

Ortega, Felix

Local and regional television in Spain, a social and economic promoter: the case of Castille and León.

Conference paper

Original citation:

Originally presented at [Media@lse Fifth Anniversary Conference](#), 21st - 23rd September 2008, LSE, London.

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21577/>

Available in LSE Research Online: November 2008

© 2008 The Author

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

Local and Regional Television in Spain, a social and economic promoter, the case of Castile and León.

Dr. Prof. Felix Ortega, University of Salamanca, Spain

Department of Sociology and Communication

e-mail: forttega@usal.es

Abstract:

From its birth the audiovisual sector in Spain, and in particular the television has reinvented itself in a continuous process. Offer segmentation, new competitors, change in consumer behaviour, technology, digital television... are some of the tendencies which are easing the opening of new windows and bridges for the development of this activity in Spain at a more regional scale.

The audiovisual sector, and more specifically the television, has played a significant role in the development of social and economic activities within transitional economies. From the recent incorporation of local television stations on the map of the digital terrestrial television in Spain, many changes are taking place. The first ones are related to small scale audiovisual regional activity, and secondly to the macro perspective of how the audiovisual market is changing due to the assignment-concession of local digital television licences.

We present an analysis of the significant processes associated to the development of this sector from a national perspective, with a more precise and example approach to Castile and Leon's case and regional idiosyncrasy.

This work-in-progress article shows a map of the proximity (local and regional) audiovisual sector in Spain, analysing the concessional processes, its policies and relevance in the development of rural and regional identities in Spain. Likewise, we do present an analysis of the communicational policy, regulation and impulse given to the new local and regional digital television. We analyse whether national and regional policies are keeping up with changes in citizen demand for greater access to the new communicational tools that Digital Terrestrial Television may offer.

We propose strategic actions which we understand should be followed by local-regional stations and policy makers in order to help effective sector development and inclusion within global trends in media developments.

Keywords: television, Spain, regional, economic development, cultural identities, audiovisual sector. DTT, digital terrestrial television, competitive strategies.

1. Proximity Television (PT) in Spain

From its birth the audiovisual sector in Spain, and in particular the television has reinvented itself in a continuous process. Offer segmentation, new competitors, change in consumer behaviour, technology, digital television... are some of the tendencies which are easing the opening of new windows and bridges for the development of this activity in Spain at a more regional scale.

The entrepreneurial Proximity Television (PT) developments have strong interactions in the economic, social and political sphere within the regions where they interact, and in significant cases have an important role associated to the construction of local and/or regional identities. The first experience of proximity television in Spain goes back to 1980 at Cardeneu, Barcelona (Álvarez Monzoncillo & Iwens, 1992).

There are authors like Moragas (1996) who write about regional television like “the television in the regions” in the sense of the numerous diversity of models that can be found in Europe. Other writers like Corset (1991) say in a simple and straight way that “the phenomenon of regional television exists”. Vacas (1999) indicates that “it is an unquestionable reality and the diversity of models that exist show its vitality”. The multiple examples of proximity audiovisual activity in Spain and its regions allow us to predict a promising future for this economic and social activity within the regions of the old Europe.

The operative definition for local television proposed by Badillo (2003) synthesises in a precise way the concept: “local televisions are those units of local audiovisual production that provide an emission in a continuous or discontinuous way, for a given town, county, province or area of influence different (excluding advertising products) from the other local, regional or national stations”, with an emission of audiovisual products related to the proximity surroundings.

Moragas, Garitanonandía and López propose us the use of the term Proximity Television¹(PT), to address in a global way all emission experiences that are at “a small and medium scale”. We use in our work an umbrella definition using the one proposed by Badillo (2003) in inclusive conjunction with the Proximity Television² concept address among others by Prado (Prado, 2004a) fundamentally.

In the vast majority of European countries, and in particular Spain, from the 1990s and throughout the XXIst century, there has been a discovery of the local and regional audiovisual market, with the fundamental goal of the exploration for new markets complementary to the national, with the mission and vision to diversify the offer and exploit the market niches which do exist in the proximity.

¹ This terminology was first used in France, “*télévision de proximité*” at the end of the 1980s, to name the urban de-connection of the public station with national implementation France 3.

² Prado provides us with a precise definition: “that station that is oriented to a local community with a territorial limit, and addresses in its products and services contents related to the local and quotidian experience of the consumers, their preoccupations, their cultural patrimony, historic memory, ... with the goal to foster the development of social participation” (2004b).

We consider the audiovisual sector as being one of the key and leading economic, social and cultural instruments for the good development and implementation of an information, knowledge and creativity society in the proximity, in the regions. The audiovisual sector as indicated by Bustamante (1999), must also “compete with the global culture and economy”, transforming the sector in an engine for the socioeconomic development of the regions in Europe, thus building a proximity economic, social and cultural marketplace.

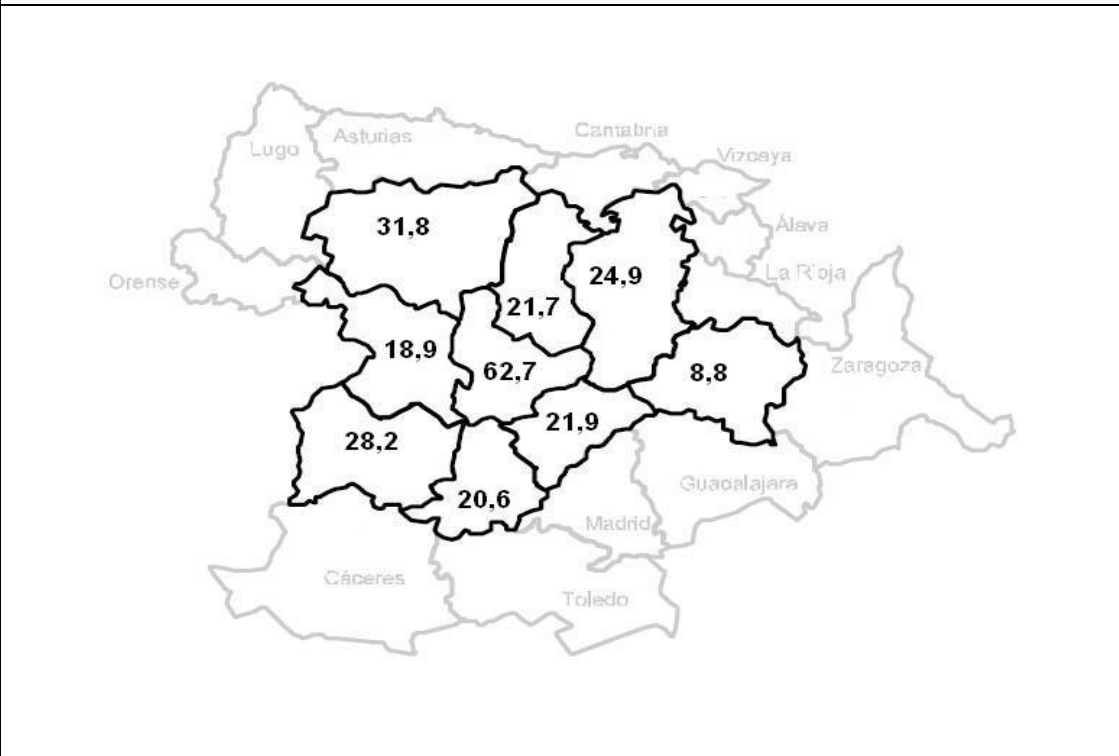
Regional television in Spain has been, is and will be an important economic and social promoter. From an economic point of view, economic development has always been associated to the development of entrepreneurial projects. In the global economy the development of a sector associated, to creativity, innovation, culture, global markets will provide to any region a value asset for its’ socio-economic-cultural development positioning it in a market that is everyday more competitive and key for the development of a modern competitive society, the market that acts within the Information, Knowledge and Creativity Society, (IKCS) of our time. The case of Castile and León will help us illustrate our analysis in this article, lets see.

2. The case of Castile and León

Castile and León is the largest of the autonomous regions in Spain and the fourth within the European Union, with an extension of 94.223 km² is also an important nexus for commercial exchanges for the southern part of the EU, west Spain and Portugal. The geographical territory is divided in nine provinces: Ávila, Burgos, León, Palencia, Salamanca, Segovia, Soria, Valladolid y Zamora. It reached a total of 2.528.417 inhabitants in January 2007. It holds a total of 2,248 towns or cities, representing 28% of Spain’s total. Up to 98% of its cities and/or towns are below 5.000 inhabitants and 71% of the lather have less tan 300 citizens, showing the extraordinary atomisation of the towns and villages within the region.

The following graph shows the distribution of inhabitants per square kilometre in the different provinces of the region.

Graph 1. Inhabitants per square kilometre in Castile and León



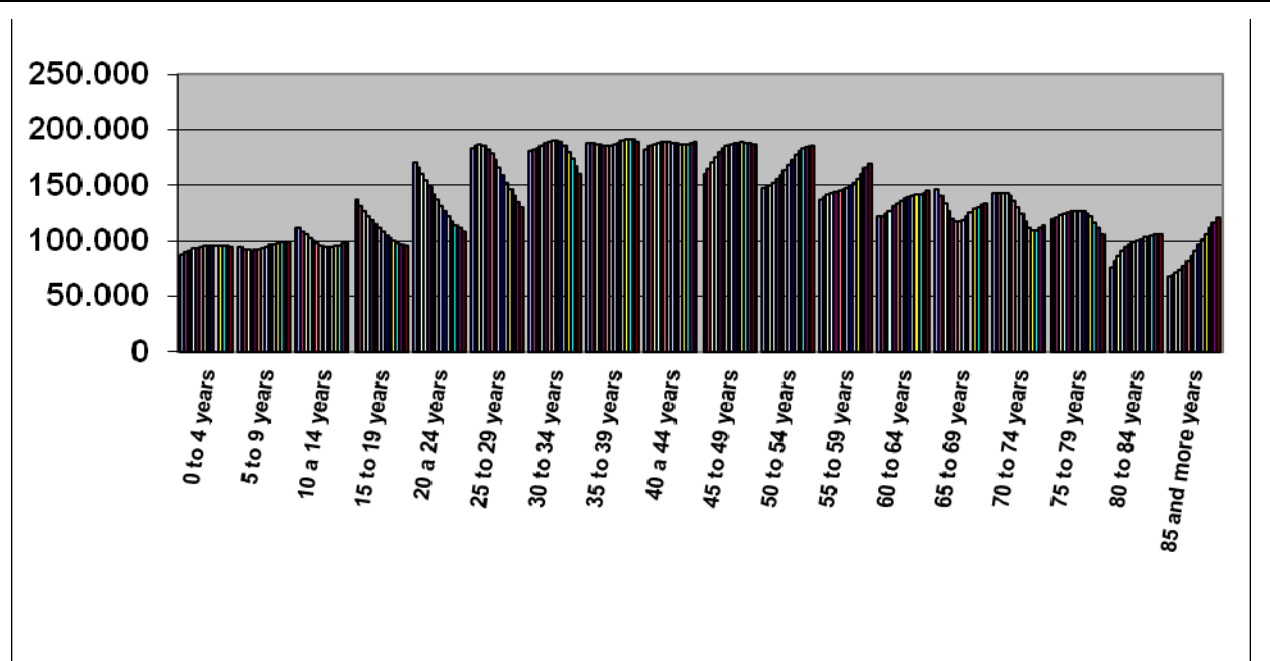
Source: Own elaboration from data present in FUNCAS, year 2003, (Alcaide Inchausti, Alcaide Guindo, & Alcaide Guindo, 2004), average of habitants per square kilometre, data has not change significantly please see National Institute of Statistics Spain, www.ine.es .

Depopulation is a descriptive characteristic of the socio-demographic situation of the region, having reached in 1950 the historical series' peak with 2.864.378 inhabitants. Only four provinces: León, Burgos, Salamanca and Valladolid have more than 300.000 inhabitants in 2007. Population density reaches 27 inhab/km², less than a third of the Spanish average of 90 inhab/km².

It is relevant to indicate that Castile and León presents a negative tendency in population evolution which is contrary to nearby regions where a significant population rise has been observed in parallel time periods like Extremadura, Comunidad de Madrid, Castile la Mancha or Galicia. This evolution continues with the progressive tendency of the last century allocating population³ growth fundamentally in the islands, the Mediterranean and the Comunidad de Madrid (Alcaide Inchausti et al., 2004). Graph 2 shows a projection for Castile and León's population development and age segmentation in period 2002-2015.

³ Nationals and non-nationals.

Graph 2. Population evolution, projections for Castile and León 2002-2015 age segmented



Source: Own elaboration from data present in INE, Case 1-Scenery projection using the component methodology⁴

The population in Castile and León is progressively getting older in the period 2002 to 2015. The above projection shows that the total population of Castile and León will have a net decrease of approximately 61.000 inhabitants. The year groups which will increase their relative weight are those of 45 years of age and above. In the same sense there can be observed a significant decrease in the number of individuals in the year groups of 10 to 14, 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 years fundamentally. The demographic analysis shows a tendency of loss of population with a *pari passu* population pyramid that gets progressively older.

The autonomous region of Castile and León, although it has significantly changed its economic-productive model and has received a considerable volume of European funds in the last 32 years, it has only reached 97% of the average GNP *per cápita* of the European Union in 2005, with a total of 21.718€, some 688€ below the European Union average of 22.400€ being slightly below the Spanish average of 103%. The GNP *per cápita* convergence with the rest of the European regions has been fundamentally based upon contrary in the sense but coinciding in the amelioration of the data, a significant economic development with a relevant population loss (Ine, Eurostat, 2008)

⁴ Case 1-Scenery, (INE, 2005).

Our former analysis shows the general socioeconomic background for the autonomous region of Castile and León. We present as follows a synthetic analysis of the audiovisual sector in the region and in particular that of the PT.

The first steps of the local television in this region go back to the 1980s, its' characteristics are those of lack of quality equipment and human resources, being the first experiences associated to small size multimedia production enterprises who did look for and found complementary incomes from broadcasting special local events (Tamarit, 2004). This period has been knowledgably named as "audiovisual puppet-theatrical nomads"⁵, where these enterprises were transmitting local fairs, events, *fiestas*, one day and the next they moved to the nearby town or city" (Badillo 2003).

One of the depicting characteristics of the local television photography in our region is that in all cases they are profit seeking enterprises. It is also relevant to indicate that the economic and financial profitability has not been a universal characteristic of the entrepreneur projects associated to local television in Castile and León, unfortunately for the shareholders (Badillo 2003; Ortega, 2006).

The last census of local television indicates that there are 36 proximity television stations in the region, broadcasting in hertzian technology at least one minute of self-made content (Ortega, 2006). PT operators concentrate in the following holdings or television associated networks:

- Televisión Castilla y León. This group has the following reference shareholders distribution: Begar S.A. with 37%⁶, el Norte de Castilla S.A., with 8%⁷, and Zener Comunicaciones S.A. It has a total of 16 television station brands within the network present in almost all major cities and provinces.
- Promecal Group. The local televisions are owned by the main reference shareholder the family Méndez Pozo, they share regional content for all de autonomous community in all emitting units around Canal 4 Castilla y León. They also have Canal 4 in Navarra, which counts with a specific and differentiated content (Pérez et al., 2005) It has a total of 13 differentiated television emitting brands within the network with presence in almost all mayor cities and provinces.
- Localia Tv, managed by PRETESA (Promotora de Emisoras de Televisión S.A.), Enterprise related to the PRISA Group dedicated to local television. It has 65 emitting units in Spain and some are owned by the group and others are associated. It is present in 84% of all Spanish cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants. The emission has national common content and local specific content (AIMC, 2002), within this group we can find Tele Bejar-Localia TV Bejar, it is really Localia TV Salamanca, Localia TV Valladolid-Medina and Localia León.

All the PT units belonging to the Televisión Castilla y León Group and Canal 4 Castilla y León have emissions via the hertzian aerial channel of distribution, cable

⁵ In the original concept "*titiretismo audiovisual*" (Badillo 2003).

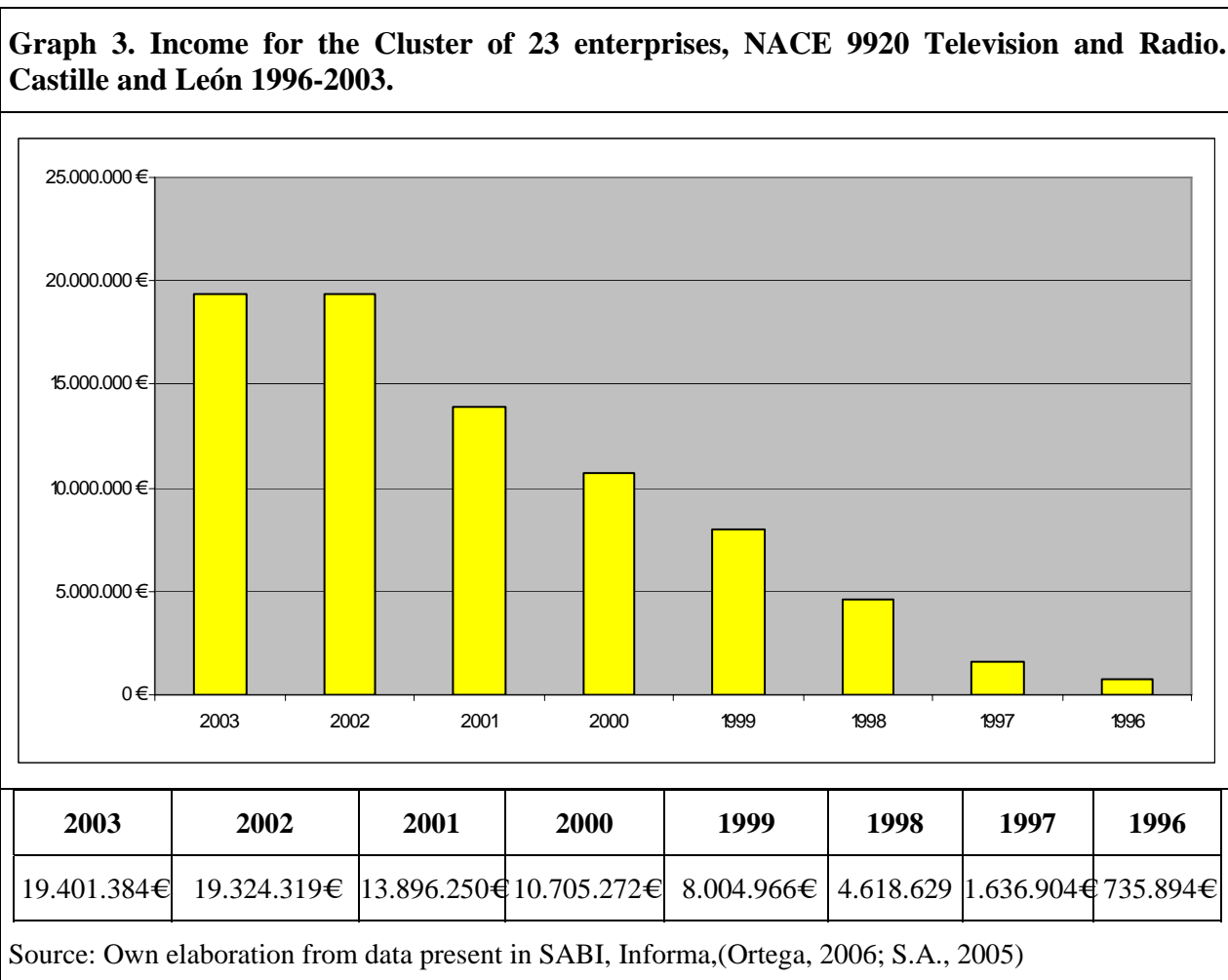
⁶ Data from the IN as in 08/04.

⁷ Data from the IN as in 03/04.

through the Ono Cable Group and have recently initiated a partial distribution of their content through the World Wide Web (Ortega, 2008).

We present in the following pages an analysis of an aggregate of 23 enterprises belonging to the audiovisual sector and classified in the NACE classification code 9220⁸. The enterprises present show us the economic and financial reality of local television in Castile and León from years 1996 to 2003 and thus the quantitative relevance of such an activity within the region.

The following graph shows us the income for the cluster in years 1996 to 2003:

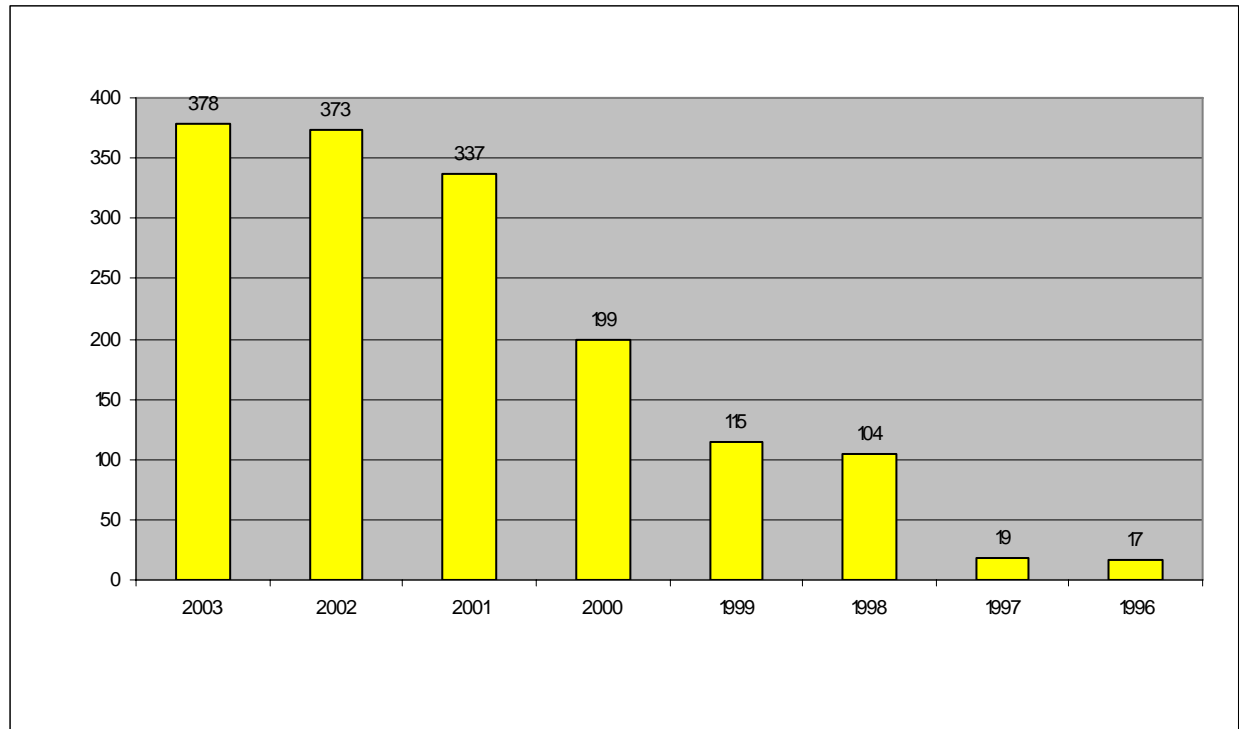


The income presents an average of 9.790.452€ through the time series with a peak value of 19.401.384€ in 2003 and a bottom value in 1996 of 735.894€. The average increase between years 1996 a 2002 has been of 54%, with significant increases in year 1997 and 1998 of 222% and 282% respectively. The graph shows a first period of *Initiation* of the economic activity with a significant *Growth* in years 1998 to 2001 and apparent *Maturity* and *Stagnation* of the income in years 2002 and 2003.

The following graph shows us the evolution of the total number of direct workers within the cluster between years 1996 and 2003.

⁸ Television and radio activity.

Graph 4. Total workers in Cluster 23 enterprises NACE 9220, Castile and León 1996-2003



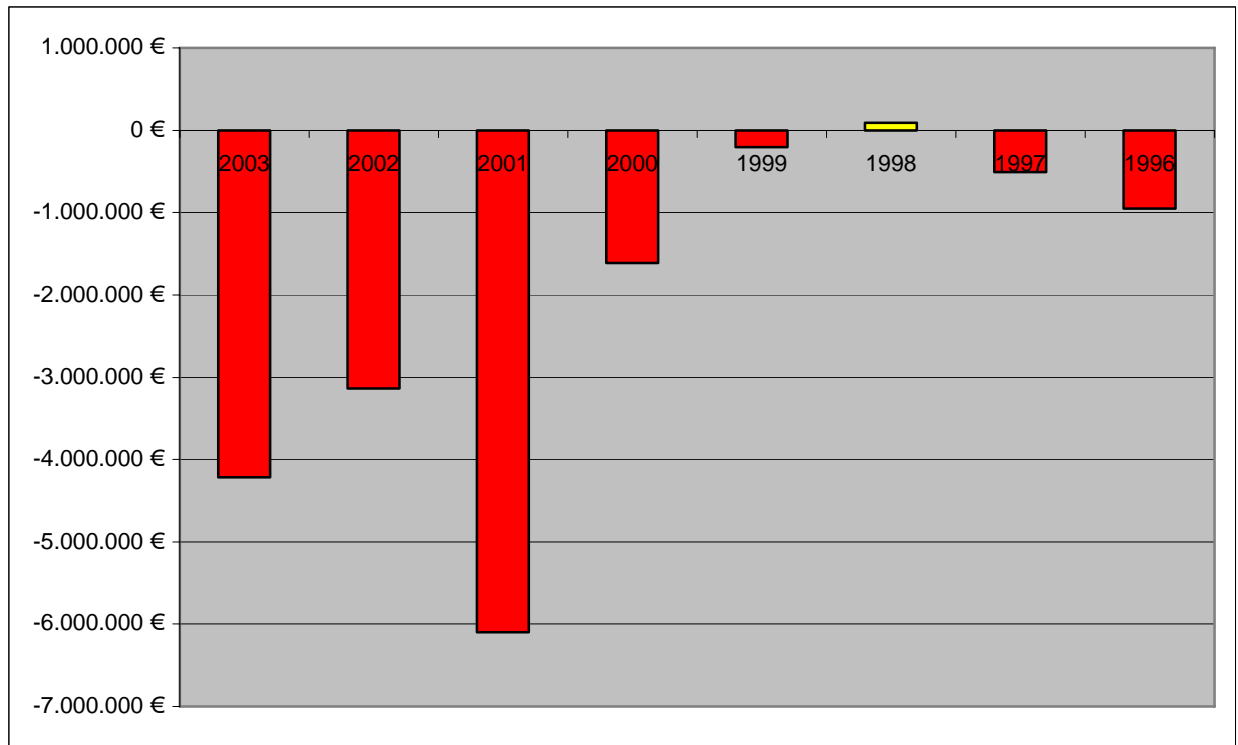
Source: Own elaboration from data present in SABI, Informa(Ortega, 2006; S.A., 2005) .

The number of workers has an average of 193 in the time series, with a peak value of 378⁹ individuals in 2003 and a minimum of 17 in 1996. The average increase in years 1996 to 2002 has been of 120%, being relevant the increases of 547% and 73% in years 1998 and 2000 respectively. This evolution can be structured in three periods, *Initiation* years 1996 to 1997, *Growth* years 1998 to 2001 and *Maturity and Stagnation* reached in years 2002 and 2003.

⁹ The regional government of the Junta de Castile y León estimates that more than 1000 workers are directly or indirectly working in the PT sector within the region (Badillo & Fuertes, 2004), recent regional census studies show a non increasing tendency in this item (Ortega, 2006).

The following graph shows us the evolution of the EBITDA within the cluster in years 1996 to 2003.

Gráfica 5. Total EBITDA¹⁰ Cluster 23 Enterprises NACE 9220, Castile and León 1996-2003



2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
-4.214.894€	-3.132.235€	-6.099.391€	-1.610.729€	-208.194€	88.332€	-509.817€	-950.594€

Source: Own elaboration from data present in SABI, Informa.(Ortega, 2006; S.A., 2005).

The EBITDA has an average value of $-1.063.892\text{€}$ through the period with an only peak and positive value of 88.332€ in year 1998 with a bottom figure in year 2001 of $-6.099.391\text{€}$. We observe two differentiated period, the first one, from 1996 to 1998 with a positive development in the numbers and results. And a second one from 1999 to 2003, with negative figures and a decrease in the EBITDA of 773% and 378% in years 2000 and 2001 respectively. This evolution has a cycle in two stages, the first one with positive results and tendency, years 1996 to 1998, growth period in red numbers *in crescendo* in years 1999 to 2003.

In the former graphs we can observe that the positive evolution of the cluster's total income does not have an equal *pari passu* evolution in the EBITDA figures with the exception of year 1998. The income has an average increase of 54% in period 1996

¹⁰ Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, EBITDA.

to 2002, however the EBITDA shows a preoccupying situation for the sector and its shareholders.

In relation to the statistics showing the media consumption in the region, it is relevant to indicate that the average audience of television in Castile and León reached the figure of 89,7% in year 2005, being the most consumed media well ahead of the radio with 56,5%. The Proximity Television stations with more monthly *Reach* in year 2005 after data from the EGM¹¹ in Castile and León, from more important to less were: Canal 29, in the province of Valladolid, Canal 4, in Valladolid, Televisión León, in León, Televisión Salamanca, in Salamanca, Canal 4, in Burgos and Canal 4, in León (Díaz Nosty, 2006).

In conclusion, the quantitative statistics shown above indicate that the sector has an economic and financial situation¹² that can be defined as preoccupying. However, the sector has also experimented a very significant growth in economic numbers in the period, in particular the growth in the statistics of income and direct workers.

The sector represented by this cluster has been and is today an important economic promoter of industrial activity within the region. A significant number of the individual Proximity Television enterprises and production units are profitable (Ortega, 2006) or approaching to an economically viable scenario. The development of new promotional channels of distribution, the influence in the political context (Barca, 1999) the market for loyalties (Price, 2000) and the differentiated significance of television as the source of political information for potential voters (Humanes, 2006) are significant reasons for the development of this economically not so profitable, but certainly social and political instrument of power and influence in the construction of opinions, ideas and influences.

3. PT in the wake of the new audiovisual DTT market, group development.

The situation of Proximity Television (PT) is rapidly changing in our country with the rapid development of the concessional process in the regions in the spell of the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) implementation by 2010. In all the concessional *contests* the main private multimedia groups in Spain are taking a strong action.

A full report of the distribution and tendencies for the DTT concessional process in Spain, and as a working process document can be found in Badillo and Ortega (Badillo 2003, 2004; Badillo & Ortega, 2008). The fundamental actors and most relevant groups which arise in the sector associated to the (DTT-L “Local-island” and DTT-R “Regional=*autonómica*”¹³ licensing process) related to the inhabitants-population reached criteria by each group are fundamentally: within the DTT-L, Prisa-Pretesa, Antena 3 Televisión Planeta, Libertad Digital and COPE with a market share of approximately 30%, and in the regional distribution DTT-R Godó, COPE, Mediamé, Vocento, Grupo Voz and Prisa controlling approximately 52% of the national DTT-R

¹¹ General Media Research, EGM, for more information see <http://www.aimc.es>.

¹² At least in the studied period 1996 to 2003, the economic activity in the region or the strategies implemented by the sector have not significantly change into a different scenario in years 2004 to 2008 from the one indicated.

¹³ Link to the *Comunidades Autónomas*. the legal autonomous regions in Spain’s constitutional system.

market share. The concessional process is certainly characterised by the descriptive key words of concentration, integration and *detritorialisation*¹⁴. This is a process still under way with some relevant regions in terms of population and territorial dimension like Andalucía, the Vasque Country and Castille and León to run the concession in the coming months (Badillo & Ortega, 2008).

4. Strategies for the regional television

The enterprises adapt to the changes in the market with the formulation and development of competitive strategies. The implementations of these helps the construction of the basic structure which helps defining its' position, growth, and continuity in a given market and time period.

The strategic decisions we understand should be taken into consideration by the Proximity Television agents¹⁵ in order to guarantee a healthy development are fundamentally:

First, improve the investment in the amelioration of technological and human capital. The PTs must forget the analogic world and foster an immersion in the digital world.

Second, improve the initiatives and strategies in the marketing and promotional area. A significant number of workers and monetary resources should be address to improve incomes. The marketing and promotion activity should be oriented to define and precise the differentiated characteristics of the proximity advertising products, improvement of the quality, and adequate segmentation of the targeted public are also lines of urgent action. Strategies to favour a potential increase in the incomes associated to net advertisement rise in the television panel and other promotional products emitted.

Third, the enterprises must facilitate the access and effective tuning of the PT signal. This must be done by an improvement on the quality and reach of the signal, but also with promotional and informative assisting campaigns' looking to ease this process.

Fourth, these enterprises should also have available statistically reliable data on the market share, audience, segmentation... etc in order to have information to convince the potential clients on the quality, efficiency, reliability of their investment in direct competition with alternatives of marketing and promotion, radio, news papers, internet.

Fifth, renovation and improvement of the quality standards along the productive value chain is a must.

Sixth, diversification and differentiation of the service-product for the final clients, paying attention to three relevant factors: i) the geographical factor, the proximity differentiating products are a key competitive advantage to "present and interpret the news and political, economical and cultural chronicle... with the election criteria associated to the local interests" (Richeri, 1995), ii) the socio-demographic

¹⁴ The process of facilitating the development of economic or social initiatives in the regions, includes also decentralisation.

¹⁵ Private enterprises and public institutions likewise.

regional factor, market segmentation in products and services, iii) the price factor, offering marketing and promotional products with convenient competitive prices and quality standards. Not forgetting again that the local, cultural, proximity contents are the differential competitive advantage of the PT (Durán, 2004).

Seventh, the proximity public administration should improve its role as an active client for the products and services of the audiovisual sector in the regions. This must turn into a tendency more present everyday in the regional audiovisual market, being engine and complement for the construction of demand within the sector (Lacroix & Miège, 1997). The implication in the financing or co-financing of product-services associated to public interest, education, culture, identity construction, economic and social development... must be a tendency to be more and more consolidated in the sector.

The collaboration between the public and private sector is vital for the transformation of the sector in the wake of the arrival of the Digital Terrestrial Television in the Proximity Television also in 2010. The administrators of the public interest must actively promote the presence of cultural contents in the PT (Rodríguez, 2003). The local and regional administration must take active action to incentive the development and consolidation of this cultural industry in the regions, its intervention is vital to guarantee the implantation of the more adequate technologies within the sector (Bustamante, 2004).

The public responsibility of the commercial television and that of the institutions in charge of its regulation are vital for the development of healthy and competitive societies in the regions. The regulative, legislative mechanism must take into consideration the economic interests of these enterprises, but likewise implement flexible and interactive mechanism of social self-regulation (Blumler, 1993). These strategies must allow to conciliate the social responsibility, today a must, with the market rules of the audiovisual market.

The enterprises of the sector and the public institutions must think globally and act locally with the objective of facilitating the competitive development of the audiovisual proximity sector, tuning the “engine of global social development” (Moragas, 1996). The proximity television is destined to be a principal actor (Moragas & Garitaonandía, 1995) within the play of this new digital communicative proximity era in the regions of the old Europe.

4. Conclusion

The proximity television has the potential to be actively used as an instrument for the creation and distribution of knowledge by the social, economic and political actors within the regions. This new instrument in the hands of the regions can be use to win and then convince the social actors that “the economic situation of the region can be modified by the action of humans” (Alcántara Sáez, Mateos Díaz, Ruiz Rodríguez, & García Montero, 2005). The Proximity Television should pay attention in the construction of its’ products and services, to that of implementing parallel interactive mechanisms of social regulation which should respect their own interests, and at the same time, the public responsibility within the instrument itself.

It is relevant to indicate that the regional feeling of belonging to the region, the national identity of Castile and León within its citizens is strong and not less than the one present in strong identitarian regions of the Iberian Peninsula like Catalonia or the Basque Country (Alcántara Sáez et al., 2005). The public institutions must take into consideration this aspect, in order to define the market rules for a proper and competitive development of the audiovisual industry in the regions. As Price correctly indicated: “It is not the television alone that creates and maintains cohesion (or mediates the process of change and evolution)” within societies and regions, but certainly has a key role to play in the building of cultural identities and the retention of power (Price, 2000).

Proximity television should offer to the consumer the product he wishes to consume, the workers’ of these enterprises must have the possibility to build, to construct, to invent with this “cultural artefact” (Cole, 1999), which is at the same time a robust creative window for the market and its targeted clients. Without the construction of strategic competitive decisions¹⁶ within these units of production, the proximity television will not interpret more than a marginal role within the audiovisual market of the regions where they are implemented.

We must take into consideration the global and final effects which the audiovisual sector has in its surrounding¹⁷ and consciously proposing the actions to be taken to facilitate the construction of an “adequate” model for the development of the sector and industry within a region, area.

The access to the communicative technology of the third modernity is every day more accessible in guaranteeing the access to new market and clients, however the easy and straight forward process is not present for the access to competitive and productive technology for the audiovisual sector (Aage Brandt, 1995). The development of audiovisual products, of new formats and inventions will necessarily require an optimal access to the proper technological capital.

The audiovisual industry associated to the Proximity Television should facilitate its’ spectators the progressive shortening of the distance for the conciliation of the political, cultural, economic and audiovisual worlds in which it develops its activity, the local and global communicated sphere. This conciliation between what the client likes to consume, the demand of the audiovisual product, and the offer, the investments, innovations and what can and should be provided is a key factor for its future development in the regions of Europe.

The industry should favour the creation of new demands and markets. These can only be conquered offering the consumer like the chef does in its restaurant, the cultural products, at the same time proximal and global, in a proper proportionate alchemy, those that can be identified with the local identity of its targeted clients. The audiovisual proximity sector must fundamentally think globally and act locally. This sector is strategic for the renaissance and development of the local and regional sphere. The television plays a key role as instrument and lubricating fluid to the processes inherent

¹⁶ Human capital formation, financial- technological- infrastructure resources within the enterprises, also relevant for these development are market freedom, legislative development fostering competence and competitiveness within enterprises (Ortega, 2006).

¹⁷ In both specific and general surrounding, the *habitat* in an extensive way.

to the construction of an harmonic socioeconomic development in the regions (Bustamante, 1999).

The proximity television must fundament its competitive advantage in the cultural products associated to the proximity identities, investing in the development of products-services with a real value for the stakeholders. The audiovisual products must be considered simultaneously culture and product, it is therefore necessary to continue to adequately measure the economic, cultural and social positive impacts they have in the regions where they are promoted and consolidated.

The regions in Spain are everyday more conscience of the importance of the communication and culture sphere for their developments. The effort to promote a rational and coherent political policy for the sector, coherent and globalized at the same time, must favour the shortening of the gap and existing disparity of development within the regions' in Spain. In words of Bustamante, "if a region is not capable of constructing cultural and communicative quality products, it is clear that there will not be economic engine, nor economic, financial or social profit"(Bustamante, 1995), the region will phagocyte itself in its potential development in this sector.

The path walked by the proximity television in Castile and León, from its first initiatives around the last quarter of the twentieth century to nowadays has been more than fruitful. The industrial sector has a relevant dimension, however, the structural deficits present in the region, the uncertainties of regulation and concessional processes are key for the definition of the best strategies for the sector in the coming years. We must take into consideration that regional television, like any other market sector, must be managed into profitability and needed be, strategic prevailing continuity (González Esteban & Marzal Felici, 2003).

The industrial activity of the proximity audiovisual sector lives in an habitat that is not only characterised by being immerse in the existing Information and Knowledge Society, but also today and even more in this sector to a society of Innovation and Creativity. The proximity television in the regions must take into consideration these circumstances and exploit the differences and competitive advantages existing in each region with considerable condiments of creativity and innovation.

Initiate the actions that can promote the development of the audiovisual industry in the regions gives the "citizens more options in the election of ideas and information" and this is giving more options to build a cultural and political identity, is giving them more options to choose (Bagdikian, 2000). In this sense, the abundance of television stations and communicative options within a region guides it to a better democratic and political situation (Neveu, 2001). The public administration should, like a loyal companion take the decisions which may help to: define market oriented priorities; correct inefficiencies; ease the access to services and resources; secure the existence of productions and cultural values key for the construction of cultural identities; educate and help in the creation of new demands and cultural consumptions, promote creation, production, education, infrastructure development and the impulse of existing and new entrepreneurial processes (Zallo, 2002), initiatives which may add value and complete the existing projects within a differentiated audiovisual region.

We have proposed strategic actions which we understand should be followed by local-regional stations and policy makers in order to help effective sector development and inclusion within global trends in media developments.

The recipe proposed in this article for the proximity television is that of the need to continue building in the differences, in the local, in cultural proximity content, in innovation and quality, in fostering digital and new multimedia services. The enterprises should continue to promote a process of renovation, update and reinvention of its technological, human and financial capital. The political institutions with a role to play, being important agents within the market, should pay more attention to the elimination of barriers and uncertainty that are partially affecting a “normal” development of the sector. They should facilitate the construction and development of existing and potential competitive advantages, and at the same time, be active promoters through the utilisation of this almost instrument and cultural tool for the construction of cultural identities, social and cultural capital. Proximity television is playing and will certainly have an important role as a social, cultural and economic promoter in the regions.

The different developments and concessional processes in Spain show the importance of a sector that is continuously changing (Badillo & Ortega, 2008), immerse in an scenario characterised by change, less uncertainty, more integration and the development of Digital Terrestrial Television¹⁸. In a time of economic slowdown and global crisis, the development and consolidation of this sector for the proximity segmented markets and clients of the regions of Europe, certainly offers a strategic opportunity. This should be thoughtfully considered by the private and public market agents in the promotion of the Knowledge, Information and Creativity Society of our time.

The adequate regulation of the information and communication services in the regions are a central aspect for the good development of culture and sane politics, but also vital for the economic legitimacy of the economy (Garnham, 2000), of the market. It has been common to consider the television as “the facilitator of new regimes and the engine for the retention of power” (Price, 2000), for these reasons and circumstances, the public interest should prevail in the decisions taking of the different actors within the market and value chain.

The audiovisual sector, and more specifically the television, has played a significant role in the development of social and economic activities within transitional economies. From the recent incorporation of local television stations on the map of the digital terrestrial television in Spain, many changes are taking place. The first ones are related to small scale audiovisual regional activity, and secondly to the macro perspective of how the audiovisual market is changing due to the assignment-concession of local digital television licences.

¹⁸ The Impulsa TDT Observatory indicates that in August 2008 almost 89% of Spain’s inhabitants could watch DTT in their home equipments. It is significant to indicate that a province of Castille and León with 51.026 inhabitants, 18.500 households and 3.090 buildings with more than a household is already totally digital since the 23th of July 2008 within the project *Soria TDT* the National Government promoted this experiment with an investment of 3,5 million euro facilitating the analogic shutdown (R.G.G., 2008), before the deadline of 2010.

Commercial Public Television must certainly seek the public interest through incentives and adequate regulation. The cultural, political and social functions of the public broadcasting is a must for the media, but should also be promoted without alienating the economic role, not only in the public, but also in the private sphere of the television units. The role of television and in particular of Proximity Television in the regions is one of vital importance for the development of the societies where they act.

Our present cultures cannot be understood beyond the proximity media. If one understands cultures in the widest sense of the word as the whole conflicting way of living, knowing and acting of a major group of people, then they are communicatively mediated. Through communication we become socialized within cultures, and cultural practices are to a large degree expressed in communication. Proximity Television has docked to the port of the regions of Europe in order to foster the development of media cultures, of sane and democratic societies, of a competitive and productive economy, we wish the sector a long and profitable responsible life.

Bibliography

- Aage Brandt, P. (1995). In media res, la estructura semiótica de la comunicación de masas. *Eutopías segunda época*, 73.
- AIMC. (2002). *Censo de televisiones locales*. Madrid: AIMC.
- Alcaide Inchausti, J., Alcaide Guindo, P., & Alcaide Guindo, P. (2004). *Balance Económico Regional (Autonomías y Provincias) Años 1995 a 2003*. Madrid: Fundación de las Cajas de Ahorros Confederadas (FUNCAS).
- Alcántara Sáez, M., Mateos Díaz, A., Ruiz Rodríguez, L., & García Montero, M. (2005). *Barómetro de Castilla y León (BAROCYL) 2005*. Salamanca: Fundación Caja Duero.
- Álvarez Monzoncillo, J. M., & Iwens, J. L. (1992). *El futuro del audiovisual en España: las transformaciones ante el nuevo marco europeo*. Madrid: FUNDESCO.
- Badillo, Á. (2003). *La desregulación de la televisión local en España: el caso de Castilla y León*. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona.
- Badillo, Á. (2004). La televisión local en España: realidades del s.XX, incertidumbres del s.XXI. In Á. Badillo Matos & M. Fuertes (Eds.), *La televisión local en el siglo XX* (pp. 17-21). Salamanca: Televisión Castilla y León.
- Badillo, Á., & Fuertes, M. (2004). *La televisión local en el siglo XXI*. Salamanca: Televisión Castilla y León S.A.
- Badillo, A., & Ortega, F. (2008). La nueva televisión local digital en España. Concentración, integración y desterritorialización del audiovisual de proximidad In C. F. I. C. I. I. Comunicación (Ed.). Santiago de Compostela: Facultad de CC. de la Comunicación. USC.
- Badillo Matos, Á. (2003). *La desregulación de la televisión local en España: el caso de Castilla y León*. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona.
- Bagdikian, B. H. (2000). *The Media Monopoly 6th Edition*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Barca, F. (1999). The local television broadcasting system in Italy: too few resources for too many companies? *Media, Culture and Society*, 21(1), 109-122.
- Blumler, J. G. (1993). *Televisión e interés público* (J. Arconada, Trans.). Barcelona: Bosch Casa Editorial, S.A.
- Bustamante, E. (1995). Televisión y dinamización de la industria audiovisual. In J. R. Pérez Ornia (Ed.), *La nueva perspectiva audiovisual. El reto de la televisión pública regional* (pp. 43-70). Madrid: Ediciones Telemadrid.
- Bustamante, E. (1999). *La televisión económica. Financiación, estrategias y mercados*. Barcelona: Gedisa.
- Bustamante, E. (2004). Cultural industries in the Digital Age: some provisional conclusion. *Media, Culture and Society*, 26(6), 803-820.
- Cole, M. (1999). *Psicología cultural*. Madrid: Ediciones Morata.
- Corset, P. (1991). Création, Recherche et formation en Région. In P. Musso (Ed.), *Régions d'Europe et Télévision* (pp. 273-275). Paris: Miroirs.

- Díaz Nosty, B. (2006). Representar la comunicación. La huella es el mensaje. In J. Fernández Beaumont (Ed.), *Tendencias 06, Medios de Comunicación. El año de la televisión* (pp. 15-65). Madrid: TP edita.
- Durán, J. (2004). Oportunidades de la televisión digital local. In Á. Badillo Matos & M. Fuertes (Eds.), *La televisión local en el siglo XXI* (pp. 37-42). Salamanca: Televisión Castilla y León.
- Garnham, N. (2000). *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity: arguments about the Media and Social Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- González Esteban, E., & Marzal Felici, J. (2003). La gestión de las televisiones locales. ¿Negocio y/o servicio público? In R. López Lita, F. Fernández Beltrán & F. Vilar Moreno (Eds.), *Radio y televisión en el ámbito local* (pp. 47-72). Castelló de la Plana: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I.
- Humanes, M. L. (2006). La anarquía periodística: Por qué le llaman información cuando quieren decir... . In *Periodismo sin información* (pp. 51-73). Madrid: Tecnos.
- INE. (2005). Demografía y población, proyecciones y estimaciones intercensales de población. 2005, from www.ine.es
- Lacroix, J.-G., & Miége, B. (1997). The "Information Society" and Cultural. Industries Theory. *Current Sociology, Sage, Toronto, 45*(4), 104-109.
- Moragas, M. d. (1996). Espacio Audiovisual y regiones en Europa. Política, Cultura y Mercado. *Telos*(45), 42-52.
- Moragas, M. d., & Garitaonandía, C. (1995). *Descentralization in the Global Era: Televisions in the Regions, Nationalities and Small Countries in the European Union*. London: John Libbey.
- Moragas, M. d., Garitaonandía, C., & López, B. (1999). *Televisión de Proximidad en Europa: Experiencias de descentralización en la era digital*. Bellaterra (Barcelona): Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Servei de Publicacions.
- Neveu, E. (2001). *Une société de communication?* Paris: Editions Montchrestien, E.J.A.
- Ortega, F. (2006). *El Sector Audiovisual en Castilla y León, La Televisión, análisis y prospectiva.*, Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca.
- Ortega, F. (Ed.). (2008). *Televisión de Proximidad (local y regional) en la Red, un análisis de la situación, estrategias competitivas ante el apagón analógico en España*. Madrid: UCM.
- Pérez, J., Castellano, J., Escalante, M., Ruano, V., Banegas, J., Gual, J., et al. (2005). *Televisión digital*. Madrid: red.es.
- Prado, E. (2004a). *La televisión local ente el limbo regulatorio y la esperanza digital*.
- Prado, E. (2004b). *La televisión local entre el limbo regulatorio y la esperanza digital*.
- Price, M. (2000). *Television, the public sphere, and national identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- R.G.G. (2008, 23/07/2008). Soria dice adiós a la televisión analógica. *El País*.
- Richeri, G. (1995). Las televisiones autonómicas ante la nueva perspectiva audiovisual. In *La Nueva Perspectiva Audiovisual, El Reto de la televisión pública regional* (pp. 35-41). Madrid: Ediciones Telemadrid.
- Rodríguez, F. (2003). *Cultura y Televisión*. Barcelona: Gedisa S.A.

- S.A., I. (2005). Consulta Código Nace 922, Región Castilla y León. Retrieved Abril 2005, 2005
- Tamarit, A. M. (2004). *La Profesión periodística en Castilla y León*. Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca.
- Vacas Aguilar, F. (1999). *El sector audiovisual en Extremadura: por un nuevo modelo de televisión regional*. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid.
- Zallo, R. (2002). Políticas culturales territoriales: una experiencia rica pero insuficiente. In E. Bustamante (Ed.), *Comunicación y cultura en la era digital, industrias, mercados y diversidad en España*. Barcelona: Gedisa.