Television viewing profile and reception context in adolescents: intercultural and gender differences

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Introduction

Within the framework of the University of the Basque Country's Chair in Communication and Values, which is subsidised by the Gipuzkoa Provincial Government, this chapter presents the preliminary results of a study carried out in 2009 by the research team in relation to an iR&D project (2009-2011) on Television Viewing Habits, values and identity construction in adolescents from diverse cultures. The study analyses the similarities and differences in certain indicators linked to both the television viewing profiles (viewing time, alternative activities, television preferences) and reception context (physical and social context, parental mediation and family environment) of adolescents from different contexts in Spain (Donostia-San Sebastian and Malaga) and abroad (Iquique-Chile and San Francisco de Macorís-Dominican Republic).

Our work was based on two theoretical approaches: ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), which focuses specifically on reception context in the broadest sense of the term (cultural and family characteristics, television viewing companions, physical context, etc.) and reception theory (Orozco, 2002, 2007), which centres more on the decoding of television messages by viewers. Reception spaces are seen as spaces in which sense is made of what is viewed on the basis of both subjective factors and abstract factors emanating from viewers' everyday lives and cultural milieu. Consequently, meaning does not reside exclusively in the message itself, but is rather a product of the interaction between the message and the viewers' milieu or framework of reference, and it is the viewer who re-interprets the meaning of the messages received.

Based on this contextualised and mediated view of television (television-context-viewer), the aim was to locate adolescents' viewing habits within their cultural contexts of reference. At the same time, the study also aimed to analyse parental

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mediation styles, taking the interaction-related aspects of the family environment into consideration.

1.- Television viewing profile: viewing time, alternative activities and preferences

The majority of studies focusing on television viewing among adolescents in our context have found that teenagers spend between three-and-a-half and four hours in front of the screen every day (Gabelas, 2005), although our previous studies found that the mean time spent by adolescents watching television was two-and-a-half hours per day, with this time increasing at weekends (Medrano, Aierbe and Orejudo, 2009; Medrano, Aierbe and Palacios, 2010). Also, no gender differences were found in relation to the amount of time spent watching TV, although males and females were found to have different preferences. In general, we found that adolescents' favourite programmes were television series (M:3.55), comedy shows (3.25), cartoons (3.28) and films (3.25). These were followed by sports (2.61), news programmes (2.43), game shows (2.12), documentaries (1.86) and celebrity gossip shows (1.50) (Medrano, Aierbe and Palacios, 2010). However, boys tend to watch more sport, films, news programmes and documentaries, while girls prefer romances, comedy shows and entertainment programmes. Pindado (2005a) found that the favourite genre among adolescents from Malaga (Spain) was suspense or terror, regardless of the media support involved. This was followed by series and talk shows, for both girls and boys.

In Latin America, the global data found by a research study carried out by Bringué and Sádaba (2008), which analysed the opinion of 20,941 Latin American students (from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela) aged between 10 and 18 regarding media use, revealed that from Monday to Friday, adolescents watched approximately 2 - 3 hours of television per day (viewing time indicator). In relation to age and gender, the lowest viewing levels were found among boys under the age of 13, while the highest levels were found among teenagers aged between 14 and 16, although the results differed somewhat from country to country. These data coincide with those found by other researchers working in Chile (Catalán Bertoni, 2007; CNTV, 2009), although in the Dominican Republic, adolescents tend to watch more television – between 3 and 5 hours per day.

As regards television preferences, in a sample of 77 young Hispanic, English and North American subjects, Horton and Arquette (2000) found that comedy and drama shows were the most popular among both boys and girls, although girls spend less time in front of the TV set. Fuenzalida, Julio, Suit, Souza, Villalobos, Barbano and Agirre, (2007) highlight the predominance of soap operas on Chilean television. These authors hold that the soap operas broadcast in prime time, just before the news (20:00 to 21.00h) have evolved towards plots and contents which attempt to include the extremely varied family audience watching television at this moment of the day. They have also adopted a less melodramatic, more comic tone. However, those that are broadcast later (from 22:00 onwards) feature more "hardcore" plots and contents, targeted specifically at a more adult audience.

In general, parents are extremely concerned about the amount of sex and violence that their children see on TV, and it is this type of content that they tend to mediate most frequently (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2004; Nathanson, 2002).

Where and with whom do adolescents watch television? Some studies carried out reveal that adolescents mostly watch television alone. This is followed by viewing with the whole family and, finally, by viewing in the company of their siblings. Watching television alone influences the freedom enjoyed by adolescents to choose which contents to view, since parents are less vigilant and exert less control over their choices. A curious loss of freedom of choice in relation to television viewing has been detected between the ages of 14 and 15 (García, 2005).

Diverse studies, such as, for example, the one carried out in Colombia by Gallo, Lopera and Vélez (2008), postulate that having a television in one's bedroom has a direct influence on viewing. In other words, having a television in one's room is related to an increasingly individual type of viewing, coupled with the consequent drop in family viewing. However, in the study carried out by Hardy, Baur, Garnett, Crawford, Campbell, Shrensbury, Cowell and Salmon (2006), the authors failed to find any significant relationship between these two variables. This finding suggests that more significant variables exist in the family environment (parents' and siblings' viewing habits) which may have a direct influence on the increase in television viewing time among adolescents.

In our context, adolescents tend to view series and news programmes both with their parents and alone, with viewing with siblings coming second. In addition to viewing TV, youngsters aged between 12 and 16 also spend time engaging in other activities, including (in descending order): sport (40.3%), the Internet (20.8%), seeing friends (16.7%), listening to music (6.9%) and reading (5.6%). Youngsters aged between 17 and 24, on the other hand, spend an equal amount of time playing sport and seeing friends (22.2%), following by time spent reading (16.7%), listening to music (11.1%) and surfing the Internet (9.3%). The time spent on the Internet and playing sport was found to decrease with age, while the time spent reading increased (Aierbe, Medrano and Palacios 2006).

Latin American adolescents, on the other hand, tend mainly to watch TV alone (6 out of every 10 adolescents), followed by co-viewing with their mother or siblings, their father, friends or other family members. They tend mostly to watch TV in their bedrooms, alone, followed by in the sitting room, siblings' bedrooms and, to a lesser degree, in the kitchen or playroom. In any case, watching television continues to be one of the principal ways in which Latin American adolescents spend their leisure time, although again, the results vary from country to country. Thus, for example, for Chilean teenagers watching television comes third, after listening to music and chatting, while Mexican adolescents rate watching television as their principal activity, followed by listening to music and chatting (Bringué and Sádaba, 2008).

It is here that the mediating role played by parents becomes particularly important, since the dimensions and perspectives provided by the parent may help youngsters find spheres of meaning which are, a priori, non-existent (Gabelas and Lazo, 2008). From this perspective, the information flows provided by an adult mind do not merely aim to control (such as, for example, setting time limits). Rather, their main importance lies in the way in which parents' input helps orient teenagers within the framework of shared viewing.

2. Parental mediation and family environment

Parents or significant adults use different types of strategies to influence the relationship between their children and the television. These strategies conform to different parental mediation styles, such as: a) Shared mediation or co-viewing: adults watch TV with their children, sharing in the act of being together in the same place, although they do not necessarily discuss what they are viewing; b) Restrictive mediation: parents establish rules which prevent their children from watching certain programmes, or limit their television viewing hours; c) Instructive mediation: parents talk about certain aspects of the programmes either during or after viewing; d) Unfocused mediation or the "laissez-faire" model: children are allowed to see what they want, whenever they want. There is unanimous agreement that the parental mediation styles which offer most benefits are instructive mediation and co-viewing, although special emphasis is placed on the fact that it is not enough just to watch together, but rather, adults should become actively involved in the viewing process.

During adolescence, of the three types of mediation described, co-viewing and instructive mediation decrease in accordance with the process of separation which adolescents undergo in relation to their parents, a process which is intrinsic to this developmental stage. The restrictive style, on the other hand, is more closely related to general parenting style than to changes in the parent-children relationship itself (Eggermont and Opgenhaffen, 2008). Also, research carried out in Chile found that the restrictive style is the least common style among adolescents (Catalán Bertoni, 2007; CNTV, 2009 and Santos, 2007).

Despite this, however, research has provided no conclusive results regarding co-viewing during adolescence. Some authors maintain that co-viewing decreases with age (Nathanson 2002; Ward, 2005), either because parents' attempts to restrict viewing become a source of parent-child conflict or because adolescents tend to watch television and engage in other "screen-related" activities in their bedrooms, thus diminishing the possibilities for shared or co-viewing. The study carried out by Nathanson (2002) with parents and teenagers revealed that restrictive mediation was related to less positive attitudes towards parents and more viewing with friends. Also, certain aspects of the physical context, such as having more than one television in the home, especially when there is one in every room of the house, makes it more difficult to establish rules and limits, since viewing becomes a more private affair. Nevertheless, other studies claim that parents and their adolescent children begin to share television preferences, and that as a result, co-viewing increases. In the research study carried out by Hardy et al. (2006), the authors found that parental presence during television viewing increased during adolescence. This may be due to the fact that adolescents and their parents tend to share fewer activities during this developmental phase, such as sitting down to a meal together, or going on outings, etc.

During previous research projects (Aierbe, Medrano and Palacios, 2006; Aierbe and Medrano, 2007; Aierbe, Medrano and Orejudo, 2008; Medrano, Aierbe and Orejudo; 2009) involving adolescents from the Autonomous Region of the Basque Country, we found that the mediation styles most commonly perceived by adolescents were co-viewing and instructive. Girls perceived restrictive and instructive parental

mediation styles more often than boys, while boys perceived an unfocused style. Furthermore, subjects attached more importance to certain values in accordance with the mediation style perceived.

In Latin America, Bringué and Sádaba (2008) analysed parental mediation as regards the use of various types of screens by adolescents, paying special attention to the existence of restrictions regarding access to specific television contents. According to their results, the most common pattern was for the adolescents themselves to decide which programmes to watch, in combination with other decision-making influences such as parents and siblings. Freedom of choice increases with age, since from 14 years old onwards, 60% said they enjoyed total freedom in relation to television, although parents maintained control over choice in 43% and, finally, one third of those surveyed said they shared their freedom of choice with siblings. In relation to gender, in general, girls enjoy more autonomy with regard to television, while boys tend, to a greater extent, to perceive parental restrictions regarding certain programmes that must not be watched.

Parental mediation styles must be situated in the general dynamics of family interaction, since everyday reception contexts influence the way in which adolescents interpret media messages and imbue the values transmitted. Nor should the socio-cultural context which envelopes the family be overlooked, since families are nothing more than microcosms which reproduce existing macrocosmic relations (Pindado, 2005b).

Some authors have focused their attention on restrictive parental interactions, and have analysed the reasons for parent-child arguments stemming from adolescents' television viewing. Thus, Bringué and Sádaba (2008) point out that for just over half of the Latin American adolescents participating the study, television watching was not a source of conflict with their parents. Also, the older the adolescent, the fewer the arguments. Boys argue more with their parents than girls at all ages, with the exception of 14-year-olds. Girls gradually start to argue less with their parents about television viewing from adolescence onwards. If we look at the results for each country, we see that Venezuelan teenagers are those which argue least, closely followed by Brazil, Argentina and Chile, all with a similar pattern. Peru and Mexico come next, with an equal division between those who argue and those who do not. Finally, Colombian teenagers were found to be the ones who argue the most.

The reasons for the arguments, in descending order from the most to the least frequent, are: a) time spent watching TV, which in general increases from the age of eleven onwards, and begins to decrease once again after the age of fourteen; b) watching TV at inappropriate moments; and c) the contents viewed by minors. The most frequent reason for girls was viewing time, whereas for boys, it was the nature of the contents viewed. The moment of viewing was an equal cause of conflict for both boys and girls. In accordance with country, certain different nuances were observed. For example, 61% of the Chilean adolescents who participated in the study said they had never argued with their parents for any television-related reason, while for those that had, the most common cause was watching TV at inappropriate moments. Mexico, on the other hand, is one of the Latin American countries with the lowest number of adolescents that claim never to have argued with their parents for television-related reasons (only 50% as opposed to the global mean of 59%).

Although these data provide more detailed information regarding the conflicts which emerge most frequently in relation to time and content restrictions, it is important to study the family dynamics more closely, since these dynamics have a major influence on the reception of television contents by adolescents.

As Professor Pindado has explained in chapter three, studies exist which, based on the conceptualisation developed by Chaffée, McLeod and Walkman (1973), analyse the relationship between family communication patterns and television viewing habits in more detail. Families which emphasise control and family harmony above all (socially-oriented families) are related to restrictive mediation, while families which attach more importance to their children's independence, autonomy and self-realisation (conceptually-oriented families) are related more to oriented mediation (instructive mediation and co-viewing). In Chile, and from an ethnographic perspective, Fuenzalida (2005) defends the study of television reception from the perspective of communicational micro-occurrences within the home.

Having reviewed a number of different studies, and with the aim of locating television viewing in the family context, in this research project we have focused our attention on the "family environment" indicator, which is conceived as the nature of the family atmosphere as perceived by the various family members, in relation to different dimensions such as Development, Relations and Organisation (Moos, 1974).

In accordance with Gabelas and Lazo (2008), we view conflicts around media consumption as an opportunity to grow, explore, get to know and recognise oneself, for all those who share a common media scenario. In other words, the aim is to view conflict as a positive occurrence, because in the words of the authors themselves, "parents, children and screens make up the territory in which a whole series of relations are designed, which may enable the development of healthy, autonomous and responsible consumption".

3.- An intercultural and gender comparison

This study comprised 283 adolescents aged between 15 and 19, from the cities of San Francisco de Macorís (Dominican Republic), Iquique (Chile) and, in our own context, Malaga and San Sebastián. More than half the subjects (150) were from the San Francisco de Macorís community (Dominican Republic), while the remaining adolescents were distributed evenly between the other three communities. Two thirds (69.6%) of the general sample were girls. If we analyse this distribution in accordance with the different cities, we see that in the sample group from Macorís, 82% were girls, while in Malaga, this percentage was only 48% (indeed, Malaga was the only place in which the percentage of boys was higher than that of girls).

Figure 1. Distribution of the sample according to context and gender
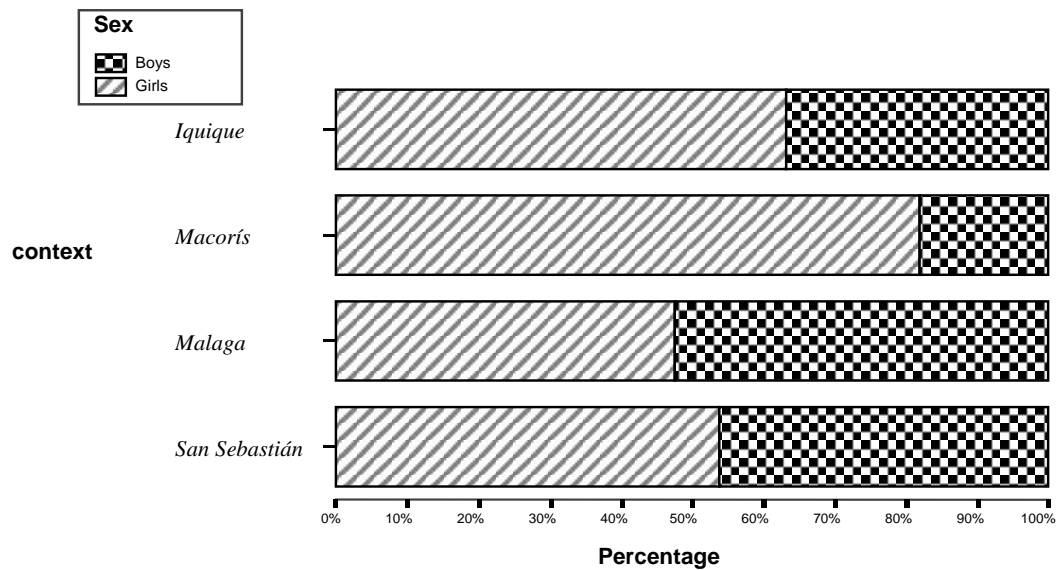
The measurement instrument used in this study was the Television Viewing Habits Questionnaire (CH-TV.02) (Medrano and Aierbe, 2008), the preliminary version of which had a total of 32 items. The on-line version of the questionnaire is administered in approximately 30'. The first part gathers data on parents' educational level, profession and employment situation, as well as information regarding the family composition (type of family structure and number of siblings). The second part of the questionnaire is made up of items which respond to different indicators; those taken into consideration here are: viewing time (hours spent watching television), alternative activities; preferred television genres, perceived mediation styles, social viewing context (i.e. with whom do they watch TV?), physical viewing context, purpose of sharing and prohibiting programmes, purpose or reasons for watching TV, and finally, perceived family environment.

When drafting the questionnaire items related to the parental mediation indicators, we based our work on Valkenburg's scale (1999), adapting it to the adolescent context and checking the suitability of the items (i.e. whether or not they reflect the dimensions we were aiming to measure) by means of statistical analyses.

We also included the family environment indicator related to communication and relationship patterns in the family, as perceived by adolescents, specifically the dimensions of cohesion, expressiveness and conflict. To this end, we based our work on the *Family Environment Scale (Escala de Clima social en la familia, FES; Moos and Moos, 1981, 1987).* This scale measures each family member's perception of the different aspects of family life. It is made up of 10 sub-scales which describe three dimensions: Relationships, Development and Stability in the family environment. The "Relationship" dimension selected for this piece of research assesses the degree of cohesion or union perceived in the family (CO), the communication or free expression of opinions and emotions (EX) and the degree of conflictive interaction (CT).

The following sections contain a summary of the most important results obtained during this preliminary phase of the preliminary study.

3.1. Some indicators of television viewing profile

a) Viewing time and alternative activities

The viewing time indicator refers to the number of hours adolescents spend in front of a television set, both during the week and at weekends. Taking into account all the communities studied, we found that the time spent by adolescents watching television is 2.53 hours on average during the week.

If we compare the different contexts, appreciable and statistically significant differences can be observed in the number of hours spent by adolescents every day in front of the TV. The group from Malaga reported the longest viewing time (mean of 3.53 hours), while the other communities reported shorter times of more or less equal lengths. The lowest level was reported by the San Sebastián community (mean of 2.10 hours). Although important differences were found between contexts, the differences between boys and girls were inappreciable, except perhaps in the case of Iquique (Chile), where girls seem to spend slightly more time watching television than boys.

Table 1. Hours spent watching TV during the week

CONTEXT	Mean	N	SD
1 San Sebastián	2.10	40	1.27
2 Malaga	3.53	40	1.30
3 Macorís	2.43	148	1.34
4 Iquique	2.39	54	1.83
Total	2.53	282	1.49

In relation to the number of hours spent watching television at weekends, the differences between the various contexts were not statistically significant, although the trend follows the same pattern as in the case of weekday viewing, with Malaga (4 hours) reporting the longest viewing times and Macorís the shortest (3 hours).

Table 2. Hours spent watching TV at weekends

CONTEXT	Mean	N	SD
1 San Sebastián	3.51	39	1.57
2 Malaga	4.00	38	1.93
3 Macorís	3.00	149	1.97
4 Iquique	3.45	53	3.45
Total	3.29	279	2.29

Of the alternative activities to watching TV, the most common were: "spending time with my family" (M: 8.9) followed by "seeing friends" (M:7.5), '"listening to music" (6.8), "surfing the Internet" (M:5), "using my mobile" (4.2), "reading" (M:3.3) and "playing sport" (2.5). It is curious to note the small amount of time spent playing

videogames (M:1). If we take into account the number of leisure activities engaged in by these young people, we see that the majority chose 5 or more activities. The differences between the various communities were appreciable, although not extreme: San Sebastián and Iquique reported the most time spent engaging in leisure activities, although in the case of Iquique, the dispersion is notably higher.

b) Preferred television genres

In order to analyse which television genres are the most popular among adolescents, programmes were grouped into the following genres: 1) News programmes, 2) Documentaries, 3) Fiction (series, soap operas, films, cartoons) and 4) entertainment (magazines, game shows, comedies, talk shows and celebrity gossip shows). The intercultural and gender comparisons revealed a series of interesting data.

The most popular genre among adolescents was **fictional series** (M: 2.84), although differences were observed in accordance with gender (M. 2.76 for boys and M. 2.88 for girls) and context, with the highest mean being found among girls from Malaga (M. 3.23) and the lowest among boys from Macorís (M. 2.44), as shown in figure 2. The second most popular genre was **documentaries** (2.74), with differences being observed between the sexes (M. 2.92 for boys and M. 2.66 for girls) but not between cultural communities. The third most popular genre was **news programmes** (M: 2.47), with significant differences being found in accordance with both gender (M: 2.69 for boys and 2.37 for girls) and context, with the highest mean being found among boys from Iquique (M: 3.10) and the lowest among girls from Malaga (1.93). In fourth place were **entertainment programmes** (M: 2.46), for which differences were observed only in relation to cultural context, with the highest mean being found in Iquique (M: 2.71) and the lowest in San Sebastián (M: 2.19). The fifth most popular genre was **talk shows** (M: 2.32), where differences were observed in accordance with context but not gender; the highest mean was found in Macorís (2.79) and the lowest in San Sebastián (1.50). **Sports** were the sixth most popular type of programme (M: 2.27), with significant differences being found in accordance with gender (M: 3.13 for boys and M: 1.86 for girls), although not with context. **Celebrity gossip shows** were the least popular genre (M: 1.76). The mean for boys was 1.61 and the mean for girls 1.82. No significant differences were found between the different cultural communities. Figure 2 shows the intercultural and gender differences observed in relation to television fiction, the most popular of the four established genres.

In short, the order of television genres, from most to least popular, was (in general) as follows: fictional series, documentaries, news programmes, entertainment programmes, talk shows, sports and celebrity gossip shows. Cultural differences were found in relation to fictional series, news programmes, entertainment programmes and talk shows. Gender differences were observed in relation to fictional series, documentaries, news programmes, sports and gossip shows. In specific terms, boys prefer sports, documentaries and news programmes, while girls score higher in fiction and gossip shows.

Figure 2. Intercultural and gender differences in relation to the fiction genre.

Fiction_TV Genre
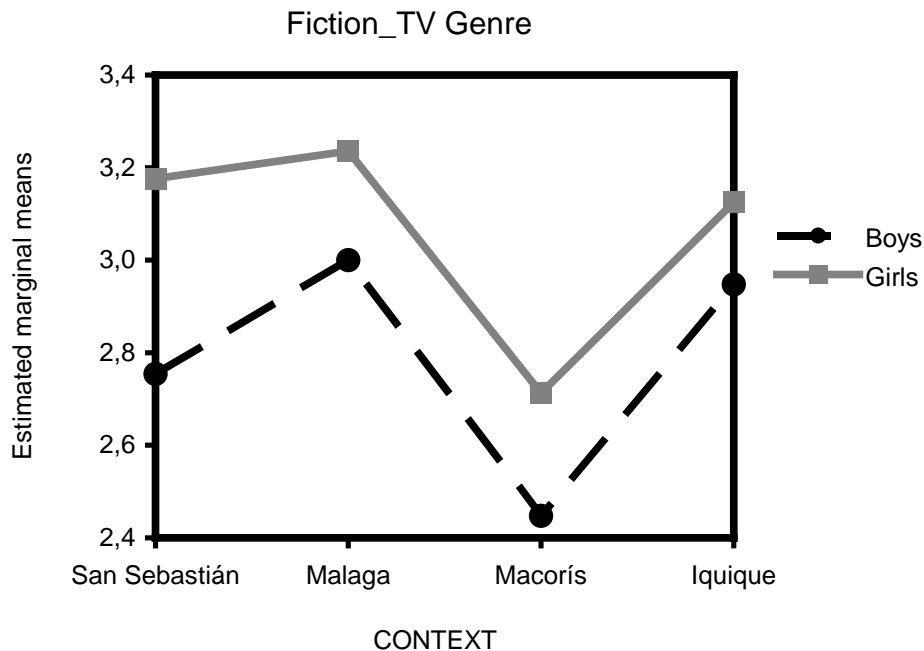
c) Physical and social viewing context

In accordance with the data gathered regarding the number of televisions in the home, Malaga had the highest number and Macorís the lowest. In response to the question: On what type of screen do you watch television?, or in other words, what medium do you use to view television content, with the exception of the traditional television set (89%), all other types are minority, such as the computer (14.1%), or even residual, such as the mobile telephone, etc.

In relation to the social viewing context, cross-cultural differences regarding the people with whom adolescents watch TV are statistically significant and important, thus enabling the establishment of different profiles. For example, Macorís stands out for the high incidence of viewing with siblings, while San Sebastián is characterised by the low level of viewing with friends, as opposed to Malaga, which has the highest level of this type of viewing. The adolescents of Iquique are those who watch TV least in the company of their parents.

When asked if they watched television alone, adolescents' responses varied moderately from context to context, although the differences observed are significant (See Table 3). If we rank the cultural communities according to solo viewing, from most to least time, the order is as follows: Iquique, San Sebastián, Malaga and Macorís.

Table 3. Watching TV alone

CONTEXT	Mean	N	SD
1 San Sebastián	3.03	40	.80
2 Malaga	2.73	40	.96
3 Macorís	2.64	148	.81
4 Iquique	3.43	54	.90
Total	2.86	282	.90

3. 2. Parental mediation styles and family environment

The first aim was to determine whether or not differences could be established between the groups using the variables or items included in this indicator, through an analysis of the cross-cultural stability of the results obtained. To this end, the set of items included to measure perceived mediation style was reduced to just a few dimensions or underlying factors. This was carried out by means of an exploratory factorial analysis, with three factors being obtained.

The first factor encompasses the contents regarding which parents intervene (i.e. the contents they feel they need to restrict or prohibit their children's access to). This type of mediation is directive, even authoritarian, in nature, which is why we have called it the "CONTROL" factor. It corresponds to the restrictive parental mediation style.

The second factor encompasses the contents which parents and children enjoy together, sharing the recreational side of the viewing activities with the emphasis being not on control, but rather on shared entertainment. We have called this factor "RECREATION", and it refers to co-viewing.

The third factor encompasses certain educational questions which reflect behaviours in which parents instruct or teach their children during TV viewing. Here, emphasis is placed on neither control nor recreation, but rather on education. We have called this factor "EDUCATION", and it refers to the instructive or guidance-based mediation style.

These three factors can be considered dimensions or subscales of parental mediation. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each dimension/subscale are: control subscale alpha= .8225; recreation subscale alpha= .7721 and education subscale alpha=.7722. The scores are fairly high, meaning that the adaptation of the items from Valkenburg's scale (1999) was suitable for measuring perceived parental mediation styles.

Table 4. Contextual differences in the three mediation factors

CONTEXT	CONTR-PM Controlling parental mediation	REC-PM Recreational parental mediation	EDU-PM Educational parental mediation
1 San Sebastián	1.9444	3.0701	2.5395
2 Malaga	1.5513	3.2957	2.6410
3 Macorís	2.4532	3.3093	3.3175
4 Iquique	1.4198	3.1741	2.4167
Total	2.0546	3.2480	2.9412

When analysing the cross-cultural sensitivity of these dimensions, in general we found statistically significant differences in both the Control factor (restrictive) and the Educational factor (instructive), while the discriminatory power was somewhat lower in the Recreational factor (co-viewing). Differences were found in accordance with cultural context, although not in relation to gender. Thus, Macorís scored higher in the control and educational factors, in comparison with the other contexts.

No cultural or gender differences were observed in the case of the recreational factor. However, we did observe that the distribution lines of the data for boys and girls crossed, resulting in inverted gender differences for Malaga and Iquique. In other words, in Malaga, the parental mediation patterns are perceived by boys as more recreational, while in Iquique, it was girls who perceived this type of mediation to a greater degree.

No differences were found between cultural communities as regards mediation styles related to the time spent by adolescents watching television (viewing time indicator). Also, hardly any differences were observed in relation to gender, since in girls, significant differences were only observed for the Control factor (restrictive mediation) on weekdays. Again, this result reflects the greater perception held by female adolescents from all the contexts studied regarding the stricter level of parental control to which they are subject in relation to television viewing.

Of the reasons given for viewing certain programmes with parents, or for certain programmes being prohibited, the main reason in all contexts for viewing with parents was "for entertainment" (74%).

Of the reasons given for certain programmes being prohibited, only "violence" and "sex" had considerable weight, accounting for 27% and 34% respectively.

Figure 3. Contextual differences regarding the prohibition of programmes due to scenes of violence
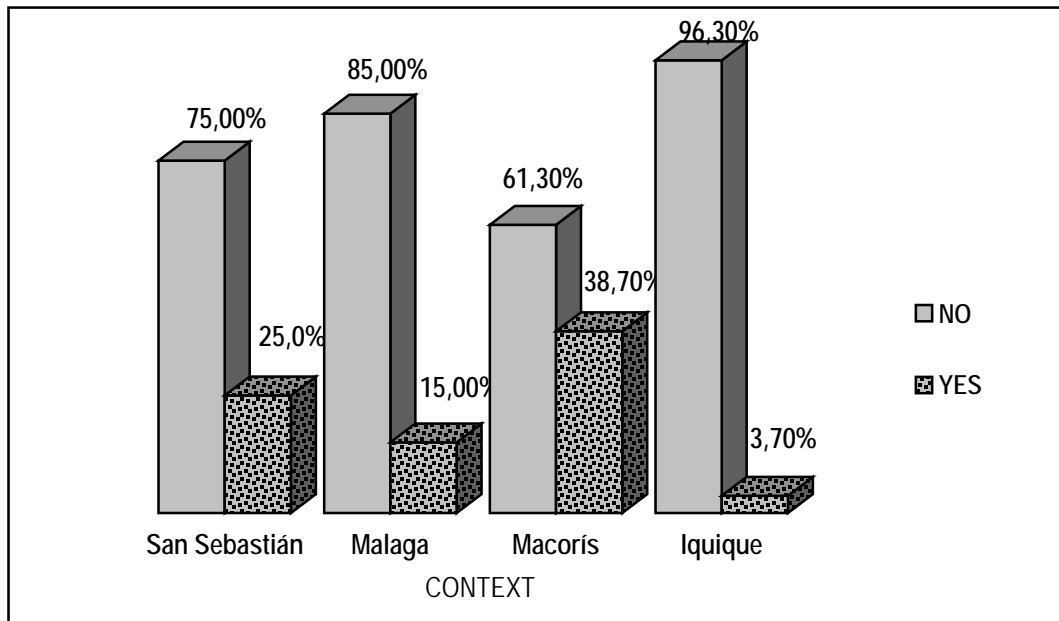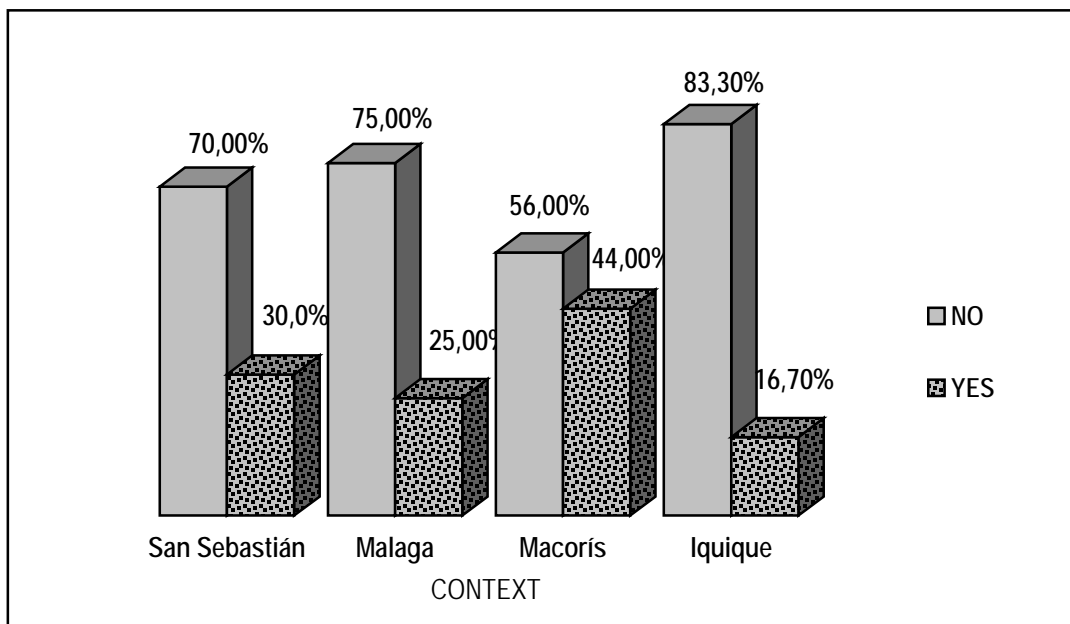
Figure 4. Contextual differences regarding the prohibition of programmes due to sex scenes


Having analysed parental mediation, it is important to place it within the context of the family environment. The presence of three factors was analysed: filiation (cohesion), communication (expressiveness) and conflict. The internal consistency (reliability through Cronbach's alpha) was high for both Filiation (Alpha = ,8460) and Communication (Alpha = ,7606). In the case of Conflict (Alpha = ,6668) the reliability was low, although notable for three items and sufficient for research purposes.

In relation to context, no significant differences were found in the three components of family interaction analysed. However, appreciable and statistically significant differences were found between boys and girls in Cohesion and Expressiveness.

As regards Cohesion in Malaga (boys M:4.14 vs. girls M: 3.61) and Macorís (boys M: 4.30 vs. girls M: 3.86), the differences are important, while the gap is smaller in Iquique (boys M: 3.96 vs. girls M: 3.88) and San Sebastián (boys M: 3.89 vs. girls M: 3.76). In all cases, boys scored higher for this factor.

In Expressiveness, as shown in figure 5, boys scored higher than girls (boys M: 3.82 vs. girls M: 3.55), especially in Malaga (boys M:3.89 vs. girls M: 3.15) and Macorís (boys M: 3.87 vs. girls M: 3.50), although these differences were not observed in either San Sebastián (M: 3.79 for both sexes) or Iquique (boys 3.81 vs. girls M: 3.71).

Figure 5. Intercultural and gender differences in Expressiveness
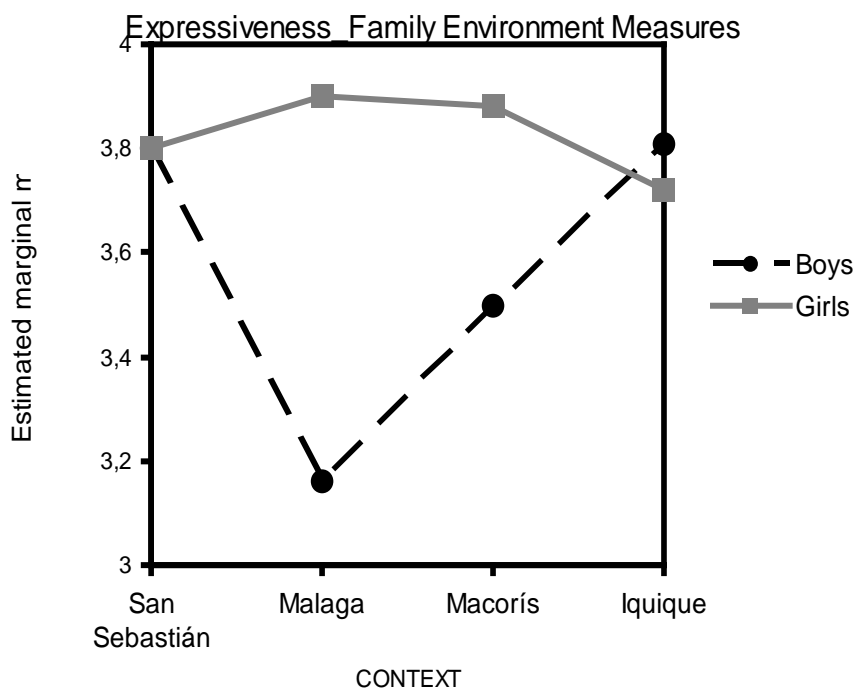
Finally, in the "Conflict" variable, no significant differences were observed in accordance with either cultural context or gender. Nevertheless, although the interaction between context and gender was not statistically significant, it can be considered tendential (it approaches 0.05), since we observed that in Iquique, boys scored higher in the "Conflict" variable, while in the other communities it was girls who scored highest for this variable.

4.- Conclusions and Discussion

In accordance with the preliminary results of our research, and in relation to some indicators of television viewing profiles and viewing context characteristics, we can state that the data point towards certain important contextual and gender similarities and differences which should be taken into account from the perspective of educational intervention and the development of television skills.

Time spent watching television (viewing hours indicator) is, on average, three hours per day during the week, although this time increases at weekends. However, important contextual differences exist, with Malaga being the place where adolescents spend the most time in front of the television. No gender differences were found in relation to this indicator, with the exception of girls from Iquique (Chile), who spend longer watching television than their male counterparts. In the opinion of parents from certain cultural contexts, television may be viewed as a "safe" leisure option for young people, in light of the dangers existing in their immediate environment.

In relation to alternative activities, in addition to the time spent watching TV, the adolescents participating in this study continue to attach a great deal of importance to time spent with their family or friends, even in comparison with the time spent using other types of "screens", such as the computer, mobile telephone or video console. Adolescents from those communities which engage in more alternative activities are also those who spend less time watching television during the week.

The results regarding television preferences differ from those found in previous studies (Medrano et al. 2009; Medrano et al. 2010), since although series continue to be the most popular type of programme, in this study they are followed by documentaries, with sport occupying a very low position on the ranking. In any case, "trash" programmes are the ones which are least popular among adolescents of both sexes, a finding which indicates that teenagers are in fact more selective than we perhaps give them credit for in relation to their preferences, and continue to place a value on privacy, even when presented with a type of programme which fails to respect the limits between the private and public spheres (Aierbe, Medrano and Martínez de Morentín, 2010).

Preferences differ according to gender, since teenage boys tend to prefer sports programmes, documentaries and news programmes, while teenage girls tend to choose fictional series and celebrity gossip shows.

One interesting nuance added by our study to the gender-based comparison is cultural diversity; for example, boys from Iquique are those who reported watching the most news programmes, while girls from Malaga reported the lowest level of preference for this genre. Furthermore, girls from Malaga reported watching the most fictional series, while boys from Macorís were the ones who watched this type of programme least. Does this point once again to the conclusion that boys are more interested in action and current affairs, while girls are more inclined to prefer relational, emotional contents? And which aspects of the cultural environment influence this, seeing as these differences are found in some cultural communities and not others? In relation to the intercultural comparison, other differences were also found, although in this case they are not linked to gender differences. Thus, for example, adolescents from San Sebastián reported the lowest level of preference for entertainment programmes and talk shows, while those from Iquique reported the highest level of preference for the first of these genres, and those from Macorís the highest level of preference for the second.

In relation to the social viewing context or, in other words, with whom adolescents watch TV, it is in Iquique, followed by San Sebastián, that they watch TV most alone, although other differences also exist between the different contexts in relation to whom they share television viewing time with. It would be interesting to relate these differences in more detail to the type of family structure (two-parent, single-

parent, others) which predominates in each cultural context, since for example, in Macorís, the incidence of single-parent families (20%) is higher than in the other contexts. Another factor which may influence this variable is number of family members, which tends to be higher in Latin America than in Spain.

In relation to parental mediation, of the similarities observed, one particularly interesting one is that the mediation style which is shown to decline the most all contexts is restrictive mediation, following by instructive mediation and co-viewing. This result confirms a widespread idea that is currently being defended through various different studies, as mentioned in the first part of this chapter. The restrictive style is the one which declines most possibility because it is related to parent-child conflict during adolescence. Another reason may be the fact that teenagers tend to distance themselves increasingly from their parents during adolescence, as an intrinsic part of this developmental stage.

Contextual differences are determined by the adolescents from Macorís (Dominican Republic), who score highest in restrictive and instructive mediation, in comparison with the other communities. Nevertheless, gender differences only appear when related to viewing time and mediation, with girls perceiving a greater degree of restrictive mediation on weekdays. This result also coincides with the fact that girls tend also to perceive a greater level of family conflict than boys, although the scores obtained do not reach significance level.

In relation to co-viewing, no significant differences were found between contexts. The fact that co-viewing decreases to a lesser degree than other mediation styles may be due to the fact that adolescent viewing patterns are fairly similar to adult ones, meaning that children and parents may share preferences. In order to explain why co-viewing scores are higher among boys from Malaga and among girls from Iquique (Chile), we could consider the viewing time indicator, i.e. the number of hours spent watching television. If we do this, then we see that Malaga is the place where teenage boys watch the most TV (both on weekdays and at weekends), while in Iquique it is teenage girls who report spending longest in front of the television set. Here, it may also be worth analysing certain cultural factors, as well as the family structure related to parental mediation styles.

It would be interesting to determine whether parents have different attitudes to different media content, and whether or not they adopt different mediation strategies depending on the context in which they live.

The perceived family environment differs in accordance with context and gender. Thus, scores for Cohesion and Expressiveness were highest in Malaga and Macorís. Similarly, differences were also found in relation to gender, since the perception of Cohesion and Expressiveness is greater among boys than among girls. Although no significant differences were found for the Conflict dimension, a certain trend does exist among the girls of the sample group to perceive a greater degree of conflict in the family environment. Could this be related to the fact that teenage girls tend to perceive a greater level of restriction and instruction by their parents, in comparison with their male counterparts?

Whatever the case, it is important to analyse the conflict dimension of the family environment, in order to clarify the different meanings attached to the concept itself. Conflict may be positive if it involves a discussion and clarification of certain themes between parents and children. On the other hand, if it is excessive or hinders communication between family members, then it may have a harmful effect on the family dynamics. It would also be interesting to continue analysing the indicator in more detail, in order to identify possible relationships between perceived environment and parental mediation styles, as well as with other television viewing profile indicators.

The results obtained from the preliminary study have also served as the basis for creating the definitive data collection instrument.

We should highlight the fact that while analysing contextual diversity and gender differences adds an extra layer of complexity, due to the difficulty of handling multiple variables, it nevertheless provides a wealth of interesting data which may help guide educational interventions in relation to the media, enabling said interventions to be adapted more precisely to the characteristics of young people from different cultures.
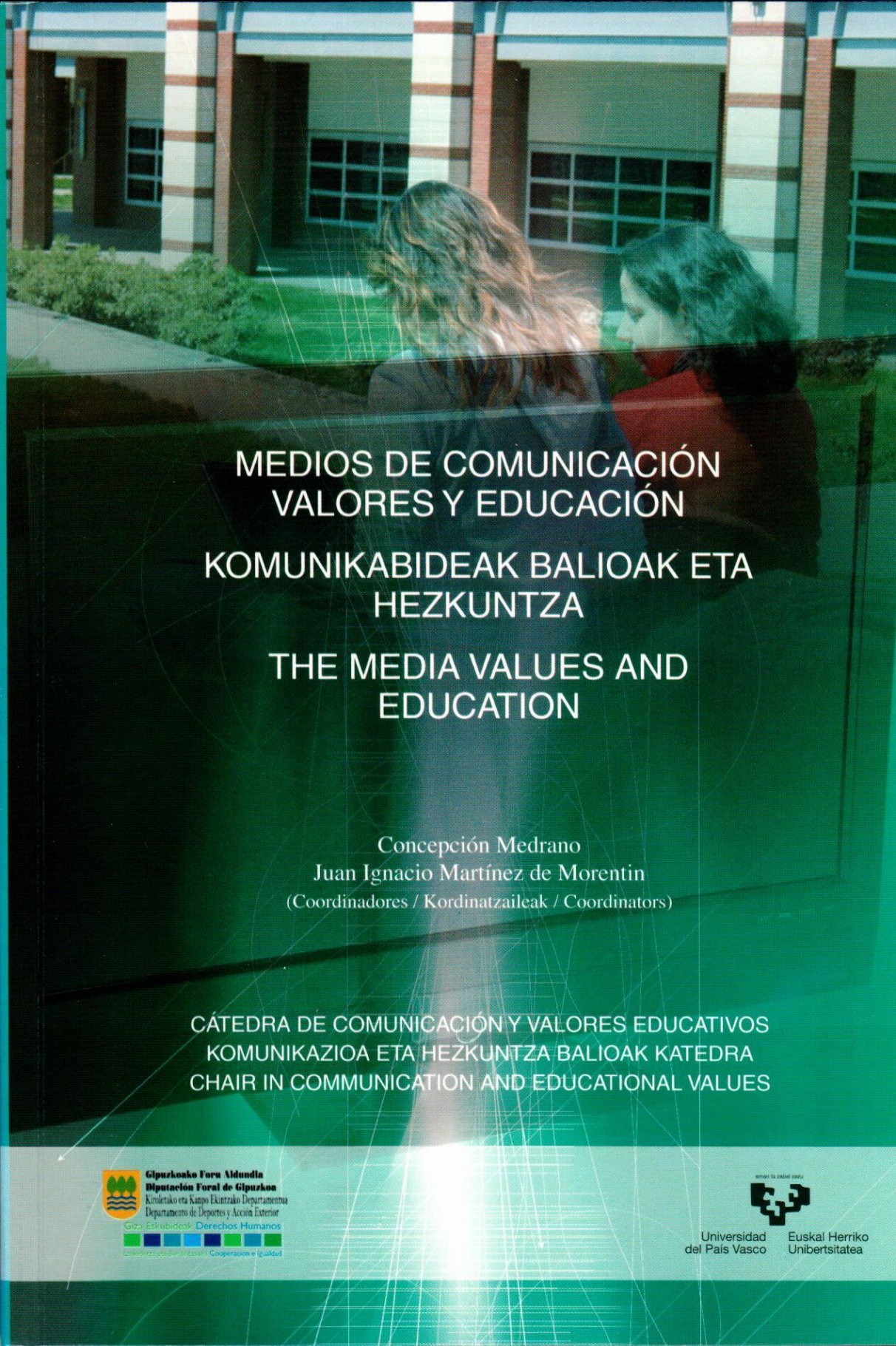
Finally, it is vital to promote a greater number of initiatives in both formal and non formal contexts which focus on adolescents' television skills, or in other words, on their ability to interact with the media in a balanced way, from both a rational and recreational perspective (Aguaded and Díaz, 2008). There can be no doubt that in the course of this process, and from an intercultural and gender perspective, it is vital to continue analysing both mediation and interaction contexts, due to their influence on either strengthening or reducing certain effects of the media.

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MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN VALORES Y EDUCACIÓN

KOMUNIKABIDEAK BALIOAK ETA HEZKUNTZA

THE MEDIA VALUES AND EDUCATION

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CÁTEDRA DE COMUNICACIÓN Y VALORES EDUCATIVOS
KOMUNIKAZIOA ETA HEZKUNTZA BALIOAK KATEDRA
CHAIR IN COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL VALUES

Los artículos que se presentan en esta publicación son trabajos de investigación que han sido aceptados tras un proceso de selección y evaluación de los originales y una calificación de evaluadores externos.