediation between television and the Internet in Spain: the discourses of users

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Abstracts

Introduction: This article analyses the possibilities for citizen participation that have emerged in the public sphere as a result of the remediation dynamics between television and the Internet, particularly regarding the expansion and convergence trends that are taking place in both media. In the current landscape, the rivalry between television and the Internet becomes evident in users' consumption habits and discourses. **Objectives:** The article has two objectives: to identify Spanish people's perception and consumption of television, in its traditional and modern formats and platforms, and to establish the extent to what Spanish people know about and use second screens and other interactive media. **Methods:** The study is based on a qualitative approach that involves four focus groups and two individual interviews. The opinions of a total of 26 people were taken into account in the study. **Results and conclusions:** With the exception of people over 65 years of age, expansion dynamics prevail over convergence dynamics among Spanish people. In other words,

people have incorporated new platforms and devices (specially the Internet and the social web 2.0) to their consumption of traditional television, to the point that some people have substituted partially and even totally the traditional consumption format. However, people either do not know or do not use the interaction and participation mechanisms that broadcast television has incorporated.

Keywords

Public television; second screen; participation; interactivity; Internet.

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Translation by **CA Martínez-Arcos** (PhD in Communication from the University of London)

1. Introduction

In recent years we have witnessed the reformulation of television as a medium and as a discourse (Cebrián, 2004; Urretavizcaya, 2008; Francés i Domènech, 2009). The conjunction of technological changes which involves the transformation and exchange between platforms, formats, genres and media, blurs the borders between them and, at the same time, reconfigures the role and position of the audience (AIMC, 2012).

This situation can be studied as a process of *remediation*, which is understood by Bolter and Grusin (2011: 51) as “the representation of one medium in another medium”. In this way, a medium, in a conscious or unconscious way, could have the ability to *re-mediate* another medium or other media by taking a specific property and reusing it (50). Consequently, according to these authors, remediation “is so widespread that we can identify a spectrum of different ways in which digital media remediate their predecessors, a spectrum depending on the degree of perceived competition or rivalry between the new media and the old” (Idem)¹.

In retrospect, it seems simple to identify the medium that remediates another. However, from a contemporary perspective, when the media are immersed in a process of change, as the current one, in which television and digital media struggle to remediate one another, tensions, oscillations and asymmetries occur:

“In fact, television and the World Wide Web are engaged in an unacknowledged competition in which each now seeks to remediate the other. The competition is economic as well as aesthetic; it is a struggle to determine whether broadcast television or the Internet will dominate [...]”. (53)

Uncertainty about what will be the final result of this friction is sometimes shared between media observers, producers and receivers. All these agents seem to be focused on leaving the *comfort zone* to rethink their roles, possibilities and responsibilities:

“Media producers are responding to these newly empowered consumers in contradictory ways, sometimes encouraging change, sometimes resisting what they see as renegade behaviour. And consumers, in turn, are perplexed by what they see as mixed signals about how much and what kinds of participation they can enjoy.” (Jenkins, 2009: 29)

Television and the web (with its recent reconversion as *social web*), in their reciprocal tension, are experiencing a double trend:

- 1) on the one hand, there is an expansive or *ad ultra* dimension, where television as a linear discourse (broadcast TV programming) is integrated into other platforms and is disseminated.
- 2) on the other hand, there is an *ad intra* reconfiguration, which is a tendency that forces and fragments their inherent formats and genres in dynamics of convergence; always inside the programming and in the temporal continuity of a discourse (Vinader and De la Cuadra, 2012).

In the case of RTVE, the expansive dynamics include the so-called *second screens*, such as the news site, the online programming archive and the red button function on smart TV devices; as well as the marketing strategies based on “transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins, 2008; Cf. Bordwell, 2009), which disseminates the linearity of the programming in a grid structure that provides, at least in appearance, freedom of choice and enables participation (Montpetit, 2012).

On the other hand, the dynamics of convergence are integrated into the programming and include interactive media (social networks, forums, feeds), specific programmes (such as *Cachitos de hierro y cromo*) and other *second screens* like the +TVE app for mobile devices, which offers live broadcasts and instant messaging networks around the *continuum* of the *broadcasts*.

These two dynamics, expansion and convergence, configure a space for public interaction whose internal limits and mechanisms are uncertain. It is important to point out that for the purposes of this work, *res publica* does not only refer to Habermas’s concept of *public sphere* (2006) -a public space of rational dialogue that connects citizens with the political power through the media-, but will refer to a particular segment: the publicly owned media. These media are the “public space” (Lamuedra *et al.*, 2012), especially from the perspective of two key concepts included in the statute of the Spanish Law 17/2006 and its reformulation in 2012: “public service” (BOE, 2006: 12; art. 25) and “right of access” (*Ibid.*: 12, art. 28).

In this sense, this work is directly related to previous research studies focused on public television (*vid.* Callejo, Lamuedra and Matilla, 2010; Lamuedra *et al.*, 2012). These research studies assume the centrality of the public in the media ecosystem, within which public broadcasting is shaping up or should emerge as a public square:

“Public broadcasting is the black hole of the media system. It designates the place of what should be and, in doing so, stands as the point of support over which the media galaxy revolves. For this reason, a public broadcasting system that acts a real referent and enjoys

legitimacy and social support acquires sufficient gravitational force to positively influence the whole system”. (Callejo *et al.*, 2012: 17)

This is the basis of the R&D project of which this work is part. This project, directed by Vázquez Medel and Lamuedra (2013), aims to explore, in general terms, the relationship between the social and political transformations and the informative aspect of broadcasting. If the technological change and the dynamics of remediation coincide with a demand for social change, do these media offer means, alternatives and channels for citizen participation and empowerment?

Based on the previous, the specific objectives of this work are: 1) to identify television viewers' general patterns of consumption behaviour; 2) to examine the discourses of the agents related to the remediation phenomena (expansion and convergence) between the internet and television, with particular emphasis on the discourses about the awareness/unawareness of new screens and interactive media, the use/non-use made out of them, as well as the participation/non-participation they generate. Given the qualitative and interpretative approach of this research work -which will be described in the methods section-, the results cannot be extrapolated to the entire -Spanish population, but do serve to identify trends, which can be of great interest for the reflection and academic, sociological, political debate on the use and perception of public television in Spain.

2. Methods

This study is based on a qualitative approach that incorporates an interpretive and hermeneutic analysis of the reality described by television viewers in Spain. Focus groups and individual interviews were the instruments used to approach this social reality. The effectiveness of these tools has already been demonstrated in projects that, according to Lamuedra and Vázquez Medel (2013: 21), are essential antecedents of the work presented here: 1) the national R&D project titled, *Information, education and entertainment?: Producers, viewers and content in TVE and the BBC: A comparative study*, which has been directed by Agustín García Matilla and coordinated by María Lamuedra (García Matilla, 2005); and 2) the project titled *Autonomy and pluralism in the new TVE: news content and audience perceptions*, which has been funded by the programme for the consolidation of research groups of the Rey Juan Carlos University and the Autonomous University of Madrid (Francescutti, 2007).

Robson (2011: 279-280) stresses the importance of interviews and focus groups as qualitative research methods in social sciences, either as the only research method or as part of multi-strategy research designs. The philosophy underlying the use of these instruments as research methods tends to be grounded theory: a systematic but flexible strategy which, according to Robson (2011: 79), tries to generate a theory from the data collected during the study.

2.1. Organisation of focus groups and interviews

Despite the complexity and time involved in the organisation and transcription of face-to-face interviews, whether individual or in groups, this tool was chosen due to its numerous advantages: “the possibility of modifying one’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administered questionnaires cannot” (Robson, 2011: 281). In addition, face-to-face interviews allow us to obtain non-verbal information from participants, “which help in understanding the verbal response, possibly changing or even, in extreme cases, reversing its meaning” (Ibid.).

Any researcher who has used interviews or focus groups as research methods knows about the complexity involved in the recruiting of subjects and the organisation of sessions. This difficulty is even greater when there is no funding to pay in some way for the participation of subjects.

The selection of the members of the focus groups followed the guidelines laid down in the R&D project of which this work is part:

“In the case of the reception study, this project combines two previously used methods: first the focus groups, which are required to represent the different positions existing in our environment, and that, a priori, would present a discourse that would tend to consensus. To do this, each of the groups will have internal homogeneity, but altogether, the groups will represent different social positions. Thus, important social variables (gender, age, social status, etc.) and the specific variables related to the objectives of the research should be taken into account. In our case, we consider that the variables that may in principle be more significant are age and social status, although we will also pay attention to the gender variable. For this reason, we will consider that all groups should have a balanced number of women and men”. (Lamuedra and Vázquez Medel, 2013: 23)

From this point of departure, a new hypothesis emerged around the idea of demand for social change, or rather, of different demands for social change: the discourses of the crisis and movements such as *Democracia Real Ya* (“Real Democracy Now”) and *15M*, as well as the sub-movements that have derived from them, have spread awareness about public services and the media. To determine whether this was the case, it was appropriate to form groups according to such variables as left-right ideology, activism and labour relations with the public service. In these groups, we detected certain differences between left and right discourses, but also the development of certain critical consciousness around the media, at least among the groups with the highest level of education. On the other hand, the objective was to determine to what extent this trend was maintained in less educated groups and subjects; and according to demographic variables such as age, geographical origin, etc.

In addition to these guidelines, we considered it was appropriate to make sure the group members did not know each other to ensure they could express themselves freely. Accordingly, the focus groups sessions were carried out in urban areas, while the individual interviews were used with subjects living in rural areas, and subjects not suitable or available to participate in focus group sessions.

The following table summarises the characteristics of the focus groups conducted so far:

Table 1. Description of focus groups

Group's generic profile	Moderator	Organisation and notes	Place	Date	Duration of session	Profile of subjects
Urban Activists	Concha Mateos	M. Lamuedra M. Broullón E. Alonso	Seville	06/03/1	2'06	S1 S2 S3 S4 S5
Urban Technophiles	Concha Mateos	M. Lamuedra	La Laguna	25/03/1	1'53	S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S7
Urban Public servants	María Lamuedra	C. Mateos J. García de Madariaga	Madrid	20/04/1	1'43	S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6
Urban Centre-right	María Lamuedra	M. Broullón E. Alonso	Seville	29/05/1	1'57	S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6

The selection of participants was based on the following procedure: First, one or two members of the working group contacted potential participants through various means (personal contacts, social networks, etc.). Then they pre-selected some candidates and checked their profiles and availability. Candidates were informed in advance about the general objectives of the research but did not receive specific details that could skew the dynamics of the group. Finally, once a group of 5 to 7 subjects was confirmed, the discussion was held in a neutral place such as a city hall or a multipurpose room. All discussions were audio-taped while an observer took notes and registered the interventions of all members. Sessions were only audio taped for two reasons: because moving images were only an accessory for our work and because voice recorders are more discrete and easier to use and install than video cameras.

As mentioned, gender equality was a priority in the formation of focus groups. Additionally, we should point out that most of the participants were of Spanish nationality, while other nationalities, with also strong ties to the Spanish culture, constituted a minority.

As shown in table 1, the researcher in charge of selecting the candidates did not act as group moderator because moderators could not know in advance the life of participants or to condition their expectations.

Table 2 summarises the interviews that have been conducted so far with people of rural origin:

Table 2. Data on interviews

Interviewee's generic profile	Interviewer	Organisation and notes	Place	Date	Duration of session	Profile of subjects
Rural Retiree	M. Broullón	E. Alonso	Cádiz	31/07/15	30'	S1
Rural Entrepreneur	M. Broullón	E. Alonso	Cádiz	31/07/15	45'	S2

The structure of the focus groups and the individual interviews followed the sequence recommended by Robson (2011: 284):

1. Introduction. The moderator offers a brief description of the motives and objectives of the interview, ensures the confidentiality of the statements and observations, and asks for permission to record the session.
2. Warming up. This phase consists of questions that do not constitute a challenge or threat to interviewees.
3. Main body of the interview. Is always in line with the aspects with which the interviewee feels more comfortable.

The focus groups and interview sessions constituted a semi-structured exchange of views and ideas among the participants on a number of issues previously selected by the research group: the use and perception of public television. Despite the existence of an established agenda, the course of the conversation slightly modified the initial list of questions, enriching the proposal and provoking periodic adjustments to the script in view of subsequent meetings, which according to Robson (2011: 280), is a common dynamic in semi-structured interviews.

2.2. Collection and analysis of data from focus groups and interviews

Once the audio recordings of the focus groups and individual interviews were transcribed manually, the discourse of the subjects was also manually analysed.

As it is known, in the qualitative approach there are several options to address the analysis of the interviews (either individual or in groups). According to Ruiz Ruiz (2009), textual analysis, contrary to what some may think, does not consist of summarising a discourse; instead it “resembles more an expansion: the result is an extension or multiplication of the information, rather than its reduction”. In this case, we used two techniques of semiotic analysis that are not mutually exclusive and support each other: content analysis and formal analysis.

Content analysis is basically the breakdown or fragmentation of the text into its constitutive units for their subsequent coding according to a system of categories, usually pre-established”. (ditto).

Coding, in the words of Robson, is of utmost importance in qualitative analysis:

Gibbs (2007), in a very clear and accessible discussion, introduces it as [...] how you define what the data you are analyzing are about. It involves identifying and recording one or more passages of text or other data items such as the parts of pictures that, in some sense, exemplify the same theoretical or descriptive idea. Usually, several passages are identified and they are then linked with a name of that idea – the code. Thus all the text and so on that is about the same thing or exemplifies the same thing is coded to the same name (p. 38). (Robson, 2011: 474)

In this regard, and with a view to the development of an appropriate coding, our analysis has tried to take into account the discourse’s manifest content (the recurrent issues or isotopies in the discourses of subjects) and the latent or implicit content (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009 no page):

“Greimas uses the concept of isotopy -coming from physics and chemistry- to address the -intratextual- problem of consistency in discourses. [...] In principle, the concept of isotopy offered by Greimas and other definitions of coherence and cohesion are based on the existence of redundancy, reiteration and repetition of similar or compatible elements”. (Lozano, Peña-Marín and April, 1982: 29-30)

According to (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009), in formal semiotic analysis, it is considered that “the sense of the discourses is not determined by language, at least not in absolute and definitive way”. In semiotic analysis, there are also two important strands: the semiotic structural analysis and the formal semiotic analysis. Structural semiotic analysis aims to “reveal the non-obvious linguistic codes, trying to describe its internal logic”, and based on this objective we have developed a coding system based on three binary oppositions: awareness/unawareness, use/non-use and participation/non-participation. On the other hand, formal semiotic analysis focuses on the effects of meaning of the discourse on the area of enunciation. Thus, for example, attention is given to rhetorical resources that have been used: deictics (I, you, us, they, here, there, yesterday, tomorrow...), verbal tenses, modalities that reflect doubt, begging, certitude, etc.

In short, the discourse analysis that we have adopted tries to incorporate the analysis of both latent and manifest content (and that is why the transcriptions have been coded with the aforementioned categories), as well as, formal analysis when necessary. Thus, we have followed the method selected by the R&D project of which this work is part (Lamuedra and Vázquez Medel, 2013: 26). According to this project, discourse is:

“...always the expression of a system of relations which includes the text and which should be deduced from two analytical movements: on the one hand, the dissection of the text in

minimum units of meaning and, on the other, the search for relationships inside the “text” (in this case, the interviews and group discussions) based on the positions and oppositions between the units that compose and give meaning to the text”. (González Brito, 2009: 256)

3. Results

This section presents the results of the application of the aforementioned method to analyse the focus groups sessions and interviews, according to the thematic categories and isotopies under examination in this work: awareness/unawareness, use/non-use and, participation/non-participation. Following the requirements of the method used, the analysis takes into account the nuances and subtleties of the discourses, which will be collected, whenever possible, by means of quotes.

Before presenting the results, it is important to outline the general issues and positions detected in the focus group sessions and individual interviews:

- 1) The analysis of the discourse of participants (audience) highlights the remarkable profusion and heterogeneity of all kinds of media, platforms and genres that are used daily by people to obtain information or entertainment.
- 2) There is a tendency to distrust the media in general and producers in particular. At a first level, and prior to the dynamics of remediation, distrust is a widespread attitude that subjects try to solve through the consumption of different media: television, radio, written press, internet, etc.
- 3) Media users maintain a strong idea of what the public space “should be”, but distrust the present moment and the public body as it is currently operating.
- 4) Young and urban audience groups prefer to use the Internet to satisfy their needs of information and entertainment, which are occasionally met by the public media. With regards to information, in general, and regardless of the ideological inclinations expressed, all participants argue that navigation make it possible for them to compare information and form their own opinion. In this sense, there is a tendency towards expansion rather than convergence, at least in the field of information.
- 5) There is a digital divide (Castells, 2003) between young and urban participants and older participants (especially pensioners) and participants from other areas. Members of this second group hardly known effective possibilities or have access to second screens or interactive media. However, they do have a positive image about those devices with which they have hardly had any contact.
- 6) Participants with an activist profile propose a utopian image of society in which there are no journalists and citizens can be empowered with participatory and community media.

After outlining these general findings, the following sections will develop the isotopies detected in greater detail.

3.1. Awareness/unawareness

In the context of remediation or play of forces and influences between the media, as a general trend, the dynamics of expansion (*ad ultra* dynamics) prevail over the dynamics of convergence (*ad intra* dynamics), while audiences are skilled users and curious observers but also silent spectators, at least with regards to information consumption in comparison to leisure habits, which tend to be more interactive. This weakens the image and the specificity of television as a medium of communication, now immersed among many other media and in competition with them.

Young and urban participants manifest greater knowledge of the available media, genres, formats, platforms and their possibilities: “95% of the television content I watch I watch it on the Internet” (subject 5, group of activists). This, as mentioned, positions the digital divide around age 65. Above this age, interviewees either waive to come into contact with second screens and interactive media or consider that it is enough to contrast the information obtained through traditional consumption practices. In this line, radio dominates either as a means of accompaniment or as the first go-to source in cases of emergency or breaking news. However, it does not seem easy to predict the future development of this digital divide, given that people whose age is close to the 65-year-old mark are surrounded by an incipient access and knowledge motivated by their immediate environments:

“Interviewer: are you a regular user of the Internet?

S2: I am... and it is thanks to one of my daughters who got me an iPad from Boston. And with my iPad I am the Queen of the dance. I guarantee you that... I use Wikipedia... and it tells me everything that I want to know, which is amazing. Man, we must study and get educated, but even without education, as in my case. That is good! [...] I search for everything on my iPad. I love it”. (Subject 2, interviews)

The pronouns used are always possessive (*my*) and the type of nouns used reveal a close relationship (for example, *daughter*), so these elements reflect strong family ties that predominate over other types of ephemeral social ties as it happens with participants from urban areas.

In the case of participants from urban areas, the semiotic discourse analysis reveals another kind of ephemeral social ties: social networks where identity and kinship cease to be relevant concepts. This is observed in the centrality of the “I”, while possessives and nouns tend to be diluted in a *somebody* who hides or whose identity tends to disappear as explicit element: “most of what I watch, I watch it on the Internet. And most of what I watch is based on the recommendations made by friends... almost always via Twitter and Facebook” (subject 1, group of activists). If the consulted pieces of information tend to be represented as found in the digital public square provided by social networks, where all sorts of messages and leisure practices are mixed, the frequent reference to the recommendations from friends and contacts from this types of networks (which would create two enunciatory levels that should be taken into consideration) would ultimately strengthen the inertias and currents of opinion according to the grouping of similar discourses and the feedback from the currents of opinion, as pointed out by the cultivation theory of George Gerbner (*cf.* Igartua, 2004, 197 *et seq.*):

“With the Internet, TV will never be the same. One can choose, from the great variety it has on offer, what one wants to watch, according to our ideas and values. Television will also offer this in the end... In the end, people is going to go watch what they want, where they know they can get it”. (Subject 1, group of activists)

Ultimately, at least in what refers to the knowledge of the possibilities of access, it is striking that participants do not know the regulatory texts and the forms of participation that are regulated by legal documents. Respondents were even surprised when they were informed of the existence of the *right of access*: this is a general trend. This shifts the debate towards a specific semantic field: the technological field, which is organised around the pronoun *I*; to the detriment of the semantic field of citizenship and democratic participation and the plural pronouns. This issue, in spite of everything and as it will be shown later, seems to be rescued by entering through another door in the discourses of the groups of activist and technophiles when they begin to develop arguments that support their uses and consumption practices, often mixed with the “should be” of the public sphere, society, and the media.

3.2. Use/non-use

The use/non-use binary opposition initially would exclude those in the absent position from negation. However, and as shown in the preceding section, it is interesting to note that the groups that admit knowing of the existence of these tools but prefer to consume broadcast content via conventional platforms, are precisely those who highlight the persistence of the digital divide, and connote and associate this technology with positive values:

“S2: For me, Internet is a wonder, it is an open window to the world. If I want to see Italy, where I was the other day, I can see the places I have been.

Interviewer: So, would you like, for example, if TVE had an iPad app that had a search bar where you could type “I want to see this” and a list of programmes showed up?

S2: Yes, of course! That would be wonderful, I would love that”. (Individual interview, S2)

Along this line, use is often connected to the celebratory discourse of non-linearity: “Internet TV is changing that; the ability to choose what we want to see changes everything” (subject 2, group of activists). This discourse involves the idea of being part of a watershed in the definition of public television: “I believe public television is dying. I mean, for me traditional television is *out*, now we choose the contents we want to see” (subject 1, centre-right group). For these users, consuming television through second screens is an effective and, to some extent, definitive response to an explicit desire for freedom of movement, both with regards to information and entertainment consumption habits:

“Since almost all of the TV devices are already Smart TV, you can open Google and see this and that, or browse the selection of content. In the end this is more like a video store than self-service. So I think this habit will change. I no longer turn the TV on to see what is on, but

to watch something specific. I even use my phone to control the television...” (subject 5, centre-right group)

“I browse the catalogues... I obviously do not go to just one source. I browse various sources. For example, when I go to TVE, the only thing I actually watch is *24 Horas*. For news, I use Radio 2, the website of course... I even have the RTVE app in my *smartphone*. This application gives you access to the radio and the website. I use the *podcast* services on the radio, Radio 2 mostly. And on television, I like *24 Horas*... to see what is going on, for instance, with the ruling system. Then I turn to other sites, of course”. (Subject 2, technophiles group)

Also, although in a rather implicit manner, those subjects who claimed they did not consume traditional television through the traditional platform seemed to want to differentiate themselves from the rest, as if using second screens was a mark of social or cultural prestige or distinction: a capacity of intellectual discernment between positive and negative contents and values:

“On radio and television the situation is very bad. The quality of the afternoon programming has fallen horrible [...]. I consume very little television... and in any case it is these thematic channels, of *TCM* type, that have been emerging through phone services... they tend to be about movies or documentaries or news. So I do watch TV to practice languages, a foreign language... like the *BBC* or other channels in French; I also occasionally watch some news shows, but pretty little... I usually like radio better”. (Subject 6, centre-right group)

This non-linearity, however, is not understood as the end of television programming. Although the assessment of the knowledge and use of television is always positive, the discourse of suspicion always prevails. It is the continuous and persistent suspicion that their interest to move freely through the network of networks do not match the interests of the media companies. There is also an implied accusation of manipulation from which a general and even compulsive reaction follows: the need and even obligation to contrast information at all costs to get some sense of truth. Thus, as a result of the superabundance of routes and media, respondents sometimes showed some weariness and intoxication, as reflected by the centre-right group:

“Subject 5: Informed about what? I do not care about 90% of the things. The information I receive from all sides does not interest me that much. So that is why I turn to alternative media. Television is trash so information about what? What I watch the most is football. I do not watch anything on TV except football...”.

At this point, it is interesting to observe how these information and entertainment consumption habits, hybridised and relaunched by the desire for freedom of movement, are mobilised around the pronoun *I*, which orders respondents’ priorities and sets a scale of values that differs from the preferences and values of other subjects of even similar profiles:

“Subject 6: I’m all the opposite... I think it is outrageous that on Wednesdays all national radio stations broadcast football... it seems that the world stops because of it. However, it is also true that there is certain saturation of information. I recently removed from my Twitter all types of newspapers, national and foreign... I stopped subscribing to them, because my timeline on Twitter was tremendously saturated that there comes a time in which you do not get informed, but all the opposite...because there is a flooding of information”.

The centrality of the personal value and of freedom of movement involves the organisation of space and time to select priorities, to decide where to turn and to plan habits. However, it is a fact that the routes followed by users are still subjected to inertias and emotional impulses that are hard to verbalise. It is at this point where the idea of responsibility emerges, from a discourse of education associated with the positive value of interactivity, which would hierarchically order and organise the other values that the subjects identify with: “to make this work, we need to be very interactive and participatory. If we delegate, there is no possibility...” (Subject 5, group of activists). In this way and, at this point, the debate moves (or is rather transformed) from the use/non-use binary opposition towards the participation/non-participation binary opposition.

3.3. Participation/non-participation

It is important to clarify people’s idea of participation, which sometimes differ from person to person. For most subjects, the notion of participation is located behind the discourse of what the media (only occasionally is accompanied by the term public) should be in tension with a state of things, with a current situation, where the alarms are set on and extra precautions are taken with respect to the messages that the media circulate through the virtual space:

“I get the impression that the objective is not to inform but to get attention. It is morbidity... which puts at risk the dignity of people. They do not care if they inform or misinform, they want to increase the audience”. (Subject 4, centre-right group)

“I do not think that there is a perverse plan; rather I think that there is a tendency to consolidate what already exists. I remember a teacher who asked us how and where would we build a media company if we had to it. We would build it in places where the media are already operating, i.e. in the centres of power. What do this mean? That the media and the economic power are connected, but not to implement a plan of manipulation, because it is very difficult to get out of the places they already consider to be important, the places where they are installed, where there is inertia”. (Subject 3, group of activists)

This point of view is very interesting, since it moves away from theories of conspiracy and image that propose that the economic powers set in motion manipulation plans and that in the current state of things participation is impossible to occur through the established channels, strengthening the need to contrast information and create personal and individual routes. However, it is important to point out that the previous quote that we selected to make a counterpoint is an opinion that contrast

with a more or less unanimous agreement: power uses the media to carry out its own plans. So most subjects believe that the private spaces are taking control over the public space and destroying the possibility of participation, and manipulating media users to favour particular their own commercial interests. All this, in consequence, and even taking into account the nuances, would tip the balance towards the denial of effective and real participation through the public media, since the value of freedom would not be associated to the public space but to the free navigation across expanded media.

Once the debate on suspicions is overcome, or is rather taken to its extreme, the group of activists and the group of technophiles develop further the idea of participation as the capacity for agency of any citizen through a medium. However, these forms of agency are never represented as the development of the concepts of “public service” or “right of access” that are present in the legal texts, which once discovered are considered as a hardly practicable concept.

Finally, we have observed that the group of activists and the group of technophiles have, at least in the form of desire, an intermediate image: community media could use the channels and formats of expanded television and convergent television to enforce their own messages, always in parallel or in replacement of the public and private media:

“I believe that we should provide a third type of media: the community media, which we could use to contribute as citizens, and which would answer to citizens. This would be a direct link between citizens and the media”. (Subject 3, group of activists)

“The situation is cut and dried. However, it is true that there are alternatives that break with that agenda, although they are clearly a minority. I think that most people, even if they use the Internet, are still following the official agenda. What they see is maybe a slightly modified version... There are other options like weblogs and blogs and even alternative media such as *Russia today* and *Hispanic Television*... *Venezuela TV* and *Telesur*, for instance.” (Subject 2, group of technophiles)

This proposal, therefore, expresses a pessimistic attitude towards the public sphere as a space for participation, or at least as a space of low participation in comparison to the more or less shared idea of empowerment, which is never placed neither inside nor outside the public space, but is the realisation of the isotopy of interaction as a predominant value.

4. Conclusions

Having analysed the discourses of the subjects participating in our study (Spanish television viewers), and in accordance with our objectives, this section presents the conclusions of this work. As explained in the methods section, given that this study follows a qualitative approach, it does not aim to extrapolate its results to the whole population of television viewers in Spain. However, given the rigour that has been used for the selection of subjects, we consider that the discourses of these participants could reflect a number of trends that are worthy of attention.

First, in the discursive and technological context of remediation, in which television and the digital medium struggle to impose one above the other, the user as an institution becomes the workhorse and strategic figure at the centre of a theory of value, governed by interaction. At this juncture, the discourses of users reflect certain prevalence of the dynamics of *expansion* (television and its products in contact and dialogue with other media and messages), over *convergence* (the inclusion of the digital medium in the now more-than-ever questionable linearity of television programming).

Such tendency to the extensive use of an expanded television is observed in all subjects under 65 years of age, where the digital divide is located. Even so, even those who do not know of or do not participate in these dynamics of expanded television, associated a positive value to the idea of interactivity that the digital medium should provide.

Second, as a consequence of the remediation phenomenon, there is some confusion about the definition of and the boundaries between media, platforms, genres and formats. Given that users tend to show confusion when referring to the communicative products they consume, studying and trying to narrow the definition of such concepts as *medium*, *platform*, *genre* and *format* is a challenge and a research line of interest for future studies.

Third, there is an ecosystem marked by heterogeneity and heterodoxy, which provokes an almost compulsive tendency to distrust the media and their producers, always accompanied by the widespread suspicion towards the political and economic actors. As a possible solution the contrast of information and sources is put into play: the need to contrast information as a horizon of individual responsibility in the everyday practices and routines of consumption.

The analysis shows that the reasons underlying the inertia towards the contrasting of information are certain values that are positively sanctioned, such as freedom (to choose contents, times, etc.) and a certain idea of empowerment (the sensation of having *control* over the medium and being able to choose), as a sign of social or cultural distinction (to stand out from the *rest* of people who consume traditional television), or as a desire to get a strong idea of truth, a concept that presupposes a structure of the world that is tarnished and tangled by suspicion. In the latter case, implicitly, there is a pejorative perception of television that contrasts with the positive appreciation of the media that remediate it.

Fourth, the current trend in television (particularly in TV on the internet) tends to lead to the specialisation of contents, for example in the organisation and preferences of thematic channels, beyond the creation of a space for participation. This, however, could generate users' loyalty according to their interests (sports, cuisine, travel, etc.), which otherwise would necessarily come into conflict depending on the subsidiary values that sustain them.

Fifth, participants in general, even the activist ones, do not seem to predict or hope that major spaces of citizen participation will be opened in public television channels. While there is a complete ignorance of the legal framework that regulates the public media, the only exception to this general trend emerges from the discourse of activists and technophiles around the possible existence of community media which, nonetheless, are not clearly located in the public space or the private sector, but appear as a third area to be conquered.

All the observed elements pose particular isotopies, areas of debate, study and discussion, which should be further examined separately in order to formulate concrete research-based proposals in the

future, which is the objective of the project of which this work is part. However, we are aware that these results only provide partial conclusions regarding the ambitious goals set in the methods section. This work is a contribution to a wider project, and aims to refine and expand its horizons in successive stages of the research. In any case, the results indicate that the Internet is giving new life to television. In other words, the digital medium is remediating television, contributing to its survival or at least giving it a second life in the terms and challenges it faces as part of the dynamics of expansion, coexistence and dialogue with other practices and needs derived from the demands of social change.

* **Funded research.** This article is part of the R&D project titled “Dynamics of relation in response to social change: contexts, contents, producers, audiences and producers in the news content of TVE and YLE” ([CSO2013-45470-R](#)). The main researchers are: María Lamuedra Graván and Manuel Ángel Vázquez Medel. University of Seville. Call from the National Programme for Research, Development and Innovation geared to the challenges of society, within the 2013-2016 National Framework for Scientific and Technological Research and Innovation. Funded by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of Spain and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

5. Note

[1] Some paradigmatic examples of remediation are the cinematic adaptations of classic novels, the adaptation of traditional encyclopaedias into multimedia formats, the incorporation of elements of one painting in another, and the painting illustrating stories from the Bible (Bolter and Grusin, 2011: 50-53).

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How to cite this article in bibliographies / References

E Alonso, MA Broullón-Lozano, M Lamuedra-Graván (2016): “Empirical analysis of the dynamics of remediation between television and the Internet in Spain: the discourses of users”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 71, pp. 179 to 196.
<http://www.revistalatinacs.org/071/paper/1090/10en.html>
DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2016-1090en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2016-1090en)

Article received on 7 December 2016. Accepted on 4 February.
Published on 14 February 2016.