

Beyond negativity on television entertainment: positive perspectives and research on its contribution to public television.

Additional analysis: the Basque night-show
magazine *Sorginen Laratza* at Euskal
Telebista.



Doctoral Thesis
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Universidad
del País Vasco

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**BEYOND NEGATIVITY ON TELEVISION
ENTERTAINMENT: POSITIVE PERSPECTIVES AND
RESEARCH ON ITS CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC
TELEVISION.**

**ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS: THE BASQUE NIGHT-SHOW
MAGAZINE *SORGINEN LARATZA* AT EUSKAL
TELEBISTA.**

DOCTORAL THESIS

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To Mikel and Ainhoa.

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INITIAL INFORMATION

i) Introduction

It can be said that television, and mainly television entertainment, has a bad reputation; we can observe that there is often a negative perception of this medium and this genre. After working in television for more than 30 years, and being closely involved in the creation, production, management and analysis of a great amount of television programmes and formats of different kinds and genres, I can easily make this statement regarding my own experience. However, I would also assert that this perception is shared by many scholars and professionals working and researching on television, as I will show later on.

In fact, television has been heavily criticised from its advent, and a great deal of research on this medium, from various critical perspectives, has been, and still is, carried out. The analysis of, and discussions about its effects, influence and impact in different areas of society generates not only a lot of articles, scientific papers, and academic seminars, but also professional meetings, reports and analysis work. Besides that, we can observe that television and its content are also a matter of talking and discussion in other social gatherings, from the chat at the pub or at the coffee shop to the comments at work or at family meals and parties or, according to the latest habits and trends, in the conversations around the office water dispenser, and on social media. Today it is broadly accepted that television in general, and also television entertainment specifically, play an important role in different areas of society. Moreover, it is assumed that this device, this medium, has become part of everyday life for many people all over the world. The great amount of time that is devoted to consuming television entertainment in most societies can't be denied, and the influence of TV entertainment in different and various fields is generally acknowledged as well.

Consequently, we can assert that the role and influence of this medium, and this genre in particular, are broadly accepted. Nevertheless, as noted at the beginning, it seems that it is still its negative role and influence which are mostly highlighted, especially by certain sectors of society. At the same time, the accompanying positive influence and contributions of television, and more specifically of television entertainment, especially in certain fields and areas, are rarely taken into account, frequently being either diminished or ignored.

If that perception can be broadly applied both to this medium and to the television entertainment genre in particular, I would say that this bad reputation and negative feeling are even more noticeable with regard to public television. In fact, leaving aside the different assessment of the influence and effects of this medium, both on viewers and in society, while the entertainment function of commercial television is generally and broadly acknowledged and valued, it doesn't seem that this statement can be equally extrapolated to public television. In addition, when referring to the main aims of these entities, the informative and educational missions are always highlighted, whereas the entertainment function, although included by public broadcasting companies, doesn't seem to be equally valued.

I will argue around this matter extensively throughout this work. Nevertheless, I would also like to point out that the regulation of television also reflects this issue. Well known Television Studies academic Toby Miller outlines the main topics that television legislation generally comprises. I would say that the list that he sketches out regarding this matter shows the main concerns about television by governors and society in general (Miller, 2010, p. 57):

Televisual regulation has routinely addressed several distinct but related elements: allocating and administering licenses and space of the electronic

spectrum; censoring advertising, politics, sex, and violence; restricting cross-media and foreign ownership; and mandating local, regional, national, ethnic, sporting, and children's programs.

Moreover, the paragraph below, by the same author, extracted from the same text, encapsulates some of the main ideas related to this work, which encompasses the main arguments that I want to bring to the fore. I would say that his words summarise in an interesting manner the main functions that are associated with television, and the different models and approaches when establishing the difference between private and public networks (Miller, 2010, p. 57): .

These regulations display fears and hopes for TV and its perceived power as a source of education, information and distraction. Television has turned into a site of struggle between the idea of a technology that binds peoples together in national or regional formations versus pure entertainment. As was indicated above, the first discourse draws from a notion of public service and the second from private gain. They lead to distinct modes of production and distribution.

However, I would like to mention that, in this text, Miller presents both models as somehow confronted, mainly when referring to entertainment, reflecting the general tendency in this respect. From my point of view, though, the entertainment function of television should not be considered in opposition to the other objectives and missions of television, and, more precisely, of public broadcasting. I am referring to the aims of informing and educating, as well as to the ambition of these public entities to bring people together and to reinforce the sense of community amongst those viewers, that is to say, their perception and feeling of belonging to a certain community, to a region or nation, whose members share features that define, and are defined by, their cultural identity.

This is, in fact, the thesis that underlies my work, as I defend the argument that entertainment shouldn't be mainly considered a genre that threatens the fulfilment of the main missions of public television. I argue that, on the contrary, entertainment programmes can make important contributions to the achievement, to the attainment of those goals that public television pursues. Furthermore, I also assert that the entertainment function of public television, per se, the ambition of offering entertainment and enjoyment to its audience, to the public, shouldn't be dismissed, due to the benefits that entertainment, and therefore entertainment television content, also brings to them. I question those perspectives that only focus on the negative perception of television, and more precisely television entertainment, especially when referring to public media.

In fact, the objective of this doctoral thesis is to research that negative perception of television and television entertainment, in particular to investigate the positive perspectives and the contributions of this genre to public television.

Hence, my interest in conducting this study responds to those reasons mentioned previously: on the one hand the feeling about the negative perception that hangs over television entertainment, and more precisely that associated to public television and its functions; on the other hand, the fact that my professional experience in the production and analysis of a great and varied amount of television programmes has made me aware of the positive effects, influence, and inputs of entertainment programmes in various fields, and more precisely aware of the contributions of these formats to public television.

Due to that, it is my intention to develop those two main ideas, to work on both of them, although different approaches are taken for each one. With regard to the first,

namely the research on the negative perception of television, as well as for the enquiry into positive perspectives, a global approach is taken, and these topics are tackled from a broad, international perspective. In the process of identifying the contributions of television entertainment to public television, though, I first narrow the research spectrum, and focus on a specific entertainment programme, before extending the arguments and conclusions drawn to other cases. Consequently, we can affirm that although when concentrating on that specific case (in the second part of this work) I mainly refer to a certain programme (*Sorginen Laratza*) on a specific channel, the Basque Public Television, Euskal Telebista, the reflections, arguments and conclusions regarding this matter can be easily extended to other public channels, and even more to those regional proximity broadcasters associated to communities with their own language and defined, specific, cultural identity.

Therefore, that initial narrow approach into a specific case is broadened, extended, afterwards, as it is shown that similar rationale can be applied to global cases too, which is argued at the end of the second part of this text. I would therefore conclude that this research work combines global and local approaches, and, somehow, ‘glocal’ perspectives as well. In any case, it can be observed that a fairly holistic approach is taken, as prominent scholars of television studies suggest nowadays.

ii) Objectives.

As a result, this work has two parts, which respond to the two issues posed in the preceding section. Consequently, it can be said that, initially, each one deals with different and specific questions and objectives but we can also affirm that both parts are certainly closely related.

The objective of the first part of this work is to conduct research on the statement presented at the beginning, namely the bad reputation of television and of television entertainment in particular. At this stage, the aim is to find out about the origin of and the reasons for this negative perception and, at the same time, to inquire into trends, theories, approaches and research models that allow a more positive perspective to the study of this medium, and more precisely to the entertainment genre, when analysing its influence, effects, impact and contributions. Likewise, this epistemology helps to establish the grounds and the main elements for the theoretical framework that binds the limits and the shape of the analysis that is conducted in the following part of this work. As mentioned previously, a global, international approach is taken in this part.

The second part of this research focuses on a specific case. I analyse a certain entertainment television programme, to identify its contributions both to the public television channel where it is produced and broadcast as well as to the society where it is embedded. The features of this television show make it suitable for this analysis, which is carried out taking into account three main areas: content, production/management, and audience/reception. In addition, as said, the study conducted in the first part provides the main referential elements and the theoretical framework for the development of this second one. The final objective of this part is also to present elements and conclusions that can be extrapolated to other companies and societies, as well as to public television in general, identifying some of the ways in which television entertainment programmes can help in the fulfilment of the main missions of public broadcasting, and hence, to outline some of the contributions of this genre to public television.

iii) Research modes, processes and procedures.

The first part is mainly documental research, as it consists of a compilation, revision and analysis of the work of prestigious international scholars in various areas associated with the study of television in several fields, all of them closely related to the issue posed here. For doing so, both the research work as well as the result of the compilation and editing activity of relevant authors in relation to television studies, are taken into account. Besides that, other specific areas and fields of study associated with the main topic of research are taken into consideration, and attention is drawn to significant works of various important authors related to them. The analysis and opinions of other professionals are also borne in mind as part of this documental research. Consequently, an international, global perspective is taken throughout this first part. Furthermore, in addition to the work of most prominent researchers on those areas, the work conducted by those academics and professionals of my nearest universities and society is also considered and mentioned.

The second part of the analysis focuses on a case study. In this final stage of the research work, the material for analysis is mainly documental, either in the form of various written documents or as audio-visual material of the television entertainment programme which is the object of analysis. Therefore, in that respect, this part could be initially considered the result of only documental research too. I wouldn't say that it is the case though, because, as a matter of fact, various types of research are applied to the analysis of that specific programme. I will below explain the reasons for this statement.

A great part of that material analysed for this thesis is the final result of various types of research previously conducted; studies of which this author was generally either part of or the sole author of. Hence, I worked on a great amount of reports

regarding the programme in question (the night-show magazine *Sorginen Laratza*), documents that were generated during the time of the production of the show, which ran for 6 years. As co-author/co-creator and executive producer of this programme I not only had access to first-hand and complete information about it, but I also generated a lot of data about this programme. Consequently, I can state that my everyday work during those 6 years entailed a profound knowledge of the object of study.

Furthermore, additional analysis was also carried out by other professionals, either within the production and broadcasting public company (Euskal Telebista – Basque Television), or by private firms that offered that service to this entity. All these studies provided fundamental data for further research as well. These numerous professional reports produced at that time are, indeed, important sources of information for this current study. Hence, these documents are the result of various analyses undertaken at the time of the production of the programme, for which various methods were used, including field work, participatory observation, quantitative and qualitative methods, and experimental research modes, in addition to the documental analysis that was also conducted at the time. Most of the analysis work undertaken at that time can be considered, in fact, as action-research, where a continuous process of observation, analysis, and trial and error based experimental methods took place.

In fact, during the period of production and broadcasting of this programme (1999-2005), in terms of the professional procedures, regular analysis in various fields was conducted (content, look, audiences, programming, production, management etc.), conclusions were drawn, and decisions about implementing changes due to those results were taken. Those innovations, in each specific field, were put into practice and were kept, or not, according to a trial-error experimental research process. This process of research (analysis – conclusions - trial/error – analysis – conclusions – evolution –

innovation) was, in fact, constant during the stage of programme production, in the various fields that are analysed in the second part of this current research. As mentioned, the results of that extensive and comprehensive analysis, compiled in the numerous professional reports produced at that time, are in fact the basis of a great part of the research conducted during the analysis of the case study reflected in the second part of this text. I can therefore state that the information gathered during those six years of production, and the diverse research methods used during that period, in which this researcher was directly involved, are indeed fundamental for this work.

At this stage I, therefore, deal with documental material which includes both written and audio-visual sources. As said, part of that material is the result of previous and varied research but, besides that, I also work on many other documents that are equally relevant for the fulfilment of the objectives of this investigation. For doing so, methods of textual analysis when studying the content, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis, related to audience behaviour and response, are applied among others, taking original data as a starting point.

I can conclude that the final result will be the consequence of qualitative analysis, as the ultimate objective of this part is to identify and assess the contributions of a certain television programme to a specific public television, and to extend those conclusions to other similar cases and to public broadcasting entities in general. However, as said, a great variety of research methods underlie that final process for which, I would add, the mixture of professional and academic research is clearly noticeable.

Taking all this into consideration I can affirm that the research methods developed in this PhD work are in line with the latest claims and tendencies among

most prominent researchers on television studies. In fact, these academics highlight the importance of using ‘mixed, multidisciplinary, multi-perspective, melted, melded, methods’ (cf. Barker M., 2003; Wasko, 2005; Newcomb, 2005; Miller 2010, 2014; Bignell, 2013; Straubhaar, 2007). In addition, the relevance of qualitative methods within the discipline of television studies, beyond the prominence of quantitative models in the field of mass studies research, is also noted by these scholars. Finally, I would add that the mixture of professional and academic research and procedures, which are fundamental in this work, allows a more comprehensive approach and analysis. I consider this aspect relevant, due to my profile and interests, which combine both the academic and the professional fields.

Having said that, I will include further explanations about the research process, methods, and procedures conducted in each part within those sections of this work where I deal with these matters.

PART I

TELEVISION ENTERTAINMENT, GOOD OR BAD: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND POSITIVE APPROACHES.

1. TELEVISION ENTERTAINMENT, GOOD OR BAD: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND POSITIVE APPROACHES.

1.1. Introduction.

1.1.1. General considerations.

This section is the result of a literature compilation, review and analysis that I have done regarding this issue, that is to say, the research work developed by different, prestigious scholars in relation to the critical approaches to television, and, more specifically, concerning the various negative views on this communication and entertainment medium. Besides that, I also include more positive approaches towards television, and more specifically over television entertainment, which have been developed mainly during these last years. These new perspectives present a more positive point of view when analysing the various effects of television entertainment and, consequently, I take into account the authors that have worked from these perspectives in various fields, as well as the various topics related to them.

Therefore, I would say that on the one hand, the aim of the analysis of the work of those relevant scholars, their texts, and the quotes selected is to offer arguments in relation to the bad reputation of television, and more specifically of television entertainment. Nevertheless, on the other hand I also aim to present relevant information regarding the continual discussions about its negative and positive contributions, its view as a benign or malignant device, and medium, as part of the media, from its advent until present times. As a consequence, according to this approach, positive arguments about and perspectives of television, and more specifically television entertainment, will be taken into account for this study.

Finally, the great evolution within television studies that has taken place during all these years have broadened the topics of research in this field, as well as the approaches and perspectives on them. Furthermore, this large spectrum has affected the perception of television, and television entertainment, with regard to its influence, effects, impact and value. Due to that, I have also included this topic (the evolution of television studies) as part of the research developed in this first part of my work.

1.1.2. Outline.

Having said that, I will add that, with regard to that approach, I have sketched out nine main chapters, according to the different fields and topics related to the explanations previously offered.

As a consequence, I first research the different perspectives of television and its value. I pose different statements related to the bad reputation of, the worries and anxieties towards television, and TV entertainment, from the advent of this medium until present times, reflected by several scholars in their research work. The opinion of academics, intellectuals, critics, and professionals are presented. Afterwards, I focus on the literature that deals with the controversy between the positive and negative considerations of television and, more specifically, of television entertainment. Due to that, both sides, negative and positive are brought to the fore. (1.2. Television and its value: negativity and bad reputation). In addition, I offer information that shows the link between those perspectives and audience centred studies, perspectives that are closely related to the evolution of the way audiences have been considered: as active or passive viewers. In relation to that, I also express the importance of the studies on audience and media effects and their evolution with respect to this matter.

The next chapter (1.3. Television entertainment's effects: audiences) is devoted to that topic, as the effects of television entertainment studied from the audience field will be analysed in this section. A great deal of literature with regard to related issues such as 'active and passive audience' and the different schools of thought and theories associated to them will be presented in this section.

After that I will tackle the analysis of the effects of television entertainment from another approach. In fact, while in the previous section most analysis responds to the research carried out within the sociology field, in this chapter I focus on the studies undertaken within another discipline, Psychology. (1.4. Television entertainment's effects: Psychology). Actually, research conducted as part of this field of study presents interesting conclusions regarding the positive effects of television and television entertainment in particular.

Due to the importance of the study of television effects for the purpose of this work, I have dedicated another chapter to this topic, to focus on the evolution of the studies on this matter (1.5. Studying television entertainment's effects: evolution).

The development of studies on television effects is closely related to the issues presented in this work, but so is the evolution of television studies. Actually, the development of this discipline and the great amount of varied research conducted within it have enabled us to identify new elements and areas of research that permit a more positive approach to the analysis of television, and television entertainment in particular, regarding the effects, influence, impact and value of this communication medium, and this specific genre. I focus on that in the chapter devoted to this topic. (1.6. Television Studies: evolution).

The next section (1.7. Television entertainment: claiming recognition) refers to those voices which have recently begun to highlight the positive side of television entertainment, including the latest formats and subgenres. We can say that they not only offer a more positive perspective on television entertainment, but they also acknowledge its value. The opinions of academics and professionals are included in this part as well as the recent discussions about the prestigious British Public Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC, regarding this matter.

In addition to the issues mentioned in previous chapters, other perspectives and topics are also taken into account (1.8. The value of television entertainment: other approaches and topics), due to their importance for the fulfilment of the objectives of this work. I consider that they help to identify the contributions of television entertainment and to assess its value. Furthermore, this information is relevant to establishing the parameters and the framework for the research developed in the second part of this work, when I study a specific case. Topics such as social impact and social value, globalisation and glocalisation, cultural identity and cultural proximity, and the role of television entertainment as part of the creative cultural industries are mentioned in this section. The research developed outside academia, within the industry sector, either public or private, is also borne in mind when mentioning the varied perspectives and approaches to the analysis of television entertainment and its value.

Next, I focus on what is understood by ‘television entertainment’ as I think that an adequate explanation of this concept is essential for proper research on this matter (1.9. Television entertainment: definition). Finally, in the last chapter I briefly reflect on the main points developed throughout this first part and on the principal and general conclusions drawn from that research (1.10. First Part: final reflections).

Having said that, I would note that the information presented in this first part, the analysis of the work of relevant scholars as well as the opinions of various professionals compiled here regarding this topic, can be considered a complete, concluded, piece of research as such. It can be said that the objective of studying the negative perception of television entertainment, held by many sectors of society, and for many years, as well as the aim of finding new approaches and opinions that allow a more positive approach to this issue are fulfilled. That analysis certainly permits going beyond those negative perspectives of television entertainment, and it helps to identify many of the positive contributions of this genre.

However, in addition, the research conducted in this first part and the conclusions drawn from it help to pose the theoretical framework, and to settle the ground, the basis, to define both the boundaries as well as the parameters and the main structure of the second part of this PhD dissertation, where, as I have explained in its introductory section, I carry out further analysis, focusing on a specific case study.

1.1.3. Additional explanation.

In this chapter I will include a lot of quotes taken from papers, essays and books written by different scholars. Opinions of various professionals and television critics and commentators are also written, verbatim in many cases. I have done so because the final purpose of this section is in fact the selection, compilation, revision and analysis of the literature that I have considered effective and clear when it comes to explaining and reflecting on the issue presented as the starting point of this research work. In accordance with this, in many cases I have decided to express literally what I have considered important points, information, reflections and statements related to the issue

outlined before. This is the reason why a lot of quotes can be found, taken verbatim from those researchers' texts, as in my opinion they reflect best the points and statements dealt with throughout this section. Hence, these quotes back up and offer arguments both for the issues analysed in this work as well as with regard to the way they are arranged in this dissertation essay. Moreover, I would say that those specific quotes bring not only important insight into the topics presented, but essential information for a comprehensive understanding of the subjects which are object of research.

In addition, the selection made, as well as the way those texts are shown and ordered, define the basis, the ground and the theoretical framework of this, the first part of my PhD work, as well as the structure and the boundaries of it. Moreover, as pointed out previously, the analysis and reflections developed and the conclusions drawn from this first part do, in fact, define and outline the theoretical framework and the structure of its second part, which, as explained before, focuses on a specific case study.

According to all this, I would say that having taken that information as a starting point, the intention of the analysis conducted, the reflection developed and the conclusions drawn from it, within this my PhD work, is to open another research path. Hence the aim is to conduct research that takes into account the previous work done by other scholars of different times and countries, to advance the study of the positive value and the inputs of television entertainment, and, more specifically, on its impact and contributions regarding public television.

1.2. Television and its value: negativity and bad reputation.

1.2.1. Introduction and general overview.

I have already mentioned that television, and mainly television entertainment, still seems to have a bad reputation, a negative consideration, by many people and within different sectors of society. In recent years, however, there are more voices, both academic and professional, which, at the same time as they acknowledge this fact, they defend a more positive view of television entertainment. I will quote below some comments by different scholars and professionals from different countries that support this statement. These are a few examples among many others that also are in line with these reflections, as I will show further in this work.

Academic Toby Miller is very well known by researchers in the field of television studies, due to the prolific work he conducts in this area. This paragraph, drawn from one of his most recent texts (Miller, 2014) poses the issue mentioned, about the negative perception of television, and regarding television entertainment in particular (pp. xxxi) :

TV has probably received the greatest attention (and frequently demonization) of any cultural medium. The opulence of television as a technology is supposedly matched by a barrenness of civilization. Critics find it responsible for deficits in knowledge, concentration and responsibility among populations. Aesthetically, it is said to appeal to base instincts and lowest-common denominators. Politically, it is seen as instilling either quietude or hysteria. Criticisms come from both left and right that a surfeit of signage and a deficit of understanding cheapen public culture, as *Kitsch* overruns quality (Martín Barbero and Rey, 1999: 15-16, 22, 24). Most television programming has been dedicated to entertainment, and that focus, along with the ease use and the double pull of vision and sound, have long produced embarrassment and even shame on the part of some viewers.

In this text below, however, Miller emphasises the positive contributions of this electronic device and the value of its programmes in the current scenario, where technological developments permit new possibilities. These comments highlight the qualities of the latest television texts, confronting the initial fears about this medium and its content (Miller, 2010, p. 186):

Television's reach is extending, its flexibility is developing, its popularity is increasing, and its capacity to influence and incorporate older and newer media is undimmed. To think otherwise would diminish the material histories of televisual texts and their consumption, reducing commodity signs with complex careers to business-as-usual attempts by the US psy-function to blame them for high national levels of interpersonal violence and low levels of educational attainment, or buying into cyberbarian simplifications. Those obsessions should be ever more-troubled by electronic texts' extraordinarily open, malleable, polyphonic qualities -their status as TV texts (Chartier 2005).

Television executive Alan Tyler, Acting Controller of Entertainment at the BBC in 2015, expressed his opinion in this sense in a speech given at that time:

There is often negativity about Entertainment. There is definitely an intellectual queasiness and cultural snobbery around Entertainment programmes; whether they succeed or fail. But in fact entertainment is a crucial genre for broadcasters. It has had a glorious period in the UK where competition has fostered creativity and clarity of editorial vision has, in my opinion, brought audiences closer to broadcasters. (BBC Commissioning, 2015, December 10).

Spanish media academic Enrique Guerrero is the author of various works on television entertainment. We could say that he is in fact one of the scholars who have researched and written most in relation to television entertainment in Spain. In this paragraph below he affirms that television entertainment doesn't have a good reputation because it is immediately related to the so called '*telebasura*' (waste-telly/rubbish-telly/trash TV). However, Guerrero remarks that an entertainment programme addressed to a

broad audience can be ‘a good product’ and, at the same time ‘a product that is good’, according literally to his words, which I quote here:

...la television de entretenimiento no cuenta con una imagen de prestigio porque, automáticamente, es asociada a la denominada “telebasura”. Sin embargo, un programa de entretenimiento dirigido al gran público puede ser un “buen producto” y, al mismo tiempo, un “producto bueno”. (Guerrero, 2007, p. 2)

L.A. Aranberri, journalist and former General Director of Euskal Telebista, the Basque public television, comments on the three most common criticisms that are normally mentioned concerning television. He mentions as such that it offers only action instead of thoughts and reflection, that it presents lies and inventions as reality, and that it always takes a superficial approach so as to get the attention and applause of those uneducated, ignorants. He notes that, although he will not start arguing against that, he wants to add that, as a matter of fact, those are precisely the features which have always been considered as the main virtues of the Spanish theatre plays of the 17th century. I cite below, verbatim, Aranberri’s words (1996, p. 16):

Gaur egun telebistari egiten zaion hainbat kritikaren artean hiru dira, besteak beste, maizenak edo usuenak: pentsamenduaren ordezkintza besterik ez du eskaintzen, gezurra eta asmakizuna errealitatetzat azaltzen ditu eta, beti ere, biderik arinenetik jotzen du ezjakinen arretaz eta txaloaz ahalik eta errazen jabetzeko. Ez naiz ni orain kontrakorik esaten hasiko, baina bai ordea, erantsiko, hiru kritika horiek direla, hain zuzen ere, Lope de Vega eta, oro har, XVII mendeko antzerki espainiarrari leporatzen zaizkion dohairik berezienak.

This negative impression of television observed by these authors is reflected in the work of many researchers on this medium, and has been very much stressed by the scholars of critical sociology for many years. Furthermore, we could say that this negative perception is also extended among a great part of academia, as well as amid other intellectuals, critics, professionals and also viewers. Although they are only

symbolic, these ironic comments on the origin of its name, made within many years of distance, reflect already the mistrust towards this media device.

The word “television” was coined by the Russian academic Constantin Perskyi at the 1900 Paris International Electricity Congress. His hybrid etymology – using both Greek and Latin to name an apparatus that could bring sight from far away –nicely encapsulates the slightly illegitimate nature of TV (Lange 2003). (As cited in Miller, 2010, p. 2)

Television? The word is half Greek, half Latin. No good can come of it. (C.P. Scott, English Journalist (1846 – 1932). (As cited in Wasko 2005, p. 1)

We can find a great amount of statements expressed by public figures of different countries at different times that show this negativity towards television. Scholar Wasko (2005, pp. 8-12) compiles some of them, from which I have selected a few to quote below. Academic Toby Miller also presents a lot of examples of this kind (e.g. Miller, 2010, p. 8). Actually, it is enough to enter a web page of quotes about television in any language to find an almost endless list of this type. Some of these negative assertions about television are very well known, indeed the reference to television as a ‘vaste wasteland’ is so widespread that it has become a very popular answer for questions asked in many Americans quiz and game shows for many years. (cf. Miller, 2010, p. 59). In the same line, the Spanish term ‘*telebasura*’ (waste-telly/rubbish-telly / trash television) is very much used when referring to television programmes. Furthermore, this medium is very often described as ‘la caja tonta’ in that language, that is to say, ‘stupid box’, as it is also repeatedly labelled in English. Some of the next sentences, taken from the long list provided by Wasko (pp. 8-12), will probably sound quite familiar to most of us:

Clive Barnes: “Television is the first truly democratic culture –the first culture available to everybody and entirely governed what the people want. The most terrifying thing is what the people do want.”

Ray Bradbury: “The television, that insidious beast, that Medusa which freezes a billion people to stone every night, staring fixedly, that Siren which called and sang and promised so much and gave, after all, so little.”

Rita Mae Brown: “Art is a moral passion married to entertainment. Moral passion without entertainment is propaganda, and entertainment without moral passion is television.”

Art Buchwald: “Every time you think television has hit its lowest ebb, a new program comes along to make you wonder where you thought the ebb was.”

Paddy Chayefsky: “Television is democracy at its ugliest.”

Salvador Dali: “What is television apparatus to man, who has only to shut his eyes to see the most inaccessible regions of the seen and the never seen, who has only to imagine in order to pierce through walls and cause the planetary Baghdads of his dreams to rise from the dust.”

T.S. Eliot: “It is a medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time and yet remain lonesome.”

Tony Follari: “Karl Marx is wrong. Television is the opiate of the masses.”

David Frost: “Television is an invention that permits you to be entertained in your living room by people you wouldn’t have in your home.”

Larry Gelbart: “Television is a weapon of mass distraction.”

Samuel Goldwyn: “Television has raised writing to a new low.”

S.I. Hayakawa: “In the age of television, image becomes more important than substance.”

Alfred Hitchcock: “Television is like the American toaster, you push the button and the same thing pops up everytime.”

Steve Jobs: “You go to your TV to turn your brain off. You go to the computer when you want to turn your brain on.”

Ernie Kovacs: “Television –a medium. So called because it is neither rare nor well-done.”

Lee Lovinger: “Television is simply automated day-dreaming.”

Daniel Marsh: “If the television craze continues with the present level of programs, we are destined to have a nation of morons.”

Groucho Marx: “I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.”

Malcolm Muggeridge: “Television was not intended to make human beings vacuous, but it is an emanation of their vacuity.”

Frank Lloyd Wright: “Television is chewing gum for the eyes.”

Despite these negative opinions, as Wasko (2005) also says, there are various approaches and ‘differing considerations about television’s fundamental value’, and she also mentions, that ‘television presents a complex phenomenon that has become a ubiquitous feature of our modern world’ (p. 1) and states that ‘television continues to be a centrally important factor and an inescapable part of modern culture’ (p. 2), adding that many people consider it the most important of all the mass media. In relation to this, Wasko (2005, p. 2) quotes some words drawn from the television programme *The History Channel*, broadcast in 1996:

From its public marketing in the 1940s to the present day, television can be listed as one of the most profound, if not the most profound, influences on human history. Television has affected every aspect of our lives including history, science, politics, culture and social mores. It is impossible to imagine a world without television, and most of us take for granted the way television has shaped and defined our society and our lives.

Moreover, this scholar also mentions the importance of television as a storyteller, pointing out that many have even considered it ‘THE storyteller for society’ (Wasko, 2005, p. 3) quoting Signorelli and Bacue’s words (1999, p. 527):

Television’s role in society is one of common storyteller –it is the mainstream of our popular culture. Its world shows and tells about life –people, places, striving, power and fate. It lets us know who is good and who is bad, who wins and who loses, what works and what doesn’t, and what it means to be a man or a woman. As such, television has joined the ranks of socialization agents in our society and in the world at large.

More recently, media consultant Dr. William Cooper (2015) also comments on this bad reputation of television in a report where he reflects on why people watch television, and he states that: 'It's always been fashionable to disparage television. For some people, the idea of watching television is almost socially embarrassing. It's something that other people do.' (Cooper, 2015, p. 28)

However, in the same vein as the previous researchers just mentioned, Cooper includes in his report a wealth of arguments that highlight the positive aspects of this medium and the reasons why we watch it. I quote below some of his statements in this regard.

For decades, television has played a leading role in our lives. Television is part of our popular culture. Television opens a window that frames our view of the wider world. (...) It shows us things we would not otherwise see and provides a context for our own experience. It provides an important public and social service. It offers us a constant companion and a sense of connection to the wider world. More than any other medium television can: talk to us, look us in the eye, show us new things, tell us extended stories, move us. Watching television allows us to express our emotions, to laugh out loud, or have a good cry. (Cooper, 2015, p. 5).

Among other reasons, Cooper (2015) points out the importance of television as a social medium that helps to share experiences, to social connection and to fit in society. Moreover, he indicates that unlike in previous years nowadays there is also a sense of fashion towards television watching, and he points out the reasons of that trend. We can observe that in these phrases that I have withdrawn from various pages of his report.

Television does more than inform, educate and entertain. It contributes to our sense of self and social connection. (p. 20)

Television has typically provided mass audiences with shared experiences. And it will continue to do so. (...) We all have our own reasons for watching television and they vary according to the viewing context. (p. 2)

What we watch becomes part of our collective and individual experience, our sense of self, who we are and what we know. (p. 28)

Television helps us to fit in –to our tribe, to society. It teaches us how to conform, from an early age. (...) There's an element of fashion and fandom in television viewing: i) Tells us about the world and how it's structured. ii) Provides a sense of belonging to a community or culture. iii) Shapes our aspirations and contributes to social cohesion. iv) Allows us to experience real and imaginary lives. v) Offers a shared experience in a relatively safe environment. vi) Provides a topic of conversation. (p. 29)

As a matter of fact, we can observe that, at present, many academics as well as professionals in this field do highlight the relevance of this communication and entertainment medium in various areas, presenting indeed a more positive view. It can also be said that this approach is quite new, though, and that it encounters the main perspectives that have been in force and, hence, have been most commonly accepted for many years, as we will argue and show further on in this work. We will see that these perceptions have evolved since those early times of broadcasting and research.

Actually, when television was launched there was quite a positive view towards this new device, and of the possibilities that it could offer in the future. Both Wasko (2005) and Newcomb (2005), point out some of the opinions of the first television technicians in this sense. Nevertheless, like many other scholars, they afterwards refer to the great amount of research focusing on its negative effects that had been written since then. Indeed, this controversy about television, its positive and negative considerations, have always been, and still are, an issue of discussion.

As Newcomb (2005, p. 17) mentions, referring to some of his previous works (1974), 'a number of those who paid early attention to the medium speculated in broad

philosophical terms about its place in society and culture'. He presents the example of Lee De Forest, who, as Newcomb points out, was best noted for contributions to the development of television technologies, and was also deeply concerned –and broadly optimistic- about the sociocultural power of the medium. He believed that television would contribute to the rise of a particular social formation. Newcomb quotes some of this scholar's statements that support this argument (Newcomb, 2005, p. 17):

A population which once more centers its interest in the home will inherit the earth, and find it good. It will be a maturer population, with hours for leisure in small homes, away from today's crowded apartments. Into such a picture ideally adapted to the benefits and physical limitations of television, this new magic will enter and become a vital element of daily life. This new leisure, more wisely used, welcoming the gifts, entertaining, cultural, educational, which radio and television will bestow, shall eventually produce new outlooks on life, and new and more understanding attitudes toward living.' (De Forest, 1942, p. 356)

In opposition to this positive view, Newcomb goes on to point out that soon after that, questions related to television's effects on behaviour and attitude became essential and were quickly addressed, but 'rather than exploring them within De Forest's optimistic frame, as "gifts", the effects were most often framed and examined as social problems'. (Newcomb, 2005, p. 17)

In this sense Wasko states that: 'As with many forms of media technology, the promises and expectations of the medium were optimistic and propitious', and mentions, for instance, the opinions of one of the 'often-overlooked inventors in the United States, Philo Farnsworth, who was clearly hopeful about the future of television' (Wasko, 2005, p. 1). Wasko refers to the explanations given by one of Farnsworth's biographers:

Philo began laying out his vision for what television could become. Above all else...television would become the world's greatest teaching tool. Illiteracy

would be wiped out. The immediacy of television was the key. As news happened viewers would watch it unfold live; no longer would have to rely on people interpreting and distorting the news for us. We would be watching sporting events and symphony orchestras. Instead of going to the movies, the movies would come to us. Television would also bring about world peace. If we were able to see people in other countries and learn about our differences, why would there be any misunderstandings? War would be a thing of the past. (Schwartz, 2002, p. 113)

Concerning Farnsworth comments, Wasko (2005) also shows a positive view when he remarks that ‘Obviously, Farnsworth’s full vision has not yet been realized, even though some parts of his dream have been more than fulfilled’(p. 2) and points out some of television’s positive functions, including also its value as an entertainment device which provides pleasure and companionship:

As envisioned by Farnsworth, television does indeed provide news, current events, and historical programming that can help make people more aware of other cultures and people. It is argued that ‘good television’ can present the arts, science and culture. Furthermore, good television can teach important values and life lessons, explore controversial or sensitive issues, and provide socialization and learning skills. Good television can help develop critical thinking about society and the world. More simply, many point out that television provides people with pleasure, as well as a welcome companion for lonely or isolated individuals. (Wasko, 2005, p. 4)

Having said that, this scholar also refers in her work to the negative considerations about television as an issue posited by many researchers, furthermore, she mentions the great amount of studies conducted regarding its effects, pointing out the existence of this controversy through all these years (Wasko, 2005, pp. 1-5). Indeed, and as we have said before, these worries, this concern about the effects of television and the debate about that matter have been constant everywhere since its inception, and they still prevail. In fact, due to the importance of these aspects, we will deal with them more deeply in this work latter on.

Likewise, media academic Toby Miller often approaches this issue throughout his abundant work on television studies and, among other cases, he points out the distress and debate that this new medium provoked during those first years in Australia, when detailing television's advent in that country (Miller, 2010, p. 113):

In September 1956 many Sydney residents had their first opportunity to experience first-hand contact with the new mechanical "monster"-TV- that had for the last seven or eight years been dominating the lounges of English and American homes. Speculations on its effects run high. On the one hand it was claimed: it would eventually destroy the human race (...) On the other hand, supporters claimed that it would initiate a moral regeneration of the nation ... (Campbell assisted by Keogh 1962: 9).

Justin Lewis is another researcher who mentions and outlines the worries associated with the power and influence of television and the anxieties that it aroused, noting the importance of this medium as an entertainment device. Besides that, he points out the doubts and dilemmas that still underlie the study of the social impact of television (2005, p. 433).

The growth of television, which became the dominant information and entertainment technology in industrial societies so rapidly that we scarcely had time to consider its significance, was a phenomenon with profoundly uncertain outcomes. If some of these uncertainties had been anticipated by the growth of radio, cinema, and the mass circulation press, the sheer presence of television- its ubiquity, its dominance of most people's leisure time, and its appropriation of national and political rituals- raised weighty questions about its power and its influence. Indeed, the uncertainty created by television was such that it provoked a whole string of anxieties. Would television provoke violence, delinquency, or moral decadence? Would it be a tool for mass propaganda and persuasion? Would it create cultural homogeneity and banality? If some of these anxieties were, in retrospect, exaggerated or misplaced, they set in train a new considerable body of research that aimed to gather and measure the nature of television's social significance. But for all these efforts, the history of research into the social impact of television on its audience has been plagued by a persistent uncertainty.

A few years later Miller (2010) poses this matter again, mentioning the worries that this device caused from the beginning, focusing on television entertainment content, and going even further. In fact, Miller wonders about the reasons for this concern but he also notes the bad reputation of television, and television entertainment in particular, both among producers and viewers (p. 6):

Why has this essentially domestic entertainment device caused so much anxiety? Perhaps because it was the first technology to stream images and sounds into domestic as well as public space, TV has received the greatest attention (largely critical) of any cultural medium: in the eloquent words of its first great scholar, Dallas Smythe, television channels an immense “flow of representations of the human condition” (1954:143). Most programmes are dedicated to entertainment, and that focus, along with the ease of use and the double pull of vision and sound, have long produced embarrassment and even shame – for producers as well as viewers. (Miller, 2010, p. 6)

Jonathan Bignell (2013) comments on these worries as well, and he also includes some responses to them, as we can see in this paragraph quoted here (p. 33):

There was a widespread anxiety that watching television might disrupt family routines and waste people’s time, especially if it was too entertaining. Writing in the *BBC Year Book 1951* (an annual collection of reports and essays about the doings of the BBC over the year), Ivor Brown responded to this concern by arguing that:

People who view do not stop going to the play or the films or the cricket-match. Television, at two pounds a year for a whole household and friends, does not, after the initial purchase, seriously affect the family’s allotment of cash to fun and games. (1951:17)

In contrast with those concerns, nowadays we can say that, at present, the importance, the value and the positive influence and effects of television entertainment in various areas are also taken into account. The latest approaches to the study of this medium, and this genre in particular, permit a more positive consideration towards it

than in previous analyses. We will indeed focus on this matter in detail throughout this work, given that it is one of the main objectives of this research.

In fact, there has always been a great controversy about television. The struggle between positive and negative considerations, distinctions between high and low culture and therefore populism and elitism, reflections on television's positive effects in contrast with theories of fear and panic, discussions related to the active or passive role of viewers, accusations of bad reputation and claims for recognition, etc., regarding television and, more specifically in relation to television entertainment, have existed from the very start of this medium. This issue, this controversy, is reflected in the work of many mass media and television researchers and, as said, I will focus on that to a greater extent. For doing so, and due to the importance of this matter for the analysis conducted here, in various sections of this research work I will present and gather varied information, taking into account different perspectives, extracted from, and based upon, the work developed by these writers.

To end this section I will refer to some words by very well-known academic Tony Miller who, both throughout his own research and analysis work, as well as in the compilation volumes that he has compiled and edited, offers deep reflections on this matter (cf. Miller 2002, 2003, 2005, 2010, 2014). I have already quoted some of his comments but I will finally highlight these following statements because, in my opinion, they summarise best the state of this controversy. Thus, he refers to this issue as '...the seemingly ineradicable binary opposition of televisual uplift versus television degradation' and adds that 'Such dreams and concerns about TV have never receded.'(Miller, 2010, pp. 6, 7)

1.2.2. Intellectuals and the bad reputation of television.

As mentioned before, these negative impressions of television and its bad reputation, as well as the sense of embarrassment towards it among a great deal of academia, intellectuals, critics and professionals started almost from the inception of this medium, and they still remain. In this section I will present several examples selected from essays and scientific papers by the previously mentioned scholars, which reflect this existing negativity towards television amid those sectors of society.

We can observe that the relationship between television and intellectuals has never been easy. This is well reflected in the comments, the statements, pointed out at the beginning of this chapter. In fact, many intellectuals proudly admit that they do not watch television, considering it, at the least, a waste of time and, in many cases, as a proof of intellectual weakness. This comment by Catalan writer and philosopher Josep Ramoneda, quoted by scholar Sergio Toledo (2012, p. 41) is a good example of this attitude: ‘La television, como muy bien expone el filósofo y escritor Josep Ramoneda, es para la mayoría de los intelectuales un producto menor e incluso tildado de caja tonta que adormece la consciencia del espectador.’

The words of well-known Cuban writer, who won the prestigious Cervantes Prize, Alejo Carpentier, summarise this feeling, when he says that ‘the intelligentsia hates television’ (Carpentier, 1987, p. 143, as cited in Aranberri 1996, p. 80). This sentence is quoted by Aranberri in his essay *Intelektualak, Telebista eta Multimedia* (1996) [Intellectuals, television and multimedia], where this journalist and former executive of the Basque Television, also puts forward this matter and reflects on it. A quotation by Spanish writer Antonio Gala that Aranberri includes at the very beginning of his essay (p. 3), to pose one of the approaches to this issue, is quite relevant in this

sense. Gala refers to the ‘high brow’, haughty intellectuals that ‘doze in the academic Edén’ as he literally says, when mentioning how they detest television: ‘La television siempre produjo aversión en los llamados “cejas altas”, esa “intelligentsia” arrogante e ininteligible que vive secuestrada por el opúsculo y la tesina, que dormita en el Edén académico’ .

We can find a lot of statements in Aranberri’s work mentioning the negative impression and dismissive comments on television by many intellectuals, and by elitist groups of ‘the intelligentsia’. He points out and offers arguments related to the bad consideration of television by this sector of society and also includes references to other authors and scholars that have reflected on this issue too.

In fact, Aranberri gathers in his essay the opinions of other intellectuals who offer a more positive view and even criticise what he, as well as them, considers a hypocritical attitude. In these paragraphs below this author refers to those intellectuals who proudly insist on their non-existent relationship with television. He mentions that some of them take themselves as cultivated and dare to criticise and reject McLuhan’s theories although they have probably never read any books by this scholar. Aranberri ends up emphasising the relevance of television as a communication medium and noting the difficulties to explain and understand the origin of the misunderstanding between it and intellectuals and academics, as well as about the responsibility of each party in this issue (Aranberri, 1996):

Bere burua intelektualtzat jo eta jendearean telebistazale agertzen den jende gutxi dago. Benetan oso gutxi. Izango da, seguruenik, etxean batere libururik ez duenik, baina ez dut inor ezagutzen eskasia horretaz lagunartean harrotu denik. Ezagutzen dut, ordea, etxean telebistarik ez duela eta, behin eta berriz, aukera duen bakoitzean, harro asko gogorazten diguna. (p. 13)

Hala ere, gaur, orduan bezalaxe, makinatxo bat dira euren burua intelektualtzat dutenak eta, ustekabean edo ez, McLuhanen tesiak mesprezitzen dituztenak, nahiz eta haren libururik bat bera ere sekula irakurri ez. Ez gara orain intelektualak eta telebistaren arteko maitasun urria frogatzen hasiko, ezin jakinagoa baita. (...).Telebista bezain garrantzitsua den komunikabidea eta intelektualen artean egon dagoen elkar ulertu ezina arrazonamenduz argitu nahi izatea, eta bakoitzari dagozkion erantzukizunak banatzea, benetan lan nekeza da. (p. 15)

These are some of Aranberri's assertions but, as said, he also compiles the reflections of other authors who not only refer to this negative consideration of television by many intellectuals, but go beyond that, considering this attitude as hypocritical. Among these authors, Aranberri mentions the extent work of writer Alejo Carpentier regarding this matter, *Los enemigos de la television* (1987), and highlights the next paragraph extracted from it that I copy below (Aranberri, 1996, p. 80). In this text Carpentier refers ironically to the attitude of those people who have 'declared war' on television, and who look down on those who admit watching it. This author adds that this attitude that diminishes television and emphasises its negative effects and implications has somehow become trendy, especially among intellectuals who, according to Carpentier's comments, consider their time too precious to dedicate it to watching television, due to all the negative features they associate with it.

Gaur egun, leku guztietako 'inteligentziak' gerla-mehatxua egin dio telebistari. 'Ah!... Baina...zuk telebista ikusten al duzu?' - lastimaz galdetu ohi zaio, zenbait kultur-ingurumingurutan, uhinek ekarritako programa bart gustura ikusi zuela aitortzearen ausardia edo hankasartzea izan duen gizagaixoari - . Zeren, han-hemenka, ezin hobeto ikusia dago telebista gauza arbuigarria dela esatea, gustu txarreko topagune eta txaplatakerien eskola. Jakina, berez asmakizun miragarria da, hori bai, baina den-dena alferrik galtzeko gaitasun aparta duen jendaila ezjakin eta diruzale amorratuaren eskutan erori dena. Ez. Izpiritu hautatuak, 'intelektualak', ezin du bere asti preziatua monitorearen pantaila txikerraren aurrean alferrik galdu, txotxolokeriak ikusten eta aditzen, kalitaten urriko nobelakeriak jasaten, inork trukaturako informazioak entzuten eta

kontsumo-gizartearen akats material eta psikologiko guztiak isladatzen dituen iragarki-pila irensten eta irensten...” (Carpentier, 1987, p. 141)

Furthermore, Aranberri regards as brave the attitude of a Basque author, Luis de Barandiaran Irizar, because he dares to speak up on some ideas that, as Aranberri claims, very few take the risk to explain publicly (Aranberri, 1996, p. 80): ‘Carpentierren lepo beretik edo jarraituz, Luis de Barandiaran Irizar antzerako gauzak idatzi izan ditu. Joxemiel Barandiaran euskal kultur-patriarkaren iloba den honek inor gutxik esaten dituenak esateko ausardia erakutsi izan du’. In this next paragraph Aranberri reproduces and comments on some words of Barandiaran’s article where this writer explained his point of view (Aranberri, 1996, p. 80):

Ia txarto ikusia dago norberak telebista sarri ikusi ohi duela aitortzea. Gustu txarraren frogatzat hartu izaten da aitorten hau eta maila intelektualaren urriaren lekuko. Gero gertatzen dena da, ordea, subkonszienteak huts egiten duela eta, solasaldian zehar, ia oharkabeaz, mundu guztia agertzen dela zein baino zein telebistazale amorratuago. Zenbat jende dago gero sekula ‘telebista ikusten ez duena’ eta, lagunarteko eztabaida sortzen denean, programa guztien berri ematen duena...”. Apaiz hau ez da, gainera, telebista-kontuetan batere punttalakurlo. Berak aditzera eman letxe, ez omen zaio askorik kostatzen “nire lanorduen ostean zirrikitu patxadagarriren bat gauero aurkitzea: dokumentala zein elkarrizketa, lehiaketa inuxenterik edo kirol saiorik. Eta, egia esan, gehienetan ez dut gaizki pasatzen.

This text underlines the fact that many people claim not to watch television because they consider that this habit exhibits bad taste and a poor intellectual level. Barandiaran adds that, actually, most of those who assert it do indeed watch a great amount of television programmes. This author admits that he himself watches a great variety of them in order to rest and relax after work, and he acknowledges that most times he enjoys it.

Finally, we can assert that the reflections and conclusions by these authors noted and quoted in this section show the position of many intellectuals towards television and television viewing. It can be said that negative opinions regarding television, its nature, function and effects have been shared by many intellectuals over the years. However, we can notice that a few of them do also highlight the positive values of this communication and entertainment medium. Furthermore, some of these authors even dare to criticise what they consider a deceptive attitude by some of their colleagues.

1.2.2.1. University: academia.

We could say that university, academia, has mistrusted both television and television studies from the early years until recently. The work developed by television scholars mainly during this, 21st, century, the attitudes and facts they observe and explain, the information they gather, their reflections and conclusions, support this affirmation. The first words of the Preface of the book *Television Studies* written by its editor Toby Miller, offer a very good example of the feelings about television of both the public and academia, from the very beginning (Miller 2002, p. vii).

When I went to university, television was something you watched to get away from study. Now, ho ho ho, you can get a degree for being a couch potato. There can be no more telling sign of the general decline in academic standards that has plagued the Western World. Studying television is right up there alongside an upsurge in ludicrous rules of speech that restrict freedom of thought and the rejection of our philosophical and political foundations.

Miller presents this statement as a question to discuss in an exam and, in relation to that, he comments on the fears by academia associated to the study of this medium, and the issues related to it, at university (p. vii):

...represents a serious set of concerns amongst family members, colleagues and intellectuals. They fear that devoting time to understanding popular-culture icons such as television abjures the historic mission of the university to elevate its students and the public more generally, in either a technical or a moral sense.

Scholar Janet Wasko (2005) also expresses these worries from academia, referring to Fransworth's comments mentioned before. She (p. 4) points out that: 'If television has become "a teaching tool", as envisioned by Farnsworth, this is not a positive development for many observers'. Wasko presents as an example the words of John Silver, president of Boston University, who, according to Wasko's explanations (2005, pp. 4, 5) recently declared that 'Television is the most important educational institution in the United States today' and went on to decry the 'degenerative effects of television and its indiscriminate advocacy of pleasure', adding that:

As television has ravenously consumed our attention, it has weakened the formative institutions of church, family, and schools, thoroughly eroding the sense of individual obedience to the unenforceable on which manners and morals and ultimately the law depend. (Silver, 1995, p. 2)

This statement by Toby Miller (2002, p. 2) provides more arguments to this issue, as he asserts that:

Today, television studies provokes its own moral panics among conservative opponents, who express anxieties that curricular changes 'such as replacement of Shakespeare [British playwright] with Neighbours [Australian soap opera]' will diminish civilisation, adding it with 'populism and immediacy' (Turner, 2000, p. 4) rather than complexity and deliberation.

At that time, Andrew Lockett's analysis followed the same direction (Lockett 2002, p. 25), when he noted: 'For much of the 80s and 90s Cultural Studies and Television Studies suffered (in the UK particularly) under the lash of media opprobrium

dismissing both areas as indulgent, intellectually vacuous and of no use to wider society'. This scholar also refers to Lusted (1998) who claimed that: 'Among elite groups (in the UK at least) television in general falls into the category of low culture or perhaps even "despised culture".' Finally, Lockett highlights the fact that 'such nervousness still persists (perhaps less in the wider population and media elites than in the university academy) and continues to politicize debates over media and cultural education' (p. 25).

The discomfort of academia regarding television entertainment, their analysis, and the relation of their work to the considerations of high and low culture and therefore the implications on their status, are also reflected in several paragraphs of Lockett's text (2002, p. 26):

...even when TV Studies academics come to discuss their own work and choice of material for discussion they can seem almost equally uncomfortable whether they are asserting a right to analyse light entertainment (Lusted, 1998) as they can be making a case for discussing a category as heavy as 'serious TV Drama' (Caughie, 2000). This is therefore a seemingly unique British debate about class. In the US the inflection is different (see Oulette, p. 53) but it seems endemic to Cultural Studies and TV Studies that debates around these poles are always ongoing and reflect continuing anxieties about status: cultural, personal, social and institutional.

In relation to television's antagonists, critics, among academia, we could also mention the position of scholars such as McGuigan (1992), Garnham (1998) and Morris (1990) who in the last years of last century, strongly criticised the new approach to television and television entertainment developed by John Fiske, which certainly offered a more positive perspective towards this medium and this genre. Fiske's work and his conclusions were clearly dismissed by these other academics who regarded his work and conclusions as naïve.

In fact, Fiske is among those scholars who can be considered as defenders of television and who, in opposition to the theorists of the Frankfurt School, started offering new perspectives that, as Kellner (2005, p. 36) remarks ‘stress the educational benefits of some television, suggest that it is merely harmless entertainment, or argue that audiences construct their own meanings from popular media (Fiske, 1987, 1989a)’.

Kellner, Lockett, Newcomb and other researches (see also Henry Jenkins, 2011), highlight the fact that John Fiske developed an interesting, new approach to the study of television, focusing on active audiences, suggesting the power and authority of viewers and offering a more positive view of television entertainment for which, as these researchers mention, he was criticised and considered too ‘populist’, too naïve.

Lockett mentions in his essay “*Cultural Studies and Television*” (2002) the debates between Garnham (1998) and Grossberg (1998) in relation to Fiske’s approach (1987a, 1987b). Indeed, Lockett also comments on Fiske’s perspective and the criticism against it by other scholars too, mentioning McGuigan (1992), Garnham (1998) and Morris (1990) among them. In addition to that, in this article Lockett stresses the fact that the issues around the cultural value of television, about elitism and populism, remain as a matter of interest regarding television studies (Lockett, 2002, p. 26):

Television again appeared centre-stage when Fiske argued that traditional media analysis greatly underestimated the power of audience to shape meaning and the positive dimension of commercially sponsored popular entertainment ... (...) Or if you like TV might be capital poison but if consumed properly could be the nectar of subcultural empowerment. (...) Critiques of such ‘populism’ were led by McGuigan (1992), Garnham (1998) and most devastating perhaps by Morris (1990). Political economy criticisms or the Fiskeian brand of culture studies centered on the charge that (...) it was naïve and (...) for easy cheerleading of the “popular”. (...) So it remains that in theory and practice awkward issues around cultural value (populism and elitism again) remain a focus of concern on all sides in the search for meaning among television audiences’.

In line with Lockett's reflections, Newcomb also mentions the criticisms towards Fiske's approach by other scholars. In his essay *The Development of Television Studies* (2005), Newcomb refers to this academic's various works where these new perspectives were posited (p. 22), noting that he was among those who helped 'pushing those approaches to the study of television in exciting new ways.' And that he 'began to develop ideas considered radical, even in cultural studies circles'. But he finally refers to those scornful criticisms, in the same sense above mentioned, by various academics. Indeed Newcomb comments that Fiske was soundly taken to task by those who found such a view far too 'populist', too naïve, and he mentions McGuigan (1992 and 1996) among the scholars that criticised Fiske. He also points out that the discussions around this issue still go on, when he asserts: 'The debates sparked by this body of work continue'.

These comments can be included, in fact, among those that criticise the positive contributions of television, and television entertainment, and that diminish its relevance as a medium that deserve attention and proper academic research. Concerning Fiske's work, we can observe that, despite the initial scornful criticisms to his new approaches by various academics noted here, the analysis and conclusions of this author were, and still are, considered relevant by a lot of media scholars (cf. *Why Fiske Still Matters*, by Henry Jenkins, 2011).

A few years later than that analysis by Kellner, Lockett and Newcomb, other scholars also refer to the negative considerations towards entertainment media by academia, as can be seen in these comments by Peter Vorderer (2009):

... the academia community did not consider "entertainment" a serious research topic deserving intellectual scrutiny: This was true particularly for academia in Europe which held elitist preferences for traditional, i.e., "classic" and "serious"

literature and the arts and believed them to be the only appropriate standards of cultural aesthetic achievement. (pp. 532 - 533)

Most recently, various authors still mention this issue in their work (cf. Miller, 2010, 2014; Orlebar, 2011; Bignell, 2013) when referring to the discipline of Television Studies, and they gather plenty of negative opinions that show a dismissive attitude towards the study of television which is, in fact, an important part of media studies. I quote here just one of them, although I add some more further below:

So Robert W. McChesney laments that the study of the media is “regarded by the pooh-bahs in history, political science, and sociology as having roughly the same intellectual merit as, say, driver’s education” (Miller 2010, pp. 28 – 29).

Therefore, we could say that these previous paragraphs reflect the discomfort of a majority of intellectuals and academia towards television for many years, as well as the strong criticism of it by many university scholars. However, together with that, it can also be noticed the link of these negative impression with the Frankfurt School, their theories of negative effects and the aspects related to the distinctions of high and low culture, elitism and populism that these sociologists reflected in their approach. Indeed, it can be said that the information cited above, drawn from the work of several well-known pieces of research into television studies, backs up the issues presented and the arguments that I outlined at the beginning of this work.

Actually, all this leads us to think that this mistrust of, and these negative considerations of television, mentioned and argued above, are some of the reasons (if not THE reasons) that explain why until very recently, television studies hasn’t been considered a valid area of academic study (cf. Miller, 2010, 2014; Bignell, 2013).

Furthermore, even now that Media and TV Studies have a place in many universities all over the world, the criticisms and the negative attitude towards them in many sectors still remain, as can be seen in these quotations by intellectuals or politicians mentioned by Miller (2010, p. 29, 30) when tackling this topic.

Similar attitudes abound across the humanities (Hilmes 2005, p. 113): for the *Times Literary Supplement*, media and cultural studies form the “politico-intellectual junkyard of the Western world” (Minogue 1994, p. 27). Pet Tory philosopher Roger Scruton denounces media studies as “sub-Marxist gobbledook [*sic*] (quoted in Beckett 2004). (...) Britain’s former Inspector of Schools denounces media studies as “a subject with little intellectual coherence and meager relevance to the world of work” (Woodhead 2009). (...) Similar attitudes are expressed by the bourgeois British and Yanqui media, business leeches, and politicians. (...) The *Daily Telegraph* thunders that media studies is “quasi-academic” (Lightfoot 2005; Paton 2007a), while *Guardian* newspaper columnist Simon Hoggart could be seen on British television in 2000 chiding local universities for wasting time on this nonsense when they should be in step with Harvard and MIT. Chris Patten, a former Conservative Party politician and the last Governor of Hong Kong, refers to the discipline as “Disneyland for the weaker minded” (quoted in Morley 2007, p. 17). The Conservative Party and Alan Sugar, UK inquisitor for *The Apprentice* (2005 -), then a Labour Party politico, worry that TV Studies “may be putting future scientific and medical innovation under threat” and “undermining the economy” (Paton, 2007b, 2008).

However, this is also changing, and nowadays we could say that television is not only being acknowledged as a discipline of study in many universities, but we can see that television, and TV entertainment too, are also well considered and taken to be ‘cool’ and creative by many students and scholars. It can be said that, in recent years, television, television entertainment, and the study and research of this medium and this genre, are gaining importance and consideration both in different sectors of society as well as in the academic field. Academic Toby Miller has written quite a lot on this issue and many examples of both positions can be found in his texts (i.e. Miller 2010, 2014).

In this respect it is also worth mentioning the position of some prestigious professionals, such as Dyke and Puttnam, although, as Miller notes (2010, p. 28) it is not a very widespread attitude. Actually, this media academic comments that: ‘Greg Dyke and David Puttnam, famous British media executives, are highly unusual in boosting media studies as good for both citizenship and professional awareness’ (Burrell 2008; Becket 2004).

Academic Jeremy Orlebar (2011) points out that there is a strong and healthy interest in television among British students, critics, teachers and enthusiasts, adding that the assumption that working in television is creative, socially engaged and personally enriching is shared by many of them. This author also notes that the great majority of television professionals show interest in the relationship of this communication and entertainment medium with society, he adds that they aim for a committed engagement with the technical resources of this medium and that they are also aware of the creative possibilities that it offers.

The work developed by various academics at the Norman Lear Center, in the School of Communication of the University of South California, also underscores the significance of television entertainment as a relevant area of study and research, as well as an important and interesting professional field.

These words below, by media scholar Jonathan Bignell, gather and encapsulate the opinion of many other academics and professionals that value both television and this discipline of studies in the present new landscape, as well as in relation to the changes that we foresee in the near future (Bignell, 2013, p. 36):

The issues of how television is delivered, how it is watched, financed and organised into schedules and channels are matters of major concern to broadcasters, government and cultural commentators. Delivering programmes

over the internet, mobile phones and other devices requires viewers and television institutions to think in new ways about producing programmes, scheduling them, addressing audiences and financing the making of television. The television landscape has changed enormously in the past fifty years, and important changes are happening right now. Studying television in the early twenty-first century is a demanding but important part of understanding culture and society in the past, present and future.

1.2.2.2. Television critics.

At the beginning of this chapter I have referred to the dismissive considerations, the negative criticism by intellectuals which, in most cases, include academia, university scholars, but also television critics who express their opinions in several journals and articles. In fact, most frequently, criticisms and analysis of television in newspapers have been written by journalists, more or less specialised in television, but also by other writers and intellectuals who offer their point of view about television as such, or in relation to certain television programmes. At present, these comments can be found in various media, including digital.

There are plenty of articles that show the negative impression of television and most television programmes, mainly the entertainment ones, by television critics. Anyone can be aware of that, as it is enough to have a look at various media and newspapers during recent years to find plenty of negative criticism on television and about entertainment programmes in particular. These negative points of view have been published by television critics since the very beginning of this medium.

Miller (2010, pp. 4-6) gathers some of these opinions, referring to various newspapers and articles from different years, starting from the 30s and 50s and including the last decades. I have copied these below, as quoted by Miller, who indicates the authors and the newspapers where these comments were published, as well

as his own statements. I have selected them because they offer a good overview of the perception and attitude of television journalists and critics from the advent of this medium until recent years:

As TV came close to realization, it attracted intense critical speculation. In a 1930 edition of the *Daily Worker*, a socialist newspaper, activist Samuel Brody argued that television in the US would seek to pacify audiences through “the same authentic lies” as cinema. Conversely, the Soviet Union would deploy television to “build socialism and a better world for the labouring masses” (1988: 106)

(...)

In 1935, aesthetics philosopher Rudolf Arnheim wrote a “Forecast of Television” and he pointed that: ‘The emergent medium’s easy access to knowledge would either enrich its viewers, stimulating and informed public, vibrant and active –or impoverish them, manufacturing an indolent audience, domesticated and passive (Arnheim 1969: 160-3)’.

Two years later, Barret C. Kiesling said “it is with fear and trembling that the author approaches the controversial subjects of television” (1937: 278).

(...)

This diabolical struggle often shames viewers as well as critics. Consider this Ivy League professor recalling New Haven follies of 1953:

In those days a Yale faculty member who owned a television set lived dangerously. In the midst of an academic community, he lived in sin. Nevertheless, in an act of defiance, we put our television set in the living room instead of the basement or the garage where most of the faculty kept theirs, and weathered the disapprobation of colleagues who did not own or would not admit to owning this fascinating but forbidden instrument (Silber 1968: 113).

Half-a-century later, Argentina’s *Ciudad* says: “Demonizar la television es parte de la lógica del medio” [“Demonizing television is part of the logic of the medium”] (Iribarren, 2005)

Regarding the numerous articles published in different newspapers in various countries, in addition to these criticisms and many others that Miller quotes in his book,

he also points out that this attitude still remains, as he mentions the ‘numerous over-anxious denunciations of cultural studies in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* over the past decade’(Miller, 2002, p. vii). Hence, Miller includes plenty of well documented arguments in relation to critics and criticism of television as such, but also of television studies, as well as television entertainment in particular. (cf. 2010, pp. 1-21)

Newcom (2002) also reflects on television criticism, and notes this negative approach from the very beginning. However, besides that, he comments on the recognition by some journalists and critics, as they started offering a more positive view of, and some respect towards the output of this new medium (pp. 27-29). Newcomb begins positing the issue when comparing television critics with those who reflect on cinema, and he explains that:

The role of the journalistic television critics is a peculiar one (...) And unlike those journalists who comment on film, there is little sense that the work addresses a readership that, at least in part, is knowledgeable about certain histories, techniques or continuing topics that exist within what might be termed a ‘discourse’ surrounding cinematic practices. Rather, the television critic generally writes from a realistic perspective that every reader considers him or herself the critic’s equal. After all, television remains, to a great extent, an unworthy topic. Or, put another way, it is a topic worthy only of opinion, not of critical discussion in which the tutored (or even the merely professionally ‘assigned’) author writes with greater authority than that afforded the viewer who pressed thumb to remote-control device the night before and skimmed through dozens of scenes, clips, words, performances, representations, modes of address, sound bites, bytes, actions and, occasionally, complete ‘texts’. In short, what can or should the journalistic critic say to his or her ‘audience’ that will somehow enhance or intensify the experience when that audience becomes the audience for television again? (Newcomb 2002, p. 27)

Referring to television critics and their evolution, Horace Newcomb (2002, p. 28, 29) mentions Lawrence Laurent as one of the most successful and prominent critics

in US journalism history, who was for many years the television critic for the *Washington Post*. This journalist showed his view and concern about television critics in his essay, 'Wanted: The Complete Television Critic'(1962), which appeared in *The Eighth Art*, a volume edited by Robert Lewis Shayon, himself the longtime TV critic for *The Saturday Review*. According to Newcomb's comments (2002, p. 28), Laurent's view reflected on the features that 'a complete television critic' should have in order to do a good job, showing a very respectful view about television:

This complete television critic begins with a respect and a love for the excitement and the impact of the combination of sight and sound –pictures which can be viewed and words which can be heard, by millions of people at one time.

Laurent's opinion, about how television critics should be, showed a complete and positive perspective towards television. He acknowledged the complexity of this medium and stressed the importance of these professionals. In fact, in the comprehensive essay above mentioned, he even describes the items that these journalists should focus on. Newcomb comments that he is referring to those journalists who 'wrote to and for the public' and describes their task as a 'heavy burden'. As this scholar points out 'Laurent spoke for a generation of critics who recognised that television was changing, or at least offering changing perspectives, on much of social and cultural life.' (Newcomb, 2002, p. 28)

However, as Newcomb comments, the vision and wishes of Laurent and the trend that started with the journalists he referred to didn't really develop. Consequently, that positive view about the role of television critics and the relevance of their work soon started fading, due to the difficulties to put into practice the tasks that Lawrence

Laurent had defined as fundamental for a 'complete television critic'. Newcomb refers to this:

But the swift and unstoppable social uptake of TV in that 1950s, even into the 1960s, made any real effectivity on the part of the critics all but impossible. Moreover, in smaller, local newspapers, the 'television column' was often handed off to the newest staff member. (Newcomb, 2002 p. 28)

Finally, even though he mentions that in the US there were moments when critics seemed to play a somewhat different role, Newcomb observes that, in the end, this situation didn't last, and some scholars continued to have a negative impression both of television critics and their analysis and opinions, as he concludes that: 'For some academic observers, journalistic television criticism was - and could be - nothing more than an extension of the industry itself, collusive or complicit in the spread of a corrupting mass culture.' (Newcomb, 2002, p. 29)

With regard to television critics, Basque author Aranberri (1996) also outlines this matter, pointing out the negative approach to television by a lot of intellectuals and critics. He even goes beyond that when he includes arguments of other authors who disapprove of this criticism and acknowledge the entertainment function of television. Amongst these intellectuals, he refers to the work of the scholar Roger Brown, from the University of Leicester, and underlines some of his remarks (1970, pp. 216, 217), stressing some of the arguments that highlight the importance of television as an entertainment medium which also helps to release tension. Aranberri refers to the idea that Brown expresses in his work, according to which these functions of television should be taken into account in addition to the objectives of offering the audience the opportunity to fulfil and raise their intellectual interests. From the perspective of these

researchers, those who criticise television, and television entertainment programmes in particular, should be aware of this fact.

Telebistaren programak kritikatzek dituztenek ohartu beharko lukete audientzia suspertu eta tentsioa laxatu beharraren arteko aldeaz. Egia da zenbaitetan telebistak ikusentzulegoa piztu behar duela berriez, eztabaidez eta gai intelektualez, baina egia ere bada telebistari berari ere badagokiola denborapasaz eta entretenimenduz tentsioa baretzea. (Aranberri, 1996, p. 57)

Aranberri (1996, p. 57) highlights some words from the above mentioned academic, Roger Brown, to support his arguments (1970, pp. 216 - 217). In this paragraph, which Aranberri includes in his essay, Brown indicates that it is not surprising that critics dismiss TV and its intellectual side. However, he notes that those professionals have had easier access to literature and music and, consequently, their opinion is not so valid when assessing the value of television for more humble people and diminishing the relevance of this medium as an important window for that audience. This scholar doesn't deny that many television programmes are of poor quality and that they may deserve strong criticism but he adds that, when assessing the influence of television, the situation of ordinary viewers prior to the existence of television must also be taken into consideration, and not only the opinion of a few critics of higher cultural level:

Ez da batere harrigarria kritikariak telebista txarrestea eta bere alderdirik intelektualek ere gutxiestea;... Hala ere, pentsatzekoa da kritikari horiek direla, hain zuzen ere, literatura zein musikara zuzenean iristeko aukerarik gehiena izan dutenak eta, ondorioz, euren iritziak ez du balio telebistaren ekarria neurtzeko eta jende xumeari eskain diezkiekeen leihoa horren erraz uxatzeko. Honek ez du inondik ere ukatzen telebista-programarik gehienak eskasak direnik eta kritika latza merezi dutenik; baina onartu ere onartu beharko, telebistaren eragina baloratzeko neurkina telebista bera sortu aurretikako bataz besteko mailak izan behar duela, eta ez goimailako zenbait kritikari gutxirenak. (Brown, 1970, pp. 216 – 217, as cited by Aranberri, 1996, p. 57)

It can be observed that the above mentioned critics call for a more positive approach towards television. They defend, and at the same time ask for, a perspective that, without denying the reasons for criticisms, would also take into account the positive values of television and television entertainment.

Scholar Horace Newcomb also refers to this positive approach by some television critics, and he comments that a certain change could be noticed at the beginning of the 80s, mainly due to the success of some television series. According to Newcomb's comments this attitude would bring to the fore the principles that television critic Laurent had focused on many years before (1962), although now they would be tackled from new approaches (2002, p. 29):

By the early 1980s, however, a new perspective was emerging, led not so much by critics, but by critical recognition that television itself had perhaps achieved a different social status. Admiration for programmes such as *Hill Street Blues* appeared in conjunction with widespread positive audience response. *Hill Street Blues* and, more tellingly, programmes such as *St. Elsewhere* were considered 'quality' work that marked an 'new era' in television content. (...)The necessities outlined by Laurent remained (...). But their approaches to matters aesthetic, political and moral were couched in a renewed sense that their subjects were crucial to public consideration.

Indeed, in the 80s a positive view towards television entertainment seemed to be developed, thanks to television series such as *Hill Street Blues*. Even now a positive consideration towards certain fictional television output by intellectuals and critics can be noticed, and it is even considered 'cool' to mention and speak about them. But nonetheless, we have to point out that this positive impression is largely constrained to those labelled as 'cult' series. Actually, they even stress that, from their point of view, these are not television programmes, as the HBO's slogan remarks '...it is not television,

it is HBO' (cf. Miller 2002, 2010; Bignell 2010, 2013). It can be said that this positive view is mostly limited to certain series, leaving aside most television fictional productions, despite their popularity, and often not even mentioning the so called non-scripted/unscripted formats, as well as noticeably disregarding those that can be included in the 'light entertainment' genre in particular (cf. Bignell, Lacey and Macmurrough-Kavanagh, 2000; Miller, 2002; Hill, 2005; Bignell & Orlebar, 2005; Miller, 2007; Bignell & Fickers, 2008b; Miller, 2010; Orlebar, 2011; Bignell 2010, 2013). I quote below some interesting paragraphs written by academic Jonathan Bignell that refer to this topic:

Canonical status has been attributed to adaptations of "classic" literature and theatre, or programmes that have assimilated the related value given to authorship in the prestige television play or authored serial (Bignell 2007). So the canon is slanted towards drama that claims political engagement or aesthetic innovation. With some exceptions, this association has taken place around high-profile prime-time programmes that are peripheral to the generic closure supposed to delimit series and serial drama in the popular series of fantasy or comedy, for example. (Bignell, 2010, pp. 189-190)

Popular programmes that foreground aesthetic style and narrative complexity implicitly attempt to stand outside of flow, and are marketed with such designations as "appointment television" or "must-see television" that draw attention to this claim. The entire cable channel, HBO, for example, marketed itself with the slogan "it is not TV, it's HBO", which among other meanings refers to programmes' innovative use of visual brands or signature styles in distinction to the supposed homogeneity of earlier phases of television. (Bignell, 2010, p. 195)

This attitude that can be observed among television critics is also mentioned by Miller (2010, p. 82) as we can see in this paragraph in which he refers to the hierarchies established among television programmes by these television commentators. It is also

quite interesting to consider the distinction between ‘factual entertainment’ and ‘Serious Factual’ made by the BBC that he refers to.

Certain genres are deemed intrinsically worthier than others because of their moral stance or the special qualities required of their creators. This aspect of theorizing genre dates back hundreds of years (Hunter 1988: 213-14). Its traces are apparent in TV Studies 1.0 and the way regulators and critics create hierarchies of pleasure and worth. For example, Ofcom, the UK’s guardian of the electronic media, shies away from deriding reality television, but can’t bring itself to catalog reality in the same way as current affairs or science, so it has constructed a distinction between “factual entertainment” (reality) and “Serious Factual” (documentary) (which rates capital letters) (2007: 5). Generic tendencies have been emphasized and perhaps even endorsed by Television Studies 2.0, which prefers the popular over the avant garde, the audience over the author. Television Studies 1.0 favors the opposite (Edgard 2000: 75; Bignell et al. 2000b: 81).

These words by Bignell (2010) also comment on those topics, in this case he focuses on the criticisms over the light entertainment genre. I have quoted them below due to the interesting reflections he includes, as well as because of the particular cases, programmes, he refers to.

One of the aspects of British television that was felt to need critique was popular light entertainment. As a medium predominantly experienced in the home, television both adopted and also transformed earlier forms of popular culture. Light entertainment television negotiates between “here” and “there” of home and public spaces of entertainment, between ordinariness and spectacle, between “us” and “them”. Thus, for Richard Dyer (1973) for example, it co-opted and tamed working class culture. (...) The effect, Dyer argued, is to frame the programme as a mediating format between earlier forms of popular entertainment such as vaudeville or music hall, and a broadcast designed for bourgeois domestic and private consumption. (...). In this argument, popular programmes such as *Strictly Come Dancing* (known outside the UK as *Dancing with the Stars*) or *Pop Idol* present a border zone between the public world of celebrity and the private sphere of television viewership, with a deterrant relationship to popular culture; they publicize and privatize it, allude to it but transform it, and they celebrate yet sanitize it. (Bignell, 2010, pp. 184-185)

Therefore, when talking of television entertainment, ‘good’ popular fiction, as well as the traditional, so called quality drama (cf. Miller 2010, p. 86), and, lately, the above mentioned ‘cult series’, seem to be almost the only genres and programmes that get some sort of recognition (cf. Bignell 2013, p. 187). We could say that it is very recently when better consideration to other genres and formats of television entertainment and specifically those classified as non-scripted entertainment, including those that can be considered as light entertainment, is being noticed on the side of some television critics. This is even more unusual with regard to public television channels, where many of these kinds of programmes are often put into question. This is also the case of the BBC where, in the same line, ‘quality’ period drama productions have generally attracted positive criticism, whereas the value of many other entertainment formats has not been equally considered by television critics.

This having been said, nonetheless, we have to add that different and more positive positions can now be perceived in this area. In fact, this has recently been a matter of discussion, when, during the last months of 2015 and mainly in the spring of 2016, while working on the proposals for the latest BBC Royal Charter, the issue about the appropriacy of broadcasting popular entertainment programmes on this public television channel was brought to discussion by the culture secretary of the British Government, John Whittingdale. His arguments were, among others, the need of this prestigious public television channel to be ‘distinctive’. From Mr. Whittingdale’s point of view the ‘distinctiveness’ of these programmes was put into doubt.

His proposal for removing the most popular prime time entertainment shows from the BBC’s television portfolio was indeed very controversial and strenuously discussed by most diverse people, and many television critics among them. As a result, various interesting articles were published in the British media dealing with this issue,

but also showing the disapproval of Whittingdale's opinion, while offering plenty of arguments defending the importance of these programmes and highlighting their features, value, and contributions to the public British Broadcasting Corporation.

Among them I would highlight those articles about two of the most successful entertainment programmes of British TV at the time, and in previous years, *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The Great British Bake Off*, programmes that, according to the cultural secretary's initial proposal should not have a place in the BBC's schedule. It has to be said that these two programmes can be included in the 'factual entertainment' genre. Hence, although they are indeed different in many aspects, both can be classified as talent, reality, entertainment shows.

Regular and distinguished media commentator Jonathan Freeland's article 'Strictly Come Dancing is a success story that could only work at the BBC' published on line in *The Guardian* (18 December 2015) is worth mentioning in this sense. This prestigious media critic underscores the success and popularity of this already classic show on British television, in addition to other entertainment programmes such as the above mentioned *The Great British Bake Off* and *Britain's Got Talent*, when he asserts that: 'For it makes sense only once you contemplate the phenomenon that is Strictly. It competes with *The Great British Bake Off* and *Britain's Got Talent* to be the highest rated show on British television.'

This detailed article was written by Freeland referring to the visit of the minister of culture to the recording of *Strictly Come Dancing* as this politician had argued against the suitability of producing and broadcasting this popular show. Freeland notes that '... the culture secretary made a discreet inspection last month of the BBC's

flagship Saturday-night show. Whittingdale was there because, before taking the job, he had questioned whether the BBC should be making *Strictly* at all ...’

Freeland makes a positive analysis of this television programme, as he presents plenty and varied arguments that stress the importance of this television entertainment format for the BBC. These words when referring to the production and broadcast of ‘the BBC’s flagship Saturday-night show’ summarise his opinion: ‘The entire operation is a weekly advertisement for the peculiarly British model of public service broadcasting’

As previously said, the very popular programme *The Great British Bake Off* was also questioned by the culture secretary. This format indeed has shown to be one of the greatest successes of last years’ British television output, and many articles including positive criticism of it have been published both in printed and online media. Some of the words of *The Guardian*’s commentator Christina Patterson (19 May 2016) summarise her positive perception about this programme, confronting the initial opinion of the culture secretary, as she concludes that: ‘The Great British Bake Off works because it’s great TV. It works because it is, to take the word Whittingdale used in his white paper, “distinctive”.’

In addition, Charlotte Higgins presents a comprehensive analysis in her article ‘The Genius of The Great British Bake Off’ (6 October 2015), where she explains ‘How it became something much larger than television - a global cultural phenomenon and the perfect show for Britain now’. In this article, published in *theguardian.com* on the day before the airing of the last episode of season 2015, Higgins offers plenty of arguments that support her statement, and she asserts that: ‘The show has shrugged off the bonds of mere TV, and garnered a cultural presence rarely seen since the shows of the 1970s – the so-called “golden age” of television’.

This journalist also mentions the presence of the programme in various media, and comments on the amount of articles written about it, as she points out as an example that within a couple of months the Daily Telegraph had published 73 articles about that programme.

These articles highlighted here are just a few examples of the numerous positive opinions of these entertainment formats published in recent years both in written and in online media. Those assessments and perspectives show, indeed, a more positive approach towards this genre by many journalists and commentators, as well as by media and television critics in general.

1.2.2.3. Professionals.

In previous sections we have referred to the negative perception and criticisms about television by academics as well as by television journalists and critics. In addition to that, we can assert that similar negative opinions have been expressed by many media professionals for many years, even by those whose activities were closely related to this medium. The attitude and opinions of various professionals who held important positions in either television companies or entities associated with them, show this mistrust and negative feelings over this medium, and in relation to television entertainment in particular. We can observe that this opinion has been shared by many professionals and policy makers for many years. The point of view expressed by various important managers of entities such as the public Broadcast Company of the United Kingdom, the BBC, or the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) in the United States, in different years, reflect this perception. Similar opinions were commented by many other professionals related to some extent with this audio-visual device. Media

scholars Toby Miller and Janet Wasko, who we have mentioned beforehand, comment on this fact, and compile some information about these negative opinions expressed by various professionals since television started broadcasting. (e.g. Miller 2010, Wasko 2005):

The Director-General of the BBC at the time the new medium was becoming popular, William Haley, refused to have a set in his own home, and instructed TV executives to ensure viewers did not watch it much. This ambivalence was shared across the Atlantic: it is rumoured that Jack Warner insisted that television sets never be part of Warner Bros. movies *mises-en-scène* (though TV became a profitable home for washed-up movies, washed-up stars and recovering and non-recovering studio alcoholics) (Airey 2004; Attallah 2007: 326; Becker 2008).’ (Miller, 2010, p. 6)

One of the most often-cited assessments of television acknowledged its potential value, but was damning of its current state. In 1961, Newton Minow, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission proclaimed: “When television is good, nothing is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite to sit down in front of your TV set and keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland.” (Wasko, 2005, p. 4)

Miller (2010) also refers to this famous speech delivered by John F. Kennedy’s chair of the FCC to the National Association of Broadcasters, and highlights the term ‘vast wasteland’ used by Minow. He adds that three years before that: ‘...veteran US newsman Edward R. Murrow addressed the country’s Radio-Television News Directors Association in 1958, he used the description/methapor that TV needed to “illuminate” and “inspire” or it would be “merely wires and light in a box ”’. Miller, however, goes on to quote the words of the FCC director, Mark Fowler, that in fact stressed the second description, as he points out that this journalist and executive had referred to television as ‘a toaster with pictures’ not so many years ago (Miller, 2010, p. 58):

Twenty years later, however, Ronald Reagan's FCC head, Mark Fowler, celebrated the reduction of the "box" to "transistors and tubes." He argued in an interview with *Reason* magazine that "television is just another appliance –it is a toaster with pictures" and hence in no need of regulation beyond ensuring its physical safety as a commodity (1981). (Not surprisingly, Alfred Hitchcock had said it earlier and better: "Television is like the American toaster, you push the button and the same thing pops up every time" (quoted in Wasko2005a:10)).

Indeed, these two expressions ('vast wasteland' and 'toaster with pictures'), as well as their authors, Minow and Fowler, became very popular, and are still often referred to when talking about television. It can be observed that not only many television and media researchers mention them in their work, as we can see that they are also well known by a lot of the public. Actually, they have often been used in different television programmes, including very popular game shows. Miller (2010, p. 58, 59) comments on that fact:

Minow's and Fowler's expressions gave their vocalists instant and undimmed celebrity (Murrow already had it as the most heralded audiovisual journalist in US history). Minow was named "top newsmaker" of 1961 in an Associated Press survey, and appeared on television and radio more than any other Kennedy official. The phrase "vast wasteland" has even, irony of ironies, provided raw material for the wasteland's parthenogenesis: it has been the answer to questions posed on numerous game shows, from *Jeopardy!* (1964-75), 1978-9, 1984 -) to *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* (1998 -) (Minow and Cate 2003: 408). (...) The "toaster with pictures" slogan is less celebrated, but has been more efficacious as a slogan for deregulation across successive Administrations. It remains in *Reason's* pantheon of famous libertarian quotations, alongside Reagan and others of his ilk.

In many cases, negative opinions about television are due to the commercial functions of this medium and, therefore, they are associated with the inclusion of advertisements. In fact, as Wasko (2005, p. 5) notices, 'The role of television in promoting consumption has been widely attacked, because commercial systems are fundamentally ruled by advertising'. Nonetheless, Wasko also refers to the comments of

those professionals who have a negative opinion of television regardless of whether it includes commercials or not. Among these detractors, this scholar mentions a prestigious practitioner of the advertising field who expresses his negative point of view over television as such.

But even without advertising, some have argued that television cannot be transformed or altered, but is inherently destructive and detrimental. Former advertising executive Jerry Mander (1977) presented this viewpoint years ago, when he argued that television is not neutral technology and its very existence is destructive to human nature. (Wasko, 2005, p. 5)

Plenty of negative comments made directly by professionals of various fields are mentioned by Miller (2010) and Wasko (2005). In addition, in the case of novelists and film makers it is also noticeable the way they use the characters of their films and novels to express these opinions. Miller points out this fact and presents many specific examples regarding authors of different times and from various countries (e.g. Miller 2010, p. 8).

Nevertheless, we can observe that this is somehow changing, and that television, and television entertainment in particular, is nowadays also valued by many professionals both inside and outside the television field. The function of this medium as an entertainment device is broadly acknowledged. Moreover, within the business and industrial sector, the contributions of commercial television, the relevance of the television industry, and of television entertainment in particular, are very much taken into account. The importance of their economic impact is generally accepted.

We can say, however, that the value of television entertainment in other areas, and mainly as far as public television is concerned, has often been a matter of discussion and negative criticism among many professionals, including politicians, as

pointed and reflected above. Furthermore, although the entertainment function of television is generally accepted by public channels, and whilst most of them include this objective within their mission and aims, it can also be noticed that the presence of entertainment programmes in these networks is very often regarded as a threat. Actually, they are often seen as an obstacle for the fulfilment of the final objectives of these companies, which are, in fact, public entities that provide a public service. Consequently, entertainment programmes, and certain genres in particular, are often criticised when referring to the functions of public broadcasting and their value, in this sense, is put into doubt.

In relation to this matter I will again bring to the fore the controversy that followed the initial proposals of the secretary of culture of the British Government at the time, regarding the latest Royal Charter of the BBC. Quite interestingly, on the one hand, some of Mr. Whittingdale's early opinions reflect his poor consideration of the role of some of the most popular entertainment programmes of the BBC, whereas on the other hand we can observe that some of the responses by BBC professionals and managers are indeed very positive. They hence strongly defend and place value on the relevance and contributions of these popular entertainment programmes to the public, as well as to the British Broadcast Corporation, programmes that the secretary of culture was intending to take off BBC's programming schedule.

Among them are the comments by the BBC Trust chairwoman, Rona Fairhead, the BBC's head of policy, James Heath, and BBC head of documentaries, Patrick Holland, comments that could be read in the British media. Their words showed their disagreement with the opinions of the secretary of culture about those popular entertainment programmes. In addition, they highlight the role, relevance, contributions, value ... and 'distinctiveness', of these television shows. Likewise, these professionals

reflect their opposition to the dichotomy between distinctiveness and popularity that Mr Whittingdale, actually posed. I refer to these facts and comments more extensively in the section 1.7, i.e. 'Television Entertainment. Claiming recognition', of this work, where I include some of those mentioned words.

Other professionals also confronted the minister's proposals. Hence, strong defence of BBC and Channel 4, in opposition to the ideas of the British Secretary of State for Culture, was made by director Peter Kosminky at the ceremony of the TV Bafta awards that year (2016). Kosminky's words appeared in most British media, together with the opinions expressed by other television professionals, also winners of Bafta awards, in the speeches at that ceremony, as informed by Christopher Hooton in various articles published in *The Independent's* online edition, on the 8th of May, 2016.

Wolf Hall won Best Drama at the Bafta Television Awards tonight, and director Peter Kosminky used it as a platform to call for the safeguarding of the BBC's future. He accused the Government of trying to "eviscerate" the broadcaster, along with Channel 4. His sentiments were echoed by others at the ceremony including Ian Hislop, who was collecting *Have I Got News For You's* comedy award. (Hooton, 2016 May 8 b)

Several of the night's award winners including Ian Hislop and Mark Rylance called for the safeguarding of the broadcaster's future during their acceptance speeches, but it was Wolf Hall director Peter Kosminky who really went all out, accusing the government of trying to "eviscerate" it in an impassioned defence. (Hooton, 2016 May 8 a)

Finally, among those television professionals that defend the importance of entertainment programmes for public channels, I would mention the information and ideas outlined at the time by television professional Alan Tyller who, as soon as he was appointed Acting Controller of BBC Entertainment Commissioning in October 2015,

declared that: ‘Entertainment is a hugely important genre for the BBC, marrying head and heart to deliver a real treat to audiences’. (BBC Media Centre, 2015, October 23)

I also want to underline Tyller’s speech of 8th of December, 2015, when seeking new entertainment formats he presented the guidelines for proposals. This BBC’s executive notes the often perceived negativity about television entertainment and highlights the importance of these programmes for the BBC. Tyller presents interesting arguments defending this genre, the various related ‘subgenres’ and ‘cross-genres’, as well as the different formats and programmes that can be included within them. Likewise, he underscores their main features and their relevance for the fulfilment of both the requests of the audience and the objectives of this prestigious public television channel (BBC Commissioning, 2015, December 10).

As mentioned above, the cases noted here are also referred to in a further chapter of this work ‘Television Entertainment. Claiming recognition’, where some of the comments made by the professionals and politicians mentioned in this part are included.

1.2.3. Television: negative effects and low culture. The Frankfurt School.

After reviewing all these comments and information I would say that most of the negative considerations about television can be associated with two main topics: On the one hand, with the perception about the effects of this medium on the audience, on the other hand, with the links between television and low, popular, culture; associations that can be perceived beneath a lot of that criticism.

Furthermore, if we analyse the work conducted by many relevant researchers in the field of television studies (Miller, Newcomb, Lewis, Kellner, Lockett, Wasko,

Bignell ...) we can also observe the great influence of the Frankfurt School on the negative criticism over this communication medium. Likewise, the approach, theories and conclusions of this scholarship can indeed easily be associated with the two issues just mentioned. Scholars of the Frankfurt School developed these theories in the 1950s in the USA. Since then, the importance of the work they conducted within mass communication, and therefore regarding topics related to media and television studies, has been broadly acknowledged within academia. Furthermore, we can assert that their influence has extended among different sectors of society, since the beginning of media research until now.

In fact, as Kellner (2005, p. 29) points out, since the 1940s an impressive variety of critical perspectives to the media and television have been developed, but The Frankfurt School was the inaugurator of critical approaches to television studies. Since the very beginning their research focused on the negative effects of this medium; from these scholars' point of view, television was seen as a social problem:

... television's "effects" on behaviour and attitude quickly came to the fore in the early years of the medium's development as the "essential" questions to be addressed (...) the effects were most often framed and examined as social problems. In this context, of television "as" social problem, a first wave of major studies of television came to prominence. (Kellner, 2005, p. 17)

Kellner (2005, p. 19) also refers to the anaesthetic effect that is presumed for television entertainment, quoting Marcuse's words: 'The individual does not really know what is going on; the overpowering machine of entertainment unites him with the others in a state of anaesthesia from which all detrimental ideas tend to be excluded' (Marcuse, 1955, p. 104).

Consequently, we can say that the scholars of the Frankfurt school were the first academics to develop a critical analysis of mass media, and about television as part of it. This approach from sociology focused its research on the effects of the media, and stressed the negative influence of television, considering the audience as passive viewers who were both doped and negatively influenced by the high power of this artifact. In their view, 'television was part of an apparatus of manipulation and societal domination' (Kellner, 2002, p. 19)

Therefore, the *Media Effects Theory*, developed by these scholars, focused on the negative influence that television had on the audience. The terms related to it, coined by mass media and television researchers, such as '*hypodermic needle model*', '*cultural dope*' paradigm, '*magic bullet*' model, '*the panic axis*', '*theories of fear*', give us an idea of the negative approach taken and the pessimistic conclusions drawn by The Frankfurt School regarding television and its effects. (cf. Garfinkel, 1992; Kellner, 2002; Newcomb 2005; Miller, 2002, 2010; Perse 2001/2008; Rubin, 2009; Clarck, Jones, Malyszko & Wharton, 2011; Bignell 2013; Perse & Lambe, 2017 ...). These words, written by television academic Jonathan Bignell, summarise the main points of this pessimistic perspective:

Frankfurt School considered that the mass media perpetrated what we now call 'dumbing down' and encouraged the mass audience's fascination with trivia, immorality and indiscriminate consumption. (Bignell, 2013, p. 246)

In addition to these conclusions about the effects of television, the strict division between high and low culture, positioning television clearly in the latter, made by this school of thought, reinforced that negative consideration about television, and mainly over television entertainment, among intellectuals and academia. This dichotomy between high and low culture, highlighted by these scholars, is mentioned by Kellner

throughout his work when referring to the Frankfurt School, e.g. ‘... the general impression that the Frankfurt School make sharp and problematic distinctions between high and low culture...’ (Kellner, 2002, p. 19); ‘...In view of general impression that the Frankfurt School make sharp and problematic distinctions between high and low culture ...’ (Kellner, 2005, p. 32)

However, further studies in the field, still from a sociological perspective, which also analysed the influence of television on the audience, the relationship between this communication medium and its viewers, softened these initial negative considerations about the ‘all-powerful’ television. These new perspectives conceded the audience a more active role, as reflected in the theory of ‘*uses and gratifications*’ (Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1973). When doing so, they also reduced the power that had been conferred to television at that first stage.

Since then, further research and theories developed by a liberal pluralist approach, diminished the visions of an all-powerful media and found the effects of media to be ‘minimal’. These theories were, in many ways, encapsuled by the ‘*uses and gratifications*’ tradition. (Lewis, 2002, p. 6)

In fact, the *uses and gratifications* perspective, starting in the first years of the 1970s, marked a big shift in mass communication research, because instead of considering the audience as passively exposed to strong media messages, it considered an active audience that consciously selected and used media content to satisfy various needs. According to this theory, the viewers’ use of the media, their selection of the television programmes they watch, would respond to the gratifications they obtain from them. As most scholars that have written about this theory assert, and paraphrasing James Halloran’s words, instead of focusing on what the mass media do to people, this

new perspective focused on what people do to the media and with the media (James Halloran, 1970).

Andy Ruddock (2002, p. 70) quotes ‘a foundational definition from Elihu Katz’, as previously cited by McQuail (1998). This paragraph indeed summarises the main aspects of this research model, as defined by its authors, and it is cited in most texts that refer to this theory.

Less attention should be paid to what media do to people and more to what people do to the media. Such an approach assumes that even the most potent of mass media content cannot ordinarily influence an individual who has no use for it in the social and psychological context in which he lives. The uses approaches assumes that people’s values, their interests, their associations, their social roles, are pre-potent, and that people selectively fashion what they see and hear to these interests. (Cited in McQuail, 1998, p. 152)

At that time the School of Birmingham, in Great Britain, opened up a field of study including an approach from the humanities and ending up in a new discipline, ‘Cultural Studies’. The *encoding /decoding* theory, developed by Stuart Hall (1980), and the resistive reading models also emphasised the active role of the audience and diminished the power and negative influence of television defended by the Frankfurt School, presenting a more positive approach. Furthermore, this new model was also centred in audience perception more than in the effects of the media (cf. Morley 1992). The Birmingham group argued against media manipulation perspectives and defended the existence of an active audience who was capable of using and understanding media content in different ways (cf. Ruddock, 2002; Kellner, 2005; Miller, 2010; Bignell, 2013...)

We can observe that these theories show conflicting approaches over the study of the media. They reflect the dichotomy, the discussions, about the influence, the

effects and the value of television. These debates that started in those years are still a matter of interest and research for many scholars who have analysed this issue. Among them, I would mention Andy Ruddock (2002) who posits the issue of the controversy between pessimism and optimism, positive and negative approaches in relation to the influence of the media. This scholar associates this discussion with *the uses and gratifications* theory and the *ideological resistance* studies on one side and in opposition to the *media effects theory*, developed by the Frankfurt School, on the other side:

Both uses and gratifications and studies of ideological resistance have been presented as utopian poles in the oscillation between pessimism and optimism in twentieth-century audience research. And both have provided antidotes to the ‘hypodermic needle’ model of influence inspiring the effects tradition... (Ruddock, 2002, p. 70)

However, all these theories that started during the early 1970s and 1980s have evolved since those early years, and have also been criticised (cf. Miller, 2010; Bignell 2013; Alvarado et al., 2014; Grindstaff, 2014 ...). In fact, the great amount of studies related to media effects, as well as their importance, is broadly accepted. Prominent scholars in this discipline note that ‘one of the primary focuses of study of mass communication has been the social, cultural, and psychological effects of media content and use’. As these academics assert, ‘much of the empirical research published in the major mass communication journals concerns the effects of the mass media’ (cf. Perse 2001/2008)

Among the various theories developed within this discipline, well-known media effects researcher Elizabeth M. Perse mentions the importance of *the uses and gratifications* model. She asserts that: ‘analyses find that uses and gratifications is one

of the most widely used theoretical underpinnings of communication research'. Having said that, we can also observe that, according to the literature reviewed for this work, with regard to television the theories developed by the sociologists of the Frankfurt School and their negative considerations over this medium are indeed relevant and still have a great influence when shaping the opinions about this device, its influence and its value.

Scholar Doug Kellner stresses this fact in various essays, where he asserts that: 'many contemporary theorists writing on television have been shaped by their engagement with the Frankfurt School' (Kellner 2002, p. 20). Kellner also comments on the influence of the critical theory developed within this scholarship over many scholars researching on television in different years:

While the classical Frankfurt School members wrote little on television itself, the critical theory approach strongly influenced critical approaches to mass communication and television within academia and the views of the media of the New Left and others in the aftermath of the 1960s. The anthology *Mass Culture* (Rosenberg and White, 1957) contained Adorno's article on television and many other studies influenced by the Frankfurt School approach. (...) 'From the perspectives of the New Left, Todd Gitlin wrote "Thirteen Theses on Television" that contained a critique of television as manipulation with resonances to the Frankfurt School in 1972 and continued to do research and writing on TV in the United States (1980, 1983, 2002). A 1987 collection *Watching Television* contained studies by Gitlin and others that exhibited a neo-Frankfurt School approach to television, and many contemporary theorists writing on television have been shaped by their engagement with the Frankfurt School. (Kellner, 2005, p. 34)

Furthermore, Miller (2010, p. 113) refers recently to the influence of the Frankfurt School critics, quoting Martín-Barbero and Rey's comments about it:

Frankfurt school critics (...) argue that entertainment TV appeals to base instincts and lowest common denominators, instilling either quietude or hysteria. The opulence of media technology is matched only by its barren civilization. Such

criticism come from both left and right, agreeing that a surfeit of signage and a deficit of understanding cheapen public culture, as kitsch overruns quality (Martín-Barbero and Rey 1999: 15-16, 22, 24).

It can be noticed that many other scholars often mention the large number of studies devoted to investigating the negative effects of television that have been carried out since the first years of television research until now, including those by Janet Wasko:

Much early television research adhered to a media effects orientation, searching for quantitative measure of television's impact on audiences, specially the impact of violent content on behaviour. For instance, according to one estimate, approximately 4,000 studies have examined TV's effects on children. Still, no conclusive results have been found. (Wasko, 2005, p. 5)

Finally, I would like to focus on these following reflections, drawn from the introduction of *The Sage Handbook of Television studies* (Alvarado, Buonnano, Gray & Miller, 2014), as they summarise and back up the statements and arguments pointed and developed in this section. In fact, the main issues regarding television entertainment that I have reflected above are also mentioned in the quote bellow, that is to say:

- . The importance and amount of audience centered studies from the beginning until now.
- . The anxieties and worries about the effects of this audio-visual media.
- . The consideration of audience as passive viewers and the distinction between high and low culture regarding them and television entertainment in the early, and the very abundant research regarding this matter.

Actually, the worries and anxieties associated with the effects of television are previously posited in that introduction, written by Toby Miller (pp. xix-xliv): '... what

would be the effects of these developments, and how would they vary between those with a stake in maintaining society versus transforming it?', and afterwards it is explained that:

By the early 20th century, academic experts had decreed media audiences to be passive consumers, thanks to the missions of literary criticism (distinguishing the aesthetically cultivated from others) and psychology (distinguishing the socially competent from others). Decades of social science have emphasized audience reactions to audiovisual entertainment: where they came from, how many they were, and what they did as a consequence of being present.

Taking everything in consideration, we can assert that the traditional theory of effects, named as *The Effects Theory*, developed by the Frankfurt School had, and still has, a great influence in various sectors of society and among a great part of both the public and academia. We can also observe that other theories that present a more positive view have been brought to the fore by other researchers too, and that these models of research that started in the late 70s and the 80s have gained importance, mainly during these last decades. Among them, the development of the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* and the great amount of research conducted following this model is highlighted by relevant scholars who work on the study of the effects of the media.

Nevertheless, it can be noted that those theories that, aligning with the research model started by the Frankfurt school, stress the negative effects of television, seem to prevail over more positive approaches, no matter the amount and quality of the academic analysis conducted from this point of view. This negative perception about television is wide-spread and seems to hide other perspectives that highlight the also positive value of this medium. The relevance of *The Effects Theory* and the Frankfurt School in this respect is undeniable.

That having been said, we can observe that the controversy between those two approaches, the different considerations, positive and negative, over television, and television entertainment in particular, remain. It can be noticed that the main discussions over this matter, in the academic field in particular, started taking place at the beginning of the new century and that, as we can see, during these first years of the new millennium this is still a topic of research, analysis and discussion. I will show that in the following chapters.

1.2.4. Television, controversy: negative and positive approaches.

As argued previously, it is broadly accepted that a great amount of research related to TV Studies has focused from the very beginning on television audiences and on the impact this communication and entertainment medium has on its viewers and in society. In fact, the topic of television audiences has mainly been analysed from this perspective. Lewis refers to ‘the volume of accumulated evidence on the social impact of television’ and to ‘the extent to which that evidence does tell us a great deal about the nature and extent of television’s influence’ (Lewis, 2005, p. 434).

Furthermore, we have commented the fact that most of the conclusions regarding the impact and influence of this medium on the audience, starting at the early years of research on this topic, have focused on its negative effects. We have also mentioned that further approaches have taken place, perspectives which focus on the uses and gratifications of television and that, consequently, offer a more positive view. Finally, we have observed that arguments on both sides, defending these opposite positions can still be found. In the same way, Lewis also points out that the discussion

confronting both approaches, the controversy about whether television is good or bad, still remains:

Indeed, it might be argued the 1950s debate –between those who focused on what the media do to people (“media effects”) and those who looked at what people do with the media (“uses and gratifications”) –is still being played out half a century later. (Lewis, 2005, p. 434)

1.2.4.1. General overview.

The studies conducted by different scholars over these years enable us to identify and sketch out the arguments and discussions in relation to various matters that we have identified as relevant when researching on the controversy about television, such as: i) the different approaches associated with television and its social influence; ii) the relationship with the audience (considering viewers either passive or active); iii) the positive and negative considerations over television; iv) the distinctions between high and low culture, elitism and populism. All these topics are reflected in various articles of well-known television and media researchers (Newcomb, Lewis, Lockett, Kellner, Miller, Wasko, Bignell, Alvarado...)

I have selected some texts by different authors that back up the arguments about these issues presented throughout this work, and regarding the way I have outlined them in previous sections. They, therefore, reflect both positive and negative views about television, and television entertainment, reinforcing the argument posited before about the existing controversy around this matter. It is also interesting to bear in mind the bibliography these authors refer to, that I have also cited in this text and included in the list provided in the final section of this work.

In the article ‘Critical Perspectives of Television from the Frankfurt School to Postmodernism’ (2005) Doug Kellner starts by mentioning the Frankfurt School and the negative approach of this scholarship, in contrast to more positive perspectives by other scholars such as John Fiske and the academics of the British Cultural Studies school of thought, as Kellner remarks. In the paragraph quoted below Kellner mentions the various negative considerations pointed out by different people, either academics or policy makers. Among them, worries about the negative influence of television on violence, consumerism, commodification, mediocrity, morality, education, and low cultural level are noted.

In addition to seeing television as a social problem because of growing societal violence, from the 1960s to the present, left-liberal and conservative media critics coalesced in arguing that mainstream media promote excessive consumerism and commodification. In the 1960s FCC commissioner Newton Minow described TV as a “Vast Wasteland” and the term was taken up by both conservative and left-liberal critics to assail what was perceived as the growing mediocrity and low cultural level of television. This view is argued in sociological terms in the work of Daniel Bell who asserts, in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1978), that a sensate-hedonistic culture exhibited in popular media and promoted by capitalist corporations was undermining core traditional values and producing and increasing amoral society. Bell called for a return to tradition and religion to counter this social trend that saw media culture as undermining morality, the work ethic, and traditional values. (Kellner, 2005, p. 36)

In the same line, the already classic work by Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, is mentioned by Kellner, because Postman’s analysis reinforces the worries about the negative social effects of television. As Miller also remarks: ‘Postman condemned popular culture, especially television’ (Miller 2010, p. 9). In fact, Postman’s work is still a reference when analysing the negative social effects of this medium. The title *Amusing Ourselves to Death* has also become popular, and it is often mentioned in different contexts when talking about television (cf. Miller, 2010).

In *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1986), Neil Postman argued that popular media culture –and, in particular television- has become a major force of socialization and was subverting traditional literacy skills, thus undermining education. Postman criticized the negative social effects of the media and called for educators and citizens to intensify their critique of the media. Extolling the virtues of book culture and literacy, Postman called for educational reform to counter the nefarious effects of media and consumer culture. (Kellner, 2005, p. 36)

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, in contrast with Postman’s analysis Kellner refers to the more positive position of other intellectuals, such as Fiske and the academics of the British Cultural Studies scholarship, which he indicates is best represented by the work of Stuart Hall. Kellner summarises their main arguments in this paragraph (Kellner, 2005, p. 36):

Defenders stress the educational benefits of some television, suggest that it is merely harmless entertainment, or argue that audiences construct their own meanings from popular media (Fiske, 1987, 1989a). Negative depictions of the media and consumerism, youth hedonism, excessive materialism, and growing violence were contested by British cultural studies that claimed that the media were being scapegoated for a wide range of social problems. In *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al., 1978), Stuart Hall and colleagues at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies analyzed what they took to be a media-induced “moral panic” about mugging and youth violence. The Birmingham group argued for the existence of an active audience that was able to critically dissect and make use of media material, arguing against media manipulation perspective.

As Kellner (2005, p. 36) points out, ‘British cultural studies began studying how different groups read television news, magazines, engaged in consumption, and made use of a broad range of media’. The research work conducted by these academics led them to conclusions that offered a more positive view about television, and television entertainment, than that emphasised by previous researchers. The negative criticisms

that started in the early years still remained though, as it is noted by Kellner, who outlines the various topics that those critics focused on:

Yet, critics working within British cultural studies, individuals in a wide range of social movements, and academics from a variety of fields and positions, began criticizing the media from the 1960s and to the present for promoting sexism, racism, homophobia, and other oppressive social phenomena. There was intense focus on the politics of representation, discrimination between negative and positive representation of major social groups and harmful and beneficial media effects, debates that coalesced under the rubric of the political representation. (Kellner 2005, p. 37)

Academic Justin Lewis (2005), also refers to the different approaches and considerations about television, and although he points out that ‘Most summaries of audience studies thus tend to leave a great deal of room for speculation’, we can note that Lewis associates these different points of view about television with the influence, the power conferred to television makers, producers, on the one hand and with the role of the audience on the other. The consideration of the public either as passive or active viewers is closely related to these reflections and conclusions:

As a consequence, one of the best-rehearsed debates in media studies is between those who assert that the media *do* play a significant role in shaping public perceptions, and those who stress the audience’s ability to create their own meanings from media. (Lewis, 2005, p. 434)

Lewis sketches out a variety of contexts where this controversy is reflected. We can observe that he underscores three main fields where ‘this debate is played out’ as he notes, and mentions the opposing positions in each one of these areas, referring to various authors who present arguments defending these different positions. These are Lewis’s conclusions in that respect (Lewis, 2005, p. 434):

- i) While some see television as part of a hegemonic system, in which the majority gives consent to a set of dominant ideas, others point to the way which even large, commercial media corporations can produce television programs that challenge dominant ideas.
- ii) While some researchers point to moments when television does appear to influence consciousness (e.g. Gerbern, Gross, Morgan and Signorielly, 1980; Heide, 1995; Iyengar, 1991; Jhally and Lewis, 1992; Lewis 2001; McKinley, 1997; Ruddock, 2001), others focus on moments of audience power and play (e.g. Hills, 2002; Hobson, 1982; Hodge and Tripp, 1986; Jenkins, 1992).
- iii) On a global scale, some see the global expansion of transnational media corporations as a force for ideological uniformity and/or a form of cultural imperialism (e.g. Herman and McChesney, 1997), while others stress the power of local contexts, enabling people to interpret media content in specific and useful ways (e.g. Ang, 1996).

In relation to Lewis' reflections and conclusions I would like to underline the next paragraph, as it brings to the fore the fact that the debate, the discussion, that started so long ago, still prevails. Therefore, this author's words summarise an argument that we have often mentioned throughout this research work which, in fact, is one of the main reasonings that underlie the controversy about television. These few lines also reinforce the rationale we write about extensively in this work.

In this context, it would be easy to imagine that we have learnt little about television's social impact over the last fifty years. Indeed, it might be argued the 1950s debate –between those who focused on what the media do to people (“media effects”) and those who looked at what people do with the media (“uses and gratifications”) –is still being played out half a century later. (Lewis, 2005, p. 434)

This scholar goes on analysing the nature of television influence and the discussions about its considerations as being ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and he indicates the different approaches, apart from those that mainly focus on the audience, that also determine and influence the various and opposite opinions about this medium.

Television is often discussed as if its content is inevitable or irrelevant –so, for example, television is seen as “good” or “bad” in itself, hence its social impact is seen, in absolute terms, as benign or negative. Although there may be instances in which the “medium is the message”, this view is generally unhelpful in a specifying media influence. In short, whether television is seen as a cultural, public service activity or as an economic, commercial activity will have consequences on the form and content of the stories it tells. Some television programs are unpredictable and full of possibilities, others are not. There are some areas where television provides viewers with a diversity of stories and images, and other areas where the information provided is limited and monolithic. Some television systems support a wide array of perspectives while others tend to be narrower, formulaic and homogeneous. (...) Television is, in this sense, a site of political and cultural struggles. Its content matters, because the nature of that content has as social impact. (Lewis 2005, p. 439)

Furthermore, Lewis suggests that the various approaches should be taken into account, as he acknowledges the complexity of television, of the nature of its presence and of its social impact. These ideas are encapsulated in this paragraph that I would like to quote:

Because we have research indicating that different audiences can behave in different ways, or that television can be interpreted in ways the producers might not have imagined or intended, this does not “disprove” research showing that television promotes or encourages certain views of the world. Both are not only possible, they reveal the complex and situated nature of television’s presence. Moreover, the fact that the social impact of television is often complex and always conditional does not make it any less significant or profound. (Lewis, 2005, p. 439)

Toby Miller has also researched and reflected on this issue in most of his work on television studies. He poses this matter and presents information and arguments in this regard in some of his latest publications (2010, 2014). In fact, we could say that this topic is the key issue of the ‘Introduction Chapter’ of his book *Television Studies* (2010, pp. 1-21) and it can be seen that this debate is present in most of the whole of the second chapter, devoted to ‘Television Theory’ (2010, pp. 22-49). I even dare to say

that this dichotomy, this discussion between the positive and negative value and effects of television underlies the whole of this interesting book that analyses television and its studies.

Nevertheless, in this case I want to emphasise two texts that respond to the main opposite points of view with regard to the value, the effects, and the consideration towards television, and television entertainment in particular. Both texts, books, have already become classics regarding the analysis of television. I am referring to Neil Postman's *Amusing yourself to Death* (1987) and John Fiske and John Hartley's *Reading Television* (1980).

In this respect, I would like to focus on the analysis and arguments that Miller points out when referring to both texts and the influence that each one had in the later opinions on this issue. Miller starts by referring to the success and influence of Neil Postman's text:

Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1987) tropes Aldous Huxley to condemn popular culture, especially television. Postman favoured writing and reading over filming and watching. He contrasted a lost past of creative civilization with a pesky present of dishpan dross dominated by mindless consumerist entertainment. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* sold over 200,000 copies and was translated into several languages. It inspired a Roger Waters album (*Amused to Death* (1992)) and public-broadcasting debates in Canada and the USA, became a memorable phrase in the English language, and made its author a noted figure within the media ... (Miller 2010, p. 9)

Furthermore, we can notice that Miller is, in fact, very critical of the analysis that Postman conducted (p. 9-10):

Postman's argument against technology was made at a personal level, with his own subjectivity a guarantor of its validity (...). He wouldn't use social-science or semiotic methods to analyze television. In fact he declined to deploy most academic knowledge about TV, apart from work done by his own inspirations,

mentors, or students, paying virtually no heed to media, cultural, or communication studies.

Later on Miller compares the influence of this book with Fiske and Hartley's *Reading Television* (1980), which was, actually, written several years before. This text, as we have mentioned previously, presented a more positive perspective of television. Miller offers quite a critical view about Postman's analysis and attitude, highlighting the importance of Hartley and Fiske's research and conclusions. Miller, however, admits that the influence of Postman's work, and therefore the analysis that emphasises the negative side, influence and effects of television and television entertainment in particular, was much greater. He acknowledges that this view, that Miller considers somehow distorted and full of nostalgia, still remains.

For instance, John Fiske and John Hartley's *Reading Television* (1980), which preceded his own success by several years and sold over 100,000 copies across seven languages, may as well never have happened. But the work Postman did fits into a very powerful critic of television. (...) In short, his better day was the supposedly quiet, deliberative domain before the crowd expressed itself. Yet this wistful, willful nostalgia continues to draw people into its mythic historical vision. (Miller, 2010, p. 10)

More recently, Laura Grindstaff (2014) also reflects on the interest showed by many scholars in the social role and impact of television and she points out the different views, positive and negative, in relation to this matter expressed by different researchers. She starts by mentioning various positive comments by several academics (p. 340):

In a positive vein, social scientists such as John Dewey, William James and Robert Park believed that mass media, if managed well, could strengthen democracy by socializing people into a common set of norms and values (Grindstaff and Turow, 2006). Marshall McLuhan (1964) posited an even more optimistic (some say celebratory) view of electronic media as enabling a global

village transcending time and place, a thesis later explored in a more detailed and historicized fashion by Joshua Meyrowitz (1985).

After noting that, in the next paragraph Grindstaff presents more pessimistic positions posed by prominent researchers in different times, referring to the opinions of academics that focused on the negativity of this medium.

Less optimistically, the rise of mass communications, in concert with industrialization and technological change, was said to breed cultural mediocrity (according to mass society critiques) and/or inhibit revolutionary class consciousness (according to Marxist critiques). Adorno (1957), for example, in concert with other scholars of the Frankfurt School, denounced television for insinuating the capital mode of production into everyday leisure, including into people's psychic lives. Baudrillard (1983) also took a pessimistic/deterministic stance, suggesting that the primary effect of television was to substitute a representation of reality (simulacrum) for reality itself. (p. 340)

Among Basque authors, Aranberri (1996) refers to these positive and negative approaches towards television, in the section entitled 'Telebista: Munduko onena eta txarrena' [Television: The best and the worst of the world] of his book about intellectuals and television. In previous pages of his essay, Aranberri focuses on the bad considerations about television showed by many intellectuals, arguments that we have included in chapter 1.2.2. In this part, though, this author points out that, without diminishing the arguments presented earlier in his text, there are also positive approaches by some intellectuals, also in the Basque Country. Aranberri mentions that once they have had the opportunity to get nearer to this communication and entertainment medium and know it better, the criticisms by some Basque writers and intellectuals have softened a bit.

He ends up mentioning that, in a democratic world, where each citizen is given a vote to elect their governors, we cannot take audiences as foolish. Hence, being capable of that, their capacity to choose the programmes they watch should not be called into question. This Basque researcher adds that the fact that television audience figures are increasing year after year, as well as the reasons behind that, should also be born in mind when criticising television. These arguments are reflected in these two paragraphs:

Orain arteko esandakoaz atzera egin gabe (...) izan baitira makinatxo bat intelektual - pentsalari eta idazle jendea batez ere - modu batez edo bestez telebista animatu izan dutenak eta baita, noiz edo behin, bertan lan egin izan dutenak ere. (Aranberri, 1996, p. 79)

Euskal Herritik atera gabe, uste baino zabaloagoa da telebistaren esparruan era batez zein bestez nola hala aritu izan diren euskal idazleen zerrenda (...). Esan gabe doa, esperientziaz –edo eskarmentuz- hurbiletik jakin ahal izan dutela zer den telebista eta, gutxienez, medioaren posibilitatez jabetzeko aukera izan dutela, nolabaiteko lorpenak baloratzeko eta kritikak leuntzeko. Edozein asmakizuni, edozein berrikuntzari, edozein teknologi-garapenari edo zientzia-aurkikuntzari darizkio argiak eta gerizak. Alderdi txarrik baldin bada, ezin ukatu, ez da onik ere falta komunikabideek eskaini ohi dituzten funtzio eta betebeharreran. Horrenbeste kritikaren artean, gero eta gehiago dira telebistaren alderdi onak adierazten dituzten adituak. Hiritar bakoitzari boto bana ematen dion demokrazi-sistema onartuz gero ez hasiko gara orain telebista-ikuslea inozotzat jotzen. Jendeak agintariak hautatzeko gauza baldin bada ez al da telebista aukeratzeko gai izango! Urteak joan eta urteak etorri teleikusle-kopurua gehituz badoa zerbaitegatik izan beharko du. (Aranberri, 1996, p. 87)

Aranberri not only expresses his own point of view over this matter, he also refers to the opinion of various prestigious authors from different disciplines and several countries, such as psychiatrist Luis Rojas Marcos, writer Alejo Carpentier, researchers Robert K. Baker and Sandra J. Bell, as well as Professor Roman Gubern.

In this paragraph below, Aranberri cites the above mentioned Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, winner of the Cervantes Literature Award, and quotes some of his

words, which pose this controversy about positive and negative values of television. According to this text, Carpentier notes that television gathers both the best and the worst of the world and he adds that it is the audience's choice not to get overwhelmed by what television brings to them. This author comments that although some evenings it is convenient to switch off this device, in many other cases, and despite the opinion of 'the intelligentsia', television helps us to experience amazing adventures, to discover fascination and to be surrounded by marvel.

Idazle kubatar unibertsal honek batere lotsarik gabe aitortzen zuen (Carpenter, 1987, p. 142): "... Antenek hedatzen duten guztiak ez du harrera eta begirunerik merezi baina telebista, Esoporen hizkuntzak bezalatsu, munduan dagoen txarrena eta onena da aldi berean, eta ikusentzulearen esku dago eterrak dakarkionaz ez itotzea. Zenbait gautan beti ere komenigarri izaten da aparailua lotan uztea, bere argiak iziotu gabe. Baina, beste zenbaitetan-'inteligentziak' nahi edo ez- telebistak abentura mireagarriak biziartzten dizkigu, liluraz jabetarazi, mirariaz inguratarazi". (Aranberri, 1992, pp. 79-80)

The opinion of prestigious psychiatrist Luis Rojas Marcos when mentioning the positive contributions of this medium is also mentioned by the Basque researcher, as can be observed in the paragraph quoted below. Aranberri (1996, p. 88) highlights Rojas Marco's opinions (1992, p. 98), which refer to the therapeutic benefits of this device. He argues that it provides fantasy, and boosts imagination, which, in his opinion, are needed to help to calm everyday emotions and tensions. Besides that, according to Rojas Marcos' reflections, this medium permits the taking part in events that happen far away, as well as allowing involvement in special historical moments, by watching them. In this way, television audiences can increase and enrich their world of knowledge but, furthermore, they can be aware of a world that is arranged around fantasy and ilusion. This psychiatrist and researcher points up the importance and the benefits of these facts when referring to television viewing:

New York-eko Unibertsitatean psikiatri-irakasle eta Psikoanalisi Akademia Amerikarraren partaide den Luis Rojas Marcos (1992, p. 98) ikerlearen ahotan, telebistak “ikusentzulegoaren amesgiroa eta irudimena zuzpertzaz gainera, eguneroko emozio eta tentsioak baretzeko fantasi-puntua eskaintzen du, eguneroko sendabelar terapeutikoa bailitzen. Gainera, ustebako zein urrutiko gertakarietan begibistaz esku hartzeko eta histori-une berezietan parte hartzeko aukera eskaintzen dio telebistak ikusentzuleari, norberaren ezagupidearen aberasgarri ezezik, baita ilusioz eta fantasiaz atondutako munduaz jabetzeko ere”. (Aranberri, 1996, p. 88)

The reflections by researchers Baker and Bell (1969) are also taken into account by Aranberri (1996). These words below refer to the various positive contributions of television to those who view it, apart from those strictly related to information and entertainment as such. According to Aranberri’s explanation, these scholars point out other needs that television fulfils, such as joyfulness and amusement, they also indicate that it provides reasonings and arguments. Furthermore, they state that this communication medium helps the elderly, and keeps children quiet. Therefore, from these academics’ point of view, there are various reasons for watching television, beyond the appeal of its programmes:

Bestalde, Robert K. Baker eta Sandra J. Bell ikerlariak bere garaian aztertu zuten, beharbada arinkeria handia litzateke telebista aurrean jartzeko arrazoirik bakarra programen erakargarritasuna dela pentsatzea. Telebistak, beste edozein komunikabideak ez bezalaxe, informazioa eta entretenimenduarekin zerikusi garbirik ez duen makinatxo bat asetun, poztun, lilura, arrazoi, argudio eta atxakia eskaini ohi du. Atso-agure zaharrei laguntza eskaintzea (nahiz eta laguntza elektronikoa) eta haurrak bakean egotea bi eredu besterik ez dira. (Aranberri, 1996, p. 61)

The opinions of Professor Roman Gubern (1987, p. 202) mentioned by Aranberri (1996, p. 61) in his essay also reflect on the positive and negative considerations about television and its value:

Gustuaren kultur-sailkatzeari dagokionez, kultur-aberastasuna eskaintzaren aniztasunean oinarritzen dela dio Roman Gubern irakasle eta aditu ezagunak Beronen ustetan, ikusentzule bakoitzari gehien gustatzen zaizkion programak ikusteko eskubidea zalantzan jartzeari nolabaiteko zentsura-izpia dario eta kultur-despotismoaren ezaugarri litzateke. Bartzelonako Unibertsitate Autonomoaren katedratiko honen iritziz, ez dago kultur-genero handirik edo txikirik eta edozein genero-mota - opera nahiz komeria, hitzaldia zein melodrama - programarik preziatuena edo arbuigarriena gerta daiteke. (Aranberri, 1996, p. 61)

Aranberri refers to the importance of the variety of choice for cultural enrichment and he notes the main points of Gubern's reflection in relation to this matter. In fact, in his book *El simio informatizado* (1987), Roman Gubern emphasises the relevance of the variety of programmes and contents and underscores the importance of the freedom, the right, to choose among them, conclusions that Aranberri highlights in his essay (1996, p. 82).

Finally, these words by the Basque author summarise most of the analysis of this kind developed by various researchers, scholars and intellectuals, as well as by television viewers, from different places and with diverse backgrounds, that he mentions in his essay. As we can see, those reflections take into account the positive contributions of this medium, and the entertainment genre in particular, in comparison to the features of other media. The possibility for viewing a new world that television offers, a world that otherwise the public wouldn't be able to reach, is highlighted by this Basque researcher.

Esanak esan, telebistak –gainontzeko komunikabideek bezala- informatu, hezitu eta entretenitu egiten du. Baina telebistak, irudiaren jabe denez gero, beste ezein komunikabidek ez duen dimentsioa eskaini ahal du. Telebistaren bitartez, bestela inondik ere bereganatzerik izango ez lukeen mundo berri ikusta dezake teleikusleak. (Aranberri, 1996, p. 87)

1.2.4.2. Television: high and low culture.

The distinction between high and low culture is also essential in this debate about the controversy on television, and television entertainment in particular, with regard to the negative and positive approaches towards it when studying, analysing and assessing this medium and this genre. This classification is indeed related to the negative considerations about television, and television entertainment in particular, as for many years watching television, and more precisely television entertainment consumption, has been associated with low popular culture. In fact this division is core when defining this term, as can be observed in the paragraph below where academics Harrington and Bielby (2001, p. 6) refer to the association between popular culture and ‘lowbrow culture’ which, as they note, was established more than 200 years ago, when researchers place the origin of these terms.

As social historians have documented, a discourse emerged in the late 1800s which distinguished elite or “highbrow” culture from mass or “lowbrow” culture. Elite cultural objects and practices are those favoured by the social privileged and well-educated, who are believed to be uniquely capable of understanding and appreciating them. Lowbrow or popular culture is essentially everything that is *not* elite culture.

As we can see in that paragraph, mass culture was defined as ‘lowbrow’ culture, and this difference between elite high culture and mass low culture was already made by the end of the 19th century, although there is some debate about when this distinction first occurred, as Harrington and Bielby note (2001, p. 13):

Herbet Gans (1974) claims it emerged about 200 years ago in most modern societies when daily life was first divided into “work” time and “leisure” time. Other scholars argue that the late nineteenth century and the transformations heralded by the Industrial Revolution (e.g. mass production/distribution/consumption) first allowed for the distinction to be

made. Levine (1988) traces the first appearance of the term “highbrow” to the late 1880s, and the term “lowbrow” to shortly after 1900 (see also Cullen 1996).

Anyhow, we can say that this categorisation applied to television from the beginning, and even more as it gained importance among the mass media. Hence, the function of television as a popular entertainment medium entailed its consideration as a ‘lowbrow culture’ device, and popular entertainment programme consumption was in general terms considered as a low culture practise. If we analyse the premises that are taken into account for the classification as ‘highbrow’ or ‘lowbrow’ we can surely understand the reasons beyond that. According to Harrington and Bielby’s explanations the accessibility, the emotional distance, and whether the author is known or not are core elements for that categorisation:

The designation of an object or practice as highbrow or lowbrow depends upon several interrelated variables. First is its degree of accessibility: the more accessible the object or practice the more likely it is to be labelled lowbrow. A second variable is the degree of emotional “distance” adopted by consumers vis-à-vis the cultural text in question: a hyper-rational or “over-distanced” experience indicates highbrow cultural consumption whereas an overly-emotional or “under-distanced” experience signals lowbrow status (see Scheff, 1979). The final variable rests on whether the object or practice is identifiably authored: that is, traceable to a uniquely gifted creative genius. In general, authored texts are more likely to be considered highbrow than are unauthored ones. (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 6 - 7)

In line with that reflection it has to be said that, although often aesthetic reasons are argued by some people when dismissing popular television entertainment, there are other explanations that underpin this division. This argument is shared by most media academics, as Harrington and Bielby (2001, p. 7) point out: ‘Scholars agree that distinction between highbrow and lowbrow are made less for aesthetic reasons than political ones’. In their text they quote some words by academics Herbert Gans and

Pierre Bourdieu that reflect on that, which I bring here too (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 7):

It is really about the nature of the good life, and thus about the purpose of life in general ... It is also about which culture and whose culture should dominate in society ... As such, the mass culture critique is an attack by one element of society against another. (Gans, 1974, pp. 3-4)

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar ... the most intolerable thing for those who regard themselves as the possessors of legitimate culture is the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates shall be separated. (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 6, 57)

These statements refer in fact to the hierarchies of taste, which is accepted by most researchers as a fact underpinning these classifications regarding elite and popular, high and low cultural products and practices. This topic is often mentioned when researching on television entertainment, mainly from a perspective of cultural and popular studies as well as when taking an active audience approach, including the *uses and gratifications* model.

As we have seen in previous sections, we can assert that these discussions between elitist and popular positions, this distinction between high and low culture concerning popular entertainment has also applied to television entertainment, and it has indeed influenced the considerations of this genre. Although the sharp difference between those two categories started fading during the last part of the last century, we cannot affirm that it has disappeared. Hence, we can observe that the issue of the hierarchies of taste, related to that distinction, still prevails. Actually, Harrington and Bielby mention this fact (2001, p. 7):

The late 1960s marked the beginning of a significant trend: the gradual disintegration of high/low distinctions. Scholars from all perspectives now agree there is considerable fluidity between elite and mass culture. In other words, culture is a dynamic process rather than a static entity, and high/low distinctions can change over time, as can the social groups that engage them (also see Peterson and Kern, 1996). (...) As such, the categories of high and low are increasingly recognized as analytically imprecise. This is not to suggest, however, that issues of taste have been resolved. Cultural objects are rendered meaningful because of aesthetic valuation, and a key point of debate among scholars is whether it is appropriate, and if so, how to evaluate the aesthetic qualities of a product.

It is also relevant the fact that, as Harrington and Bielby note (2001, p. 2), prominent scholar on cultural studies and popular culture Raymond Williams mentions that, amid the different meanings that the word 'popular' has, this term is used both to refer to those objects or practises that are well liked by a lot of people as well as to those deemed inferior or unworthy. In this view, popular culture is everything left over after we have identified what constitutes elite or 'high culture' (Williams, 1983, p. 237). As we have previously mentioned, television audio-visual texts, and entertainment programmes mainly, are often considered as popular, low culture, products and consequently, the same consideration is extended to the practise of watching them. From this perspective, we can affirm that television entertainment is scorned and that its value is diminished; likewise, a link between these points of view and the negative assessment of television entertainment often observed can easily be established.

The research carried out by precursor Raymond Williams and other academics in the field of popular culture studies presented a more positive approach over this field of research. The value of popular culture is highlighted in many studies conducted within this scholarship. Further research work undertaken from this perspective has also highlighted the positive side of popular entertainment, including television

entertainment. It can be said that some of the latest studies in this field analyse popular entertainment programmes from a more positive perspective. Besides, as Harrington and Bielby explain, in most cases these studies go beyond questions of taste and aesthetics, as other parameters are taken into account when researching on this field. From this perspective, popular culture is analysed and valued as part of everyday culture (2001, p. 9):

Popular Culture Studies espouses a non-evaluative approach, arguing that researchers should be neutral or objective in examining cultural texts and the people who produce and consume them. Since pop culture is defined as everyday culture, “liked or disliked, approved or disapproved ... the questions of aesthetics plays only a tangential and relatively unimportant role” (Browne, 1996, pp. 25, 33)

This approach certainly differs from the initial perspective of the discipline of sociology because, as Harrington and Bielby point out: ‘In the early twentieth century, sociologists were centrally involved in aesthetic evaluation, as part of their wide-spread critique of the “evils” of mass culture (see, for example, Blumler, 1933)’. It has to be said that newer sociological approaches, have avoided evaluative issues (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 10).

Therefore, we can say that the controversy about the consideration of television entertainment as a low culture genre, in opposition to those approaches that analyse and value it as part of everyday culture is still a matter of discussion. Although the hard distinctions between high and low culture seem to fade, mainly among media researchers, this negative perception towards television entertainment for considering it as part of popular low culture still remains. This distinction has been present when assessing television entertainment from various fields and by many different people for many years.

We can also observe, though, that some of the latest studies conducted in relation to popular television entertainment programmes permit more positive approaches, as they also value the contributions of this genre in various fields (e.g. Blakley, J., 2001; Harrington and Bielby, 2001 (a) (b); Gabler and Kaplan, 2004; Kjus, Y., 2009; Bignell, 2010, 2013; Boyle and Kelly, 2013). Most of these studies do indeed elude the traditional classification mentioned previously and go beyond it, in line with the path started by the cultural studies and the studies on popular culture in the last years of last century, but adding new perspectives and contributions. We can say that the distinction between high and low culture, and the initial positioning of television entertainment in the latter, has undoubtedly been surpassed by media academics at present. However, we are also aware that this perception of television, and television entertainment watching, is still considered by many sectors of society as a low culture practice. Hence, television entertainment programmes and some of the most popular ones among them are still taken as low culture products, audio-visual texts.

1.2.4.3. Summary and conclusions.

After analysing this literature, we can observe that the controversy about television being good or bad, and the different issues and perspectives associated with these different points of view still remain. It can also be noticed that these discussions are closely related to the studies regarding the effects on the audience and the different considerations between audience as passive or active viewers, in addition to the struggle between elitist and popular positions, differences between high and low culture, when referring to this medium and, even more specifically to the entertainment genre. In fact,

we can observe that all these terms are closely related and at the same time they are all involved in the different perceptions about television. Therefore, I would conclude that:

- The concepts of passive audience, low culture and negative effects and considerations over television are related to each other.
- Theories of active audience and studies on the importance of popular culture are associated with the positive perspectives towards television and its positive contributions.

Furthermore, we can notice that studies about television effects, audience and reception, have evolved and that, in addition, other approaches to television studies apart from those that focus mainly on the various topics related to the analysis of the audience have also been taken. When doing so, new and more positive perspectives can also be found, as we have seen before. However, it seems that these new theories and approaches are not so well known and followed. Indeed, we can say that, generally speaking, negativity about television, especially towards television entertainment, still prevails even at present among a lot of sectors of society.

1.3. Television entertainment effects: audiences.

1.3.1. Introduction.

We have already mentioned the great amount of research that has been conducted in relation to television effects and audiences. The importance and influence of this field within television studies, as well as amongst many professionals and intellectuals, including academia, has also been noticed in this work. In addition, I have already reflected on the importance of these studies in relation to the controversy over

the good and bad considerations of television and television entertainment. That is why in this section I would like to outline the evolution of the study of audiences since the early times until now, focusing on those theories and fields related to the issue that we are dealing with, that is to say, the different perspectives regarding the value of television and television entertainment and the discussions over that issue, controversy that can still be considered a current topic.

Miller tackles this matter when he refers to ‘...The key public obsession with television-what does it *do* to you?’ (Miller, 2002, p. 3) and underpins its importance in the following assessment he makes in this sense, a statement that seems to be generally accepted. This prestigious scholar considers audiences the centre of discussions and research:

Academic, commercial, and regulatory approaches to television focus most expansively and expensively on audiences as citizens and consumers. Audiences tend to characterize discussions about TV, far more than its technology, law or even content. (Miller, 2010, p. 112)

In fact, if we analyse the literature on television studies we can find a lot of comments that, in one way or another, reinforce this statement, that is to say, the importance and amount of research related to audiences. Most of the studies developed within this field during this century emphasise this fact. I have selected Miller’s reply to Hartley and Ang’s comments on that, though, as their statements show that they already developed interesting research around this matter during the last years of last century, drawing the same conclusion (Miller, 2010, p. 111):

Hartley suggests that “the energy with which audiences are pursued in academic and industry research” is “larger and more powerful than the quest for mere data”, because it seeks “knowledge of the *species*” (1992: 84; also see Ang 1991): Effects and rating research traverses the industry, the state, and criticism.

In relation to this issue, scholars not only point out the importance and amount of audience centred research, they also reflect on the social influence of television. These paragraphs that I have selected from some of the work conducted by Lewis and Grindstaff are just some examples of this.

In fact, quite recently, Laura Grindstaff (2014) offers a good outline of the development that has taken place within the studies on television audiences. She explains the different approaches and steps with regard to this issue that have been taken from the early years until present times. This author starts mentioning the central place that television has always occupied in American domestic and national culture, she also notes the great amount of time and energy that has been devoted to studying television audiences, and goes on to comment that:

...the bodies of work focused on television audiences, broadly conceived, stretch wide and deep. They encompass different theoretical traditions, countless methodological choices and competencies, varied national and international industrial systems, local and global interdependencies, and different cultural/intellectual priorities. (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 339)

Justin Lewis (2005) also refers to the great amount of research developed in this field, and highlights the importance of that. He reflects in the same direction previously noted when he states that these studies show the social influence of television, but, furthermore, Lewis underscores the fact that the great amount of research conducted in this field helps to define the parameters within those effects, that influence what takes place:

Indeed, it is because different audiences can do different things at different times in response to different kinds of television that many have chosen to read the now voluminous body of research on the subject as inconclusive. This is, I would argue, both a lazy and misleading conclusion. On the contrary, the

research suggests that we can be more precise than ever about the social impact of television. In sum, we can say that television does influence public opinion in specific ways and with certain limits. (Lewis, 2005, p. 439)

In addition, Grindstaff (2014) comments on the different reasons that explain the interest in researching on television audiences, pointing out that the influence and social effects of television as well as the discussions and debates over this issue are central matters of interest. This scholar refers to various reasons that underlie this curiosity, as well as this permanent discussion, and offers various arguments that support her statements:

Historically, scholarly interest in the social role and impact of television has been driven by the medium's pervasiveness, as well as its ability to bring the outside world into the home and thereby connect disparate individuals to one another in virtual space via notions of 'the audience'. The fact that millions of people watched the same program simultaneously formed the basis for caring and theorizing about television. As Leo Bogart wrote in 1956, 'with no other form of impersonal communication has the sharing of experience been possible on so universal a scale and to so intense a degree as with television' (p. 2). In the early years as today, television –and mass media more generally- prompted considerable debate about the changing nature of society, the public sphere and the public good. (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 340)

With respect to Laura Grindstaff's work on this matter it is interesting to note that she examines three different empirical approaches to researching audiences. The first is industrial, in which the audience is a commodity and the main focus is on measurement and ratings. The second reflects a body of academic work that is generally known as 'reception studies', in which viewers actively interpret television texts under specific socio-cultural conditions; this would include ethnographic approaches. The third is the scholarly study of fans and fandoms, which, as Grindstaff points out, could be subsumed under reception and/or ethnographic analysis. It is also interesting the fact

that the framework that this scholar takes for the study on audiences is not so much chronological but related to the ‘level of activity’ of television viewers, that is to say, linked to the assumed passivity *versus* activity of people when watching television.

1.3.2. Evolution.

Different approaches and theories have been developed during these last decades in relation to audience research and studies, from and after the first analysis conducted by the sociologists of the Frankfurt School. These theories are closely related to the issue posited along this work, that is to say the negativity towards television due to the focus on its detrimental effects on the audience, and the more positive considerations towards this medium regarding various theories developed in recent years. In fact, and due to that, I have already included some references to these theories in previous sections, where I have focused on that controversy between positive and negative considerations towards television.

In this chapter I will complete the main points previously outlined and I’ll summarise the information related to the core theories involved in this branch of research. When doing so, I shall link them with the concepts of passive and active audience, as this classification shows to be a core matter when analysing the different theories that have been developed in this field. Beyond that, these different considerations can also be associated with the power conferred on television and its effects, and to the positive or negative approaches towards this communication and entertainment medium, which are in fact two key concepts regarding the theoretical framework of my research work.

Most scholars on audience studies take this dichotomy as a key element. Laura Grindstaff also points out this matter, and takes into account those concepts in relation to audience studies, as, in fact, after describing the different approaches to audience research she links them with the ‘different assumptions about presumed passivity versus activity on the part of the viewers/users....’ (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 340).

On the other hand, the prestigious television researcher Toby Miller establishes three different stages in television studies (1.0, 2.0 and 3.0) and he connects them with the concepts of passive and active audiences too. According to Miller’s classification, ‘TV Studies 1.0’ is related to the concept of passive audience, while active audience considerations would be included in the second phase of television studies, that is, ‘TV Studies 2.0’. But, together with that, I would also like to stress other connections that Miller establishes in this classification, namely, the relation of that first stage, that he labels as ‘1.0’, not just with the concept of passive audience, but also with the consideration of television as an object of low culture and, therefore, consumed by illiterate viewers easily influenced. In the same line the second stage of television studies, ‘2.0’, would not only respond to a concept of active audience, as it would also entail a change in the agents’ power role, which would shift from the media to the public.

These new theories about television audiences imply a sharp turn, from an all-powerful television to an all-powerful audience, from what are considered passive illiterate audiences to super clever viewers that not only consciously decide what they want to watch but also have the power to influence the industry and programmers, to make them produce and broadcast the type of products, the audio-visual texts, that they prefer and, therefore, will indeed watch, consume (the so called ‘power of ratings’).

Therefore, I would say that the dichotomy between the concepts of passive and active audience can be extended to others: the difference between high and low culture; the so considered aesthetically cultivated and socially competent in contrast to the popular classes; the assumption of an all-powerful, highly influential television artefact - and consequently its owners, managers, producers and programmers - confronting the value and the power of the public, the television consumers, its viewers, its audience, and to a greater extent even the power of its loyal followers and fans.

All these antagonistic concepts and approaches underlie the object of discussion that I want to bring here, and that I pose as the core dichotomy that leads to the objective of this work, namely the positive and negative considerations about television, and more specifically television entertainment, its positive and negative effects, its influence and its real value.

I would therefore like to underscore various paragraphs that I have drawn from Toby Miller's work *Television Studies. The basics* (2010), as they very clearly pose these issues that I have just mentioned, that is to say:

- The importance of the concepts of passive and active audiences in television studies.
- The link of these concepts, when researching on television, with others also confronted, such as high and low culture, academics and intellectuals in opposition to popular classes, as well as the power of television versus the power of viewers.
- The relation of all those somehow confronted positions with the also opposite positive and negative impressions about television, as well as with

the different research approaches when analysing this medium, and more specifically the entertainment genre.

All these concepts and perspectives must be taken into account for the fulfilment of the objective of my research, as I intend to find out about the contributions of this television genre, and for doing so the study of audiences is certainly a key element. With that purpose I shall first offer a broad overview of the different theories and studies conducted in that field and related to the thesis I posit, to later on, in succeeding chapters, reduce the scope of analysis for their application to the case study I have chosen. Consequently, I consider these general, broadly accepted theories and approaches the starting point to tackle this first analysis, for which the above mentioned statements become crucial.

In the book *Television Studies* (2010), Miller links the different stages of that field of study to the statements, concepts and dichotomies that I have just mentioned:

Fractured by politics, nation, discipline, theory, and method, this dispersed field of knowledge [TV Studies] can be bifurcated as TV Studies 1.0 and TV Studies 2.0 –both of which are subject to the televisual sublime. Television Studies 1.0 derived from the spread of new media technologies over the past two centuries into the lives of urbanizing populations, and the policing questions that posed to both state and capital. What would be the effects of these developments, and how would they vary between those with a stake in maintaining society versus transforming it? By the early twentieth century, academic experts had decreed media audiences to be passive consumers, thanks to the mission of literary criticism (distinguishing the aesthetically cultivated from others) and the psy-function (distinguishing the socially competent from others). Decades of social science have emphasizes audience reaction to audiovisual entertainment: where they came from, how many there were, and what they did as a consequence of being present. (Miller, 2010, p. 25)

As said, the theories that lie beneath Miller's classification of TV Studies and the differences between the first two stages, linked to passivity or activity of viewers, are broadly accepted by media and television scholars. Nonetheless, what I really want to highlight from Miller's statements is the way he links them with the other concepts that I have mentioned before, such as the distinction between both the 'aesthetically cultivated' and the 'socially competent' when compared with the others. Concepts and connections that, in my opinion, are very well compiled and summarised both in relation to the first stage (Television 1.0), whose arguments are described in the text above, as well as when referring to further research (Television 2.0), that Miller mentions in the next paragraph:

For Television Studies 2.0, by contrast, TV represents the apex of modernity, the first moment in history when central political and commercial organs and agendas became receptive to the popular classes. This perspective has offered a way in to research that reverses Television Studies 1.0's faith in the all-powerful agency of the apparatus. For, in TV Studies 2.0, the all-powerful agent is the television audience, not the industry. TV Studies 2.0 claims that the public is so clever and able that it makes its own meanings, outwitting institutions of the state, academia, and capitalism that seek to measure and control it. (Miller, 2010, p. 27)

Having said that, these two concepts, *passive and active audience*, will be the main axis that will structure and define this section on which I want to gather and sketch out the different analyses, theories and reflections related to them.

1.3.3. Passive audience: The Effects Theory.

The study of the effects of the media, and consequently of television, is one of the first branch of research among mass communication studies. In previous sections I have already offered information that shows the great amount of literature that can be

found devoted to this field of research. Scholar Anna McCarthy defines that concept in her article 'Media Effects', included in Miller's compilation *Television Studies* (2002, p. 74):

As a label, the term *media effects* commonly refers to a body of a social scientific research on the influence of media images –particularly images of violence or of sexual activity- upon the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of audiences, usually children. Effects research comprises a diverse set of methodologies and assumptions about audience activity and policy goals, but the field is most widely known for this concern with the psychological and social impact of explicit and/or controversial material.

The so called '*effects tradition*' studies focus on the influence that television has upon viewers and it is mainly related to the concept of passive audience. The Frankfurt School started this trend of research in the United States, from the late 1930s and mainly during the 1950s, and developed *The Effects Theory*, which can be considered the main paradigm of this approach. As we have already mentioned, this theory stresses the negative effects of television on the audience, on their behaviour and attitude, considering them as a mass of passive viewers easily influenced and manipulated by this medium.

Lewis (2002) refers to this approach and the two main concepts above mentioned when researching mass communication. In his academic article 'Mass Communication Studies' this author remarks on the importance of television as a mass media: 'The development of television in the late 1940s and 50s created a mass medium *par excellence*, quickly becoming –and remaining- the most ubiquitous cultural industry' (p. 4). This author mentions the '*effects tradition*' developed by the scholars of the Frankfurt School as part of the Marxist critiques of television, noting the arguments of these researchers with regard to the negative influence of this medium on the

audience who, as he points out, 'were often understood in precisely the terms Raymond Williams described, as intellectually passive and easily manipulated.' (Lewis, 2002, p. 5)

In that text Lewis outlines the main points developed by the theorists of the Frankfurt School. These academics, that took refuge in the United States at the 1930s, fostered a new path of research at the University of Columbia. In the television field, their main work took place in the 1950s and onwards, and it focused on the negative effects of this communication medium on a passive audience and highlighted the fears related to the change on moral and value systems as well as on the influence of violence in society.

In the 1940s and 50s, as television began to emerge as a dominant medium, mass communications research began to establish itself in the United States, and researches at Columbia developed what came to be known as the media 'effects' tradition (see p. 11, Miller 2002). The effects approach was informed by a concern that the growth of mass media implied increasingly centralised control – whether from government or from private corporate media- over culture and information. (...) In particular, mass media were linked with changes in moral value systems, and anxiety that has often been articulated around one of its potentially most extreme manifestations- the idea that images of violence in the mass media would lead to violent behaviour. This fear was particularly pronounced in relation to television, which combined an almost universal reach with the power of the moving image. (Lewis, 2002, p. 5)

Among the scholars who have researched on these topics, the work of scholar Douglas Kellner is also worth mentioning. In his essay 'Television and The Frankfurt School' (2002), Kellner notes that Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas and other major Frankfurt School theorists mention television in their development of a critical theory of society, and he refers to the work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972), written by two of its scholars, Horkheimer and Adorno, to define the approach of these theorists:

Following the model of critique of mass culture in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a Frankfurt School approach to television would analyse television within the dominant system of cultural production and reception, situating the medium within its institutional and political framework. It would combine study of text and audience with ideology critique and a contextualising analysis of how television texts and audiences are situated within specific social relations and institutions. The approach combines Marxian critique of political economy with ideology critique, textual analysis and psychoanalytically inspired depth-approaches to audiences and effects. (Kellner, 2002, p. 19)

Besides that, T.W. Adorno's article 'How to Look at Television' (1991), which is considered by Kellner as 'a striking example of a classic Frankfurt School analysis' (Kellner, 2005, p. 32), witnesses the interest of the scholars of the Frankfurt School to study the effects of television on the audience, on the viewer's personality, taking into account social and psychological factors, beyond other approaches from previous researches. Kellner also highlights this fact, as he points out that 'Adorno opens his article by stressing the importance of undertaking an examination of the effects of television upon viewers...' (Kellner, 2002, p. 19), and he goes on quoting Adorno's words (Kellner, 2002, p. 20):

The effect of television cannot be adequately expressed in terms of success or failure, likes or dislikes, approval or disapproval. Rather, an attempt should be made, with the aid of depth-psychological categories and previous knowledge of mass media, to crystallize a number of theoretical concepts by which the potential effect of television –its impact upon various layers of the spectator's personality- could be studied. It seems timely to investigate systematically socio-psychological stimuli typical of televised material both on a descriptive and psychodynamic level, to analyze their presuppositions as well as their total pattern, and to evaluate the effect they are likely to produce. (Adorno, 1991, p. 136)

Kellner emphasises this text again in his article 'Critical Perspectives on Television from the Frankfurt School to Postmodernism' (Kellner, 2005), and other

authors also highlight this paragraph (e.g. Miller 2010, Alvarado et al., 2014) when referring to the Frankfurt School and the studies of effects developed by these scholars.

Hence, it can be said that those two paragraphs, referring to the analysis of Habermas and Adorno, summarise the intentions, the aims, of Frankfurt School's academics, showing both their interest and perspective over the study of television effects. In fact, we can assert that those statements and the two articles mentioned ('Dialectic of Enlightenment' and 'How to Look at Television') are considered as fundamental for the early research of the effects theory developed by the scholars of the Frankfurt School.

In relation to these academics and their engagement with the concepts of 'television's negative effects' and 'passive audience' I would also point out Kellner's reply to Herbert Marcuse's work *Eros and Civilization* (1955) and his view of television as 'part of an apparatus of manipulation and societal domination' (Kellner, 2002, p. 19). These words drawn from it summarise very well the most important concepts that the effects theory encompasses (Kellner, 2002, p. 19):

The individual does not really know what is going on; the overpowering machine of entertainment unites him with the others in a state of anaesthesia from which all detrimental ideas tend to be excluded' (Marcuse, 1955, p. 104).

Likewise, according to Kellner's comments, other authors also refer to The Frankfurt School and their 'effects theory', in the same terms pointed out above, such as Herbert Schiller, George Gerbner, Dallas Smythe and C. Wright Mills (Kellner, 2002, p. 20). Kellner mentions his text *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity* in this regard (Kellner, 1989, p. 134) and mentions Todd Gitlin's paper 'Sixteen Notes on Television' (1972), which, as Kellner notes, 'contained a critique of television as manipulation with

resonances to the Frankfurt School' (Kellner, 2002, p. 20). He also refers to Adorno's already classic text, *The Culture Industry* (1991), and the anthology *Mass Culture* by Rosenberg and White (1957), among the texts and authors that research about television influenced by the Frankfurt School approach (Kellner, 2002, p. 19-20).

Actually, Kellner has written on this matter in various books and articles (cf. Kellner, 1995, 1997, 1989, 2002, 2005) where he has also recommended further readings about this topic, mentioning various authors and texts, among them: Adorno (1991), Arato and Gebhardt (1982), Bronner and Kellner (1989), Jay (1973), Steinert (2003) and Wiggershaus (1994). (See Kellner 2002, 2005).

Muriel Cantor, in her now-classic essay 'Audience Control' (1980) also stresses this fact when referring to the critical approach of the Frankfurt School. In that work, Cantor notes that Marxist critiques of television 'contained implicit assumptions of audiences as powerless and manipulable –either by technology or capitalist ideology or both. Television had negative 'effects' on society because audience response was said to be determined in large measure by the industrial nature of the medium.' (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 341)

These words summarise indeed the assumptions and main points of this theory, as well as the core matters of this approach, namely the effects study tradition, started by the Frankfurt School and expressed in their so called 'effects theory'. As I have already mentioned and argued, this theory is still quite important as part of the branch of studies of media and television effects and it has a great influence concerning the assumption of television as a good or bad artifact, and medium.

Furthermore, as pointed in previous sections, this perspective remains popular as the driving force behind '*moral panics*' and theories of fear, closely related to the

negative effects of television on the audience. (cf. Lewis, 2002; Miller, 2002; Newcomb, 2005; Wasko, 2005; Clark, Jones, Malyszko and Wharton, 2007; Perse 2001/2008; Miller, 2010; Bignell, 2013; Alvarado et al, 2014; Perse & Lambe, 2017 ...)

1.3.3.1. The Domestic Effects Model (DEM) and the Global Effects Model (GEM).

In relation to television effects, I would like to point out the difference mentioned by Miller between the *domestic* effects model (DEM) and the *global* effects model (GEM). (2010, p. 116). We have previously noted that Miller classifies television studies in three main groups that he labels as ‘TV studies 1.0’, ‘TV Studies 2.0’ and ‘TV studies 3.0’. According to this categorisation and with respect to the study of the effects of television, ‘TV Studies 1.0’ would be the first stage, and would respond to the worries about what the effects of this new artefact would be. At this time media audiences were decreed as passive consumers by academic experts and television was considered as an ‘all-powerful’ media which dominates everyday life. It is in this period when moral panics emerge. (Miller, 2010, pp. 25-26)

Focusing on that first stage of television studies (TV Studies 1.0) those two models of effects that Miller mentions (DEM and GEM) assume that television has effects on people, that this medium does things to them. Therefore, they would both respond to the effects model, and the difference between them would be established by the scope of influence they refer to. In the first case (DEM) the emphasis is put on interpersonal relations, on the effects on personal behaviours and attitudes, the second model would refer to the influence of television, of media, on national cultures:

Two accounts of the audience are dominant in TV Studies 1.0, public policy, and social activism. In their different ways, each is an effects model, in that they

assume the media *do* things *to* people, with the citizen understood as an audience member at risk of abjuring either interpersonal responsibility or national culture: the *domestic* effects model (or DEM) and the *global* effects model (or GEM). (Miller 2010, p. 116)

Both models respond in fact to a concept of passive audience, to a consideration of viewers as a mass negatively influenced by television. As Miller explains, the studies on the *Domestic Effect Model* initially started in the United States and were assumed internationally after that. That approach witnesses worries about education and civic order as it considers television as a medium that controls and perverts viewers. It is mostly centred in psychological influence and would be conducted mainly within that field of study:

The DEM is dominant in the US and exported around the world. It is typically applied without consideration of place or time, and is nestled within the psy-function (see Comstock and Scharrer 1999; Cooper 1996; Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behaviour 1971). The DEM offers analysis and critique of education and civic order. It views television as a force that can either direct or pervert the citizen-consumer. Entering young minds hypodermically, TV both enables and imperils learning. It may even drive the citizen to violence through aggressive and misogynistic images and narratives.' (Miller, 2010, p. 116)

The *General Effects Model*, on the other hand, emphasises the cultural influence of media and, in contrast to the previously mentioned DEM, this one would centre on politics. It can be found associated to discourses of cultural imperialism, cultural heritage and globalisation issues among others. As Miller notes, the studies of Global Effects have been mainly developed outside the USA:

The GEM, primarily utilized in non-US discourse, is spatial and historical rather than psychological. Whereas the DEM focuses on the cognition and emotion of individual human subjects via observation and experimentation, the GEM looks to the customs and patriotic feelings exhibited by collective human subjects, the

grout of national culture. In place of psychology, the GME is concerned with politics. (Miller, 2010, p. 118)

Therefore, the conclusions drawn when studying the effects by these two perspectives emphasise different aspects of the influence of this artefact. While the model that studies the 'domestic effects' focuses on the personal, individual influence, when analysing the 'global effects' the impact of television and its broader cultural influence become essential. It can also be said that the GEM favors 'creativity, not consumerism', in the words of UNESCO's 'Screens Without Frontiers' initiative (Tricot, 2000).

Television does not make you a well-educated or ill-educated person, a wild or self-controlled one. Rather, it makes you a knowledgeable and loyal national subject, or a *naïf* who is ignorant of local tradition and history. Cultural belonging, not psychic wholeness, is the touchstone of the global effects model. (Miller, 2010, p. 118)

The methods for assessing that influence, the questions asked, are also different in both models, likewise, the perspective when approaching the objects of study is not the same either. In the case of the GEM special attention is paid to those genres that are considered fundamental for nation-building, namely drama, news, sports and current affairs, and the fields of influence that are taken into account also differ from the Domestic Effects Model, covering a broader scope of research when studying the effects of television and media.

Instead of measuring responses electronically or behaviourally, as its domestic counterpart does, the GEM interrogates the geopolitical origin of TV texts, and the themes and styles they embody, with particular attention to the putatively nation-building genres of drama, news, sport and current affairs. (...) This model is found in the discourses of cultural imperialism, everyday talk, broadcast and telecommunications policy, unions, international organizations, newspapers, heritage, cultural diplomacy, and post-industrial service-sector planning, as per

the NWICO and globalization issues (see Schiller 1976; Beltrán and Fox 1980; Dorfman and Matherlat 2000). (Miller, 2010, p. 118)

1.3.4. Active audience: Reception Studies.

In opposition to the approach mentioned in these previous passages the theories of active audience suggest that television is far less influential than stated by the *effects theory*, due to the active role of the audience. These theories were developed during the period of TV Studies that Miller labels as 2.0. At this stage, the ‘all-powerful’ agent is the television audience, not the industry’ (Miller, 2010, p. 27).

According to the approaches related to this concept, viewers do watch television and decode its texts (as well as react to them), responding to different reasons and factors. Audience members are, therefore, active both when choosing the programmes they want to, and indeed watch, as well as in the ways they read those television texts and decode their messages, for it is assumed that television texts, its images and sounds, are multilayered and polysemic. These theories note that various external and internal factors (both social and psychological) influence the audience , their choice of different content, the way they experience this medium, the meanings they draw out of it and, therefore, determine the real effects that television has on the public and on each one of its viewers.

All these facts would, hence, diminish the concept of ‘all powerful’ television that has mostly negative effects on its viewers, and on society. Together with that, the consideration of the audience as a passive homogeneous mass negatively influenced by this communication and entertainment medium would be altered. The concept of active

audience, instead, appears as crucial in this shift. I would also like to highlight the fact that this perspective takes into account the complexity of television and its programmes as well as the importance of the social, cultural context of both television production and reception.

In this following paragraph Jonathan Bignell refers to this alternative perspective and notes the main consequences of considering audiences as active agents. He points out that the role of viewers is valued and, together with that, the importance of the influence of the social and cultural environment is also born in mind.

Audiences can be regarded as distant and unknowable, as objects rather than subjects or agents who act on their own initiative. The alternative view to this is that television audiences have an active agency and are not simply passive objects positioned by television texts so that they lap up a single “preferred reading”. By considering audiences as active, it is possible to take account of the complex social and cultural contexts in which television viewing takes place, and in which television programmes are made.’ (...) ‘From this ‘active audience’ perspective, audiences are not regarded as masses, crowds or mobs whose behaviour appears from the outside to be irrational and uncontrollable.’ (Bignell, 2013, p. 260, 261)

Bob Mullan’s arguments clarify and reinforce this point when he mentions that the various internal and external factors, the personal and social circumstances, influence the audience and their making of meaning. (Bignell, 2013, p. 260):

Viewers often, but not always, engage in meaning-making: they do not always sit there empty-minded awaiting edification. When a viewer watches television they do not leave their histories at the living-room: neither do they abandon their cultural, class, racial, economic or sexual identities, nor do they forget their media knowledge of comparable programmes, information in newspapers, and other aspects of the infrastructure of television viewing. (Mullan, 1997, p. 18)

1.3.4.1. Reception Studies: outline and main concepts.

According to Grindstaff's analysis, the various theories related to the concept of active audience are considered part of the general field of 'reception studies'. This approach would be in contrast with the study of television's effects in its viewers. Paraphrasing James Halloran (1970), the question in reception studies is not what media does to people but what people do to the media. (cf. Rubin & Perse, 1987; Berger 1998a, 1998b; Ruggiero, 2000; Jensen 2002; Miller 2002, 2003; Perse 2001/2008; Rubin 2009; Miller 2010; Bignell, 2013; Miller 2014; Alvarado et al., 2014; Grindstaff, 2014; Berger, 2016; Perse & Lambe, 2017 ...).

In this following paragraph Grindstaff details the different theories and models that can be included among reception studies, and reinforces the concept of active audiences associated to this branch of research.

Reception theory, reader-response theory, the text-reader model, ethnographic studies of audiences, and even 'uses and gratifications' research-all are interventions in the reception studies tradition that, in different ways and to varying degrees, move us away from an understanding of 'the audience' as an effect of the text or production process toward the notion of audiences as active makers of meaning. (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 345)

Scholar Klaus Bruhn Jensen (1991/2002), in his academic article: 'Media Audiences. Reception Analysis: mass communication as the social production of meaning' points out the main features of reception studies, in opposition to the previous tradition in audience studies and media effects. Jensen highlights the fact that it combines both audience and content analysis: 'One of the main premises of reception analysis has been that audience research, in order to construct a valid account of the reception, uses, and impact of media, must become audience-cum-content analysis.' (Jensen, 2002, p. 136)

He notes that, previously, analysis of textual content had been conducted from the field of humanities and, on the other hand, social sciences had focused on the cognitive and attitudinal effects of that content on the audience. Jensen claims the importance of reception studies, as this discipline combines both approaches, for it assumes that effects are closely related to meanings. One of the contributions of this field for the study of audiences is precisely that both content analysis and social aspects are taken into account when researching them.

...[Although] the attention given by the humanities to the interpretation of textual contents, and by the social sciences to the cognitive and behavioural impact of contents, traditionally the two research enterprises have been in practice been segregated. By contrast, reception analysis submits that texts and their recipients are complementary elements of one area of inquiry which thus addresses both the discursive and the social aspects of communication. In two words, reception analysis assumes that there can be no “effect” without “meaning”. (...) “The rise of reception analysis is characterized in the context of other forms of audience research, and some preliminary findings regarding specific decodings, of particular genres of communication and by particular audience groups are reported.” (Jensen, 2002, p. 135, 136)

This scholar refers to the various research traditions that have been rearticulated by reception analysis, among them the so-called dominant paradigm (Gitlin, 1978) of *social science* research, that is to say, *the effects theory*, as quantitative evidence suggested rather limited effects of media despite their manifest social significance (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1995; Klapper, 1960). Klaus Bruhn Jensen (2002) points out the new perspective developed and the different responses obtained due to the reconstruction of audience studies that implied the new branch, namely reception studies. This scholar is, in fact, focusing on what I consider a core concept, which is central in reception studies, that is to say the social production of meaning:

In response to the social-scientific tradition, reception analysis notes that any study of media experience and impact, whether quantitative or qualitative, must be based in a theory of representation, genre and discourse that goes beyond the operationalization of semantic categories and scales. In response to humanistic textual studies, reception analysis suggests that both the audiences and contexts of mass communication need to be examined as socially specific, empirical objects of analysis. The common denominator for the dual social and discursive perspective on communication, then, becomes the social production of meaning. (Jensen, 2002, p. 137)

Other important factors associated to reception studies are outlined in this article. Among them, I will below sketch out some of the most relevant features, contributions and research bodies included in this field of study, both in relation to the perspective it implies, as well as to the areas of research developed, and the conclusions drawn from scholars that studied audiences following this framework.

- The importance of empirical research, and the studies developed attempting to capture the specific experimental qualities of particular media, such as television.
- The *polysemy* of media discourses and therefore the different *interpretative repertoires* due to cognitive, affective and social factors.
- The body of research that shifted the focus from ideology in a political sense to the question of pleasure.
- The studies that examined variations in reception to the ethnic, cultural and subcultural context of audiences (e.g. Liebes and Katz, 1990; Lull, 1988), identifying mass communication, and consequently television, as an important resource within other cultural practices.
- The relevance of taking into account the social production of meaning and the importance of combining both content analysis and social sciences perspectives.

1.3.4.2. Reception Studies: theories.

Among the different approaches included as part of the reception studies most researchers stress the importance of the *encoding/decoding* and the *uses and gratifications* theories. I also consider them quite relevant for the analysis of television entertainment, especially from a positive perspective, and, therefore for the theoretical framework of this research work. Actually, I would say that these theories not only offer a more positive position towards television, further than that, they play a core role when analysing television entertainment from different angles. As a matter of fact, entertainment (enjoyment, joy ...) is pinpointed as one of the most common ‘uses and gratifications’ related to television consumption, but, besides that, it is also accepted that television entertainment also responds to other uses and gratifications that viewers seek and obtain from television watching, and also outlined by the theorists of this approach.

Beyond that, it is broadly accepted that most television entertainment programmes, ‘texts’, are multilayered and polysemic and, consequently, it is assumed that different viewers may get different meanings from the same television programme, while various factors are related to this process. In fact, the cultural context and background are also accepted as having a great influence in the different reactions and different ‘readings’ that viewers do regarding the same television text, programme. These assumptions engage with the main features of the framework outlined by the *encoding/decoding* model. Nonetheless, I would also like to stress the importance of these arguments in relation to my research work, as they introduce a new element when analysing the relationship between television programmes and their viewers, namely the importance that the cultural aspects (context, experience, background) have in this process.

In summary, the concept of active audience and more precisely these two theories just mentioned offer an approach towards television entertainment that allows a consideration of that genre in more positive terms. I would say that the work developed within the framework outlined by these two models permits, in fact, to explore other research paths beyond those mostly centred in the negative effects of television, to focus on the also existing positive effects, and contributions of this communication and entertainment medium to its viewers and also, and ultimately, to society.

Having said that, I will now outline the most important concepts and definitions associated to these two theories, including different quotations from television researchers that summarise the most significant information and reflections in this respect.

1.3.4.2.1. The Encoding/Decoding Model.

The *encoding/decoding theory* is mainly based on the work started by the sociologist Stuart Hall and other scholars from the School of Birmingham, as part of the Cultural Studies developed at that British university, starting at the 1980s. In fact, the title of the article 'Encoding/Decoding' (1980) written by this academic at that time, gave name to this theory. It can be said that this text and this scholar established the basis of this model, which was then developed together with others researchers. The study and analysis of audiences of certain programmes that Morley (1980), Hobson (1982) and Ang (1985) carried out at that time added important contributions to the model.

Together with them, the work developed by the Italian scholar Umberto Eco must be taken into consideration regarding the first steps of the *encoding/decoding*

model. In fact the prestigious television researcher, Toby Miller, already points out that this theory resulted from the previous analysis of both Umberto Eco and Harold Garfinkel. (Miller, 2002, p. 1):

Consider the emergence of encoding/decoding as a model of producer-audience relations mediated through TV content. It arose from Umberto Eco's 1956 consultancy for the Italian broadcaster RAI (Eco, 1972), and Harold Garfinkel's 1967 critique of the 'cultural dope' paradigm that assumed audiences lacked and active role in making meaning from the programmes they were offered (Garfinkel, 1992)'.

This text by Toby Miller (2010) also mentions the importance of Umberto Eco's work in relation to the *encoding/decoding* model, which started from criticisms to the previous research model based on concepts of passive audience. Eco can be considered in fact the forefather of this theory, whose conclusions, according to Miller's notes, were the starting point for further research and theories developed by other scholars (Miller, 2010, p. 123):

Such critiques have generated an entire paradigm of research. Marshall McLuhan declared television to be a "cool" medium, because is left so much up to the viewer to sort out (1974: 31). Umberto Eco's mid-1960s development of a notion of encoding-decoding open texts, and aberrant reading –developed as a consultancy on audiences for Italian public broadcasting- was crucial (Eco 1972). Eco looked at the ways that meanings were put into programs by producers and extracted from programs by viewers, and the differences between these protocols. His insights were picked up by Frank Parkin (1971) then Stuart Hall (1980), David Morley (1992), and Ien Ang (1982) on the left, and Elihu Katz (1990) on the right.

The main argument of the *encoding/decoding* approach is that media messages can be interpreted in a range of possible ways, depending on the cultural background and experience of the receiver, as academic Annette Hill points out:

More fruitful for new reception studies was Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, which proposed a typology of viewers' interpretation of television texts and how these relate to programme-makers' media messages. At a time when ideas about reception were being debated, not only within communication studies but also in literary and film studies, Hall's working notes on a typology of production and reception 'meaning-systems' were influential.' (Hill, 2002, p. 64)

Broadly, these interpretations can be categorised as *dominant/preferred*, *negotiated or oppositional/resistant*. Umberto Eco added a fourth – the *aberrant decoding*. He also distinguished between open and closed texts, the latter being those that are encoded to encourage a particular interpretation (cf. Miller, 2010; Clark et al., 2011; Bignell, 2013; Grindstaff, 2014).

I have already mentioned that the work of David Morley was very significant for the development of the *encoding/decoding* model at those first years, and I would like to stress some of the conclusions drawn from his early work, the analysis about the current affairs magazine programme, *Nationwide*, broadcast in the 1970s in the UK on BBC1. It ran for 14 years (1969-1983), went on air each weekday following the early evening news, and included the regional opt-out programmes, thus it incorporated reports and features from the various regions. *Nationwide* used to combine political analysis and discussion with consumer affairs, light entertainment and sports reporting.

The research carried out by Morley was based on interviews about that programme with groups of viewers selected according to their social and economic background. The contributions of this early work of Morley's to the field of reception studies are widely acknowledged.

Klaus Bruhn Jensen (2002), mentions the theoretical and political implications of the reception analysis and, as many other academics, he points out the relevance of

Morley's investigations and its contributions. This academic opened a new path of research that went beyond those first analyses conducted either in the field of humanities, which centred on textual analysis leaving aside its cultural uses, or by sociology critics, who focused on the powerful and negative subconscious effects of media. Jensen comments on that in this paragraph (Jensen, 2002, p. 136):

It is commonly acknowledge that the pathbreaking work of Dave Morley (1980), while emerging from the British cultural studies tradition, summed up a long prehistory that had pitted two conceptions of communication against each other. The first broadly conceived school is associated with the logos tradition of the *humanities*, and has approached *texts* as the locus of meaning to be extracted by (more or less) competent readers through a hermeneutic act. (...) work in this tradition has tended to focus its analysis around the text itself rather than its cultural uses. Most important, the tradition as applied to mass media has implied a view of media effects as acting directly and powerfully on audiences. The strong version of this position may be found in the cultural criticism of the Frankfurt School (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1977).

As Jensen (2002, p. 137) also notes, Morley's conclusion would align with those recent trends at the time, which started rejecting the transmission model of that early scholarship on effects. Encountering that approach, and due to quantitative analysis that showed evidence of more limited effects, these academics developed theories highlighting the consideration of audience as active viewers. Hence, these scholars showed interest in researching into the relationship between television and its viewers in both directions, that is to say, focusing not only on the effects of television on the audience but also raising questions about what individual users do with the media rather than vice versa (Blumler and Katz, 1974; Rosengren et al., 1985).

In that respect, Morley added new factors to bear in mind when studying the relationship between television and its audience. The importance of taking into account both the social and cultural aspects as well as others such as pleasure, associated to the

decoding of texts and their making of meaning were some of the conclusion drawn by Morley due to this research work. These two factors are seen as fundamental steps in the study of television audiences and are considered indeed relevant when analysing the influence, the effects of television in viewers and the relationship between this medium and its audience which is, in fact, the main object of research of reception studies.

Consequently, I would like to put the emphasis on two main aspects of his work as already highlighted by Bignell (2013, pp. 263, 264) when referring to it, as he explains that on the one hand Morley's conclusions pointed out the centrality of the cultural knowledge, background and experiences of viewers when watching and 'decoding' the messages of a programme, and on the other, he also concluded that feelings as pleasure and frustration were closely involved in the reactions of viewers as much as social and political issues.

In fact Morley (1992) acknowledges that individual differences in interpretation do exist, but he stresses the importance of subcultural socio-economic differences in shaping the ways in which people interpret their experiences with TV (via shared 'cultural codes'). Morley emphasises the social aspects of television viewing and the influence of these factors in the way television watchers interpret and experiment with television texts, programmes. But I find also relevant the fact that he also adds the concept of *pleasure* when referring to the viewers' television experience, as he notes the importance of this feeling when watching programmes.

Stuart Hall's comments are most significant with regard to the conclusions and contributions of Morley's work. Referring to Morley's BFI Monograph, *The Nationwide Audience* (1980) and to the article included in *Culture, Media, Language* (Hall, Hobson, Lowe and Willis, 1980) entitled 'Texts, Readers, Subjects' (Morley,

1980b), as well as to the book *Family Television. Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (Morley, 1986), whose introduction Stuart Hall writes, this academic emphasises various core aspects of the line of research undertaken by David Morley. These aspects are presented as relevant for the development of the *encoding/decoding* theory that Stuart Hall in fact started.

This body of work helped to bring about the long-overdue demise of old-style audience surveys, with their monolithic conception of “the viewer” and simple-minded notion of the message, meaning and influence, which for so long dominated media studies. It helped to inaugurate a new set of interests in a more active conception of the audience and of the codes and competences involved in establishing variant readings. This approach was differentiated from other work on “texts” (from which it nevertheless learned a good deal) by its persistent attention to the social dimensions of viewing and interpretation, alongside textual aspects. (Hall, 1986, p. v)

Therefore, Morley’s work stresses the importance of the social context, background and cultural codes in the process of watching television and decoding the messages; he focused on the social aspects of television viewing, and reflected on the social meaning of television.

Television viewing may be a “privatised” form of activity, by comparison with cinema-going for example, but it is still largely conducted within, rather than outside of, social relations - in this case the social relations of the family or household. (Morley, 1986, p. 2)

Thus, we can assert that these Morley’s conclusions added new interesting parameters when studying audience behaviour and reaction towards television programmes, as well as when analysing the effects that this medium has on its viewers and in society. Bignell also points out these aspects when he notes that:

The conclusion that Morley drew from this was that audience research should pay more attention to the knowledge and experience that viewers brought with

them to watching television. This knowledge and experience are termed the viewer's 'cultural competence' or 'cultural capital'. On the basis of what viewers already know and understand, they have reactions to television that are as much to do with pleasure and frustration as they are to do with the issues of social and political position that Morley had focused on. Bignell (2013, p. 263)

Stuart Hall's (1986) statements in the introduction of Morley's work *Family Television. Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (1986) also emphasise both the active and social processes involved in watching television:

Television viewing, the choices which shape it and the many social uses to which we put it, now turn to be irrevocably active and social processes. People don't passively absorb subliminal "inputs" from the screen. They discursively "make sense" of or produce "readings" of what they see. Moreover, the "sense" they make is related to a pattern of choices about what and when to view which is constructed within a set of relationships constituted by the domestic and familial settings in which it is taking place. The "rational consumer in a free and perfect market" so beloved of advertisers, audience research departments and rational-choice economist alike, is a myth. (Hall, 1986, p. vi)

In summary, the *encoding/decoding theory* started by Stuart Hall and the line of enquiry developed by Morley offered interesting findings when researching the audience and the ways television viewers make meanings of television programmes. This line of research gained importance and was followed by many television scholars.

At the beginning of this century, Dayan (2001) stresses the importance of the *encoding/decoding* model for the study of effects of television on the audience. This scholar mentions the fact that this theory concentrates on the nature of the relationship between text and reader and sketches out four assumptions that this framework of analysis implies (Dayan 2001, p. 749, as cited in Grindstaff, 2014, p. 346):

- 1) The meaning of a text is not pre-given but is produced in the context of reception;

- 2) The analyst does not have privileged knowledge of the text;
- 3) Readers/viewers are varied, as are contexts of reception;
- 4) Meanings, rather than the text itself or the industrial system that produces it, are the starting point for the study of 'effects'.

In 2005 Horace Newcomb, in his essay about the development of television studies, also points out the relevance of the *encoding/decoding* model for the study of television audiences and the effects of this medium on viewers. The link of this perspective with the British Cultural Studies and the concept of 'active audience', in opposition to the earlier studies of 'media effects' and 'passive audience' are also outlined in this passage. Newcomb explains that 'This focus on audience activity became a major focus of the emerging television studies arena' (2005, p. 21):

While "spectatorship" had become a major topic of film analysis, the domestic aspects of television viewing, combined with its role as advertising medium, repetitive or serialized narrative structures, and genres merged within the television schedule, led to serious reconsideration or revision of notions regarding actual viewers experiences. (...) British cultural studies had posited the study of audiences as a major topic within the study of mass media. Drawing on the model developed by Stuart Hall, analytical strategies had developed around notions of "encoding and decoding" television "texts". By examining the professional/institutional/production process at one pole of this model and the activities of audiences at the other, emphasis on the "actual" audience became a central component of study of television. The notion of the "active audience" became a central tenet in much of this work, often used to counter earlier studies of "media effects" and a range of "ethnographic" approaches, drawn from anthropology replaced or amplified the "survey" and "experimental" methods of social psychologists.

Jonathan Bignell also writes about this theory in his book on television studies (2013). He refers to the new ways which are explored in the 1980s to analyse the way audiences understand the codes of television programmes. Bignell emphasises the

prominence of Stuart Hall's *encoding/decoding* model in this regard, and summarises the main aspects related to this theory, as we can read in this paragraph:

[This work] argued that programmes contain dominant ideological discourses. These are encoded in programmes through the production practices of programme-makers that result in conventional forms of narrative structure, invitations to the audience to identify with particular characters and the telling stories that reflect taken-for granted social meaning. Hall was interested in the factors that might affect the encoding of these meanings and also how audiences might decode them. Since the images and sounds of television are polysemic, it can never be guaranteed that audiences will make sense of the programme in a way that is consistent with the meanings encoded in it. (Bignell 2013 p. 263)

In fact, it can be said that the importance of the *encoding/decoding theory* is noted by most researchers on television studies, as I have observed in the literature reviewed for this research work. Grindstaff (2014), also stresses this point in her essay 'From the Networks to New Media: Making Sense of Television Audiences' when, referring to this model, she asserts that 'Texts and anthologies devoted to the study of television and its audiences testify to the centrality of this perspective' , and she mentions the work of various authors (cf. Grindstaff, 2014, p. 346) such as Allen (1987), Fiske (1987), Seiter (1990), Morley (1992); Hay, Grossberg and Wartella (1996), Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), Newcomb (2000), Tulloch (2000), Gorton (2009), Briggs (2010), Seiter, Borchers, Kreutzner and Warth (2013), to back up her statement. I have chosen a passage from this scholar drawn from the above mentioned article to summarise the main contributions of the *encoding/decoding* model. (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 346):

The main contribution of the encoding/decoding approach was to provide theoretical justification for conceptualizing television audiences differently: not as an irrational mass manipulated by ideology on the one hand, and not as an assemblage of rational individuals strategically consuming media for identifiable

and measurable reasons on the other, but rather as complex, messy subjects embedded in cultures and communities.

However, in addition to these aspects I would also like to highlight the following of Grindstaff's statement, as it focuses on the relevance of the new paths of research that the initial work of scholars that developed this theory opened and framed at that time. Thus, Grindstaff remarks that this model of media reception (Hall, 1980) and the studies of television audiences conducted by the early researchers (Morley, 1980 and Hobson, 1982) 'were foundational in shaping growing scholarly interest in the qualitative, experimental dimensions of television reception and use (as well as engagement with other forms of popular culture)'. (Grindstaff 2014, p. 345)

1.3.4.2.2. The Uses and Gratifications Theory.

The *Theory of Uses and Gratifications* is one of the best known paradigms among the studies that focus on the 'active audience' and that diminish the concept of 'all-powerful television' and 'passive audience', both implied in the traditional approach to media effects developed by the School of Frankfurt. This influential tradition in media research presents the use of media in terms of the gratification of social or psychological needs of the individual (Blumler & Katz, 1974).

As scholar Justin Lewis points out, the *uses and gratifications* tradition stems from a liberal pluralist approach, and it was developed in the wake of the notion of 'minimal effects'. This theory refers to the way viewers use the media and the 'gratifications' that they take out of them. It works on what the audience seek and pursue as well as what they obtain from media consumption and consequently from

television watching. These paragraphs (Lewis, 2002; Ruddock, 2002) summarise some of the key concepts related to this theoretical approach to media research:

Uses and gratifications saw the influence of media in relation to the way it was used to gratify people's needs (such as the need to be entertained or informed) and in relation to people's motivations (such as their interest –or lack thereof- in politics). The concept of the 'mass audience' could no longer be regarded as a passive, undifferentiated entity, but as a series of active sub-groups using media for their own ends. This approach was, in both sociological and psychological terms, more sophisticated than some of the 'effects' studies that preceded it,... (Lewis, 2002, p. 6)

I have also selected these words from Andy Ruddock's article 'Uses and Gratifications Research', which reinforce some of the aspects of this model pointed by Lewis, but also add other elements that are equally relevant regarding this theory. I am referring to the importance of shifting from previous elite considerations and taking into account the everyday experience of television viewers.

... This witnesses a common tendency to equate uses and gratifications with the notion of the active audience that emerged from the encoding/decoding and resistive reading models (Morley 1992) (...) Uses and gratifications departed from the effects tradition in two ways. First, the new model was centred on audience perception. Elite questions and concerns about media power had guided empirical work in the 1930s and 40s (...). Hence researches had to come down from their dreaming spires to appreciate the media as everyday viewers, readers and listeners saw them (Katz et al., 1974) (...) At the same time, uses and gratifications was also built on a call for greater procedural rigour that drove its practitioners closer to positivist, quantitative methodologies. (Ruddock, 2002, p. 70)

Thomas E. Ruggiero, in his thorough article on the studies of uses and gratifications, 'Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century' (2000), mentions the change that this new model implied, compared to the previous research work on media

effects. This scholar refers both to the change of research perspective as well as to the shift when considering the role of the audience (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 6):

These studies and others conducted during this period reflected a shift from the traditional effects model of mass media research to a more functionalist perspective. Klapper (1963) called for a more functional analysis of U&G studies that would restore the audience member to “his rightful place in the dynamic, rather than leaving him in the passive, almost inert, role to which many older studies relegated him” (p. 527).”

Despite disagreements by communication scholars as to the precise roots of the *uses and gratifications* approach, the centrality of the work developed during the 1970s is broadly accepted (Ruggiero, 2000). Ruggiero comments on the main factors that define the importance of the work developed at that time, compared to previous studies. These elements would, in fact, be crucial to the list (and classifications) of the various needs and gratifications identified in this period by the main researchers of this model, that is to say, Denis Mc Quail, Jay Blumler and Joseph Brown (1972), as well as Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch and Hadassah Haas (1973).

Hence, these scholars took into account not only the uses and gratifications that media consumers, and consequently television viewers, seek, they were also interested in the gratifications they obtain, from and during that process. In addition to that, both psychological and social factors were taken into consideration for this identification and classification.

Until the 1970s, U&G research concentrated on gratifications sought, excluding outcomes, or gratifications obtained (Rayburn, 1996). During the 1970s, U&G researchers intently examined audience motivations and developed additional typologies of the uses people made of the media to gratify social and psychological needs. (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 6)

That work developed at the 1970s is, therefore, considered as fundamental when establishing the main basis of this theory and more precisely the two typologies developed by the above mentioned academics at the first years of that decade. I am referring to the typology of user motivation (McQuail, Blumler & Brown, 1972) and the classification that highlights the social and psychological functions of the mass media (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973).

In ‘The television audience: A revised perspective’ (1972), Denis Mc Quail, Jay Blumler and Joseph Brown suggested four main categories of uses and gratifications, for media use. According to these scholars the uses of media and, consequently, television, respond to the following main motivations: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. This classification is still considered as fundamental when studying the uses of television by its audience.

- i) Diversion: Use of the media as an escape from routines, daily problems and stresses of an individual’s life; for emotional release.
- ii) Personal relationships: Value of media products to acquire information for conversations, but also as a subject matter for talking and socializing as well as either substituting or using it for companionship; social utility.
- iii) Personal identity: seeking media to reinforce an individual’s values, attitudes, and beliefs. The use of the media to construct or reinforce a sense of self, and therefore, as personal reference, as a way to develop and understand one’s self, reality exploration and value reinforcement; related to individual psychology.
- iv) Surveillance: Media as information source, the use of them to learn about the world and one’s community as well as being informed about events and political affairs, mainly via the news, but also through other types of media texts, even fictional; the use of media as a way to gather information to inform choices and actions; media for seeking information to help an individual accomplish something.

On the other hand, in 1973 Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas analysed the large literature on the social and psychological functions of the mass media and identified and developed 35 needs of the individuals for using them, gathering them in five main categories. The main groups of needs they established are: cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative and tension released.

- i) Cognitive Needs: Acquiring information, knowledge and understanding. Use of the media to get information, knowledge and understanding.
- ii) Affective Needs: Emotion, pleasure, feelings. Media function as a way to strengthen aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experience.
- iii) Personal Integrative Needs: Credibility, stability, status. Using the media to reinforce credibility, confidence, stability and status.
- iv) Social Integrative Needs: Family and friends. Media as a mean to facilitate contact with family, friends and the world.
- v) Tension Release Needs. Escape and diversion. Media to release tension, or the use of it as a type of escapism.

These scholars also outlined various steps, sequences, in the investigation of uses and gratifications that, according to researcher Andy Ruddock (2002) are related to seven questions, drawn from the work of Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch *The Uses of Mass Communications* (1974, p. 20).

In *The Uses of Mass Communications* (1974), Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch define uses and gratifications as a sequential investigation involving seven questions. What, they ask, are (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure ... resulting in (6) need and gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones?. (Ruddock, 2002, p. 70)

The analysis conducted and the classification proposed by these academics at the beginning of the 1970s remain fundamental, and they are taken as bedrock for further typologies of needs and motivations listed by other researchers on *uses and gratifications*:

Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) studied viewers' exposure to public television and identified seven gratifications associated with it: relaxing, learning about things, communication utility, forgetting, passing time, companionship and entertainment.

Alain M. Rubin (1981, 1983) established the following nine initial viewing motivation categories and statements: relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal and escape (1981). He applied them in further analysis of viewing motivation and patterns and his findings revealed two television user types: (a) users for time consumption and entertainment; and (b) users for content or nonescapist, information seeking (1983).

We have already mentioned Denis McQuail's early work (1972) as fundamental when establishing the main uses and gratifications for using the media, in his work on mass communication theory of 1987, McQuail offers the following typology of common reasons for media use (McQuail, 1987):

i) Information:

- finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world
- seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices
- satisfying curiosity and general interest
- learning; self –education
- gaining a sense of security through knowledge

ii) Personal Identity:

- finding reinforcement for personal values
- finding models of behaviour
- identifying with valued other (in the media)
- gaining insight into one's self

iii) Integration and Social Interaction:

- gaining insight into circumstances of others; social empathy
- identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging
- finding a basis for conversation and social interaction
- having a substitute for real-life companionship
- helping to carry out social roles
- enabling one to connect with family, friends and society

iv) Entertainment:

- escaping, or being diverted, from problems
- relaxing
- getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment
- filling time
- emotional release
- sexual arousal

One year later, Finn and Gorr (1988) reduced viewing motivations to needs arising from two sources. (a) social compensation, which included the uses of companionship, pass time, habit and escape motivations; and (b) mood management (Zillmann 1988; 2000) which included the uses of relaxation, entertainment, arousal and information motivations.

In 1990, James Lull (1990, pp. 35-46) presents a typology of the social uses of television based on ethnographic research. Lull defines two main typologies, structural and relational, and includes various subcategories and uses related to them. (Lull 1990, p. 36)

i) Structural

- Environmental: background noise; companionship; entertainment.
- Regulative: punctuation of time and activity; talk patterns.

ii) Relational

- Communication Facilitation: Experience illustration; common ground; conversational entrance; anxiety reduction; agenda for talk; value clarification. Something to talk about.
- Affiliation/Avoidance: Physical, verbal contact/neglect; family solidarity; family relaxant; conflict reduction; relationship maintenance. Something to do together.
- Social Learning: Decision-making; behaviour modelling; problem-solving; value transmission; legitimization; information dissemination; substitute schooling. Aid in decisions, problems, models.
- Competence/Dominance: Role enactment; role reinforcement; substitute role portrayal; intellectual validation; authority exercise; gatekeeping; argument facilitation. Role aid, authorization.

Scholar Arthur Asa Berger is the author of several relevant and comprehensive texts in media analysis, which have, indeed, become classics, after several editions and having been translated into various languages, such as *Media Communication Research Methods*, *Media Analysis Techniques* and *Media Research Techniques*. This academic admits that 'A good deal of scientific work remains to be done on people's needs, on the gratifications individuals seek, and on the roles the mass media play in meeting people's needs'. Berger also asserts that it seems obvious that people do use media in varying ways although they may not even be aware they are doing so.

This scholar suggests a long list of gratifications that the media offer and some needs they may help to fill. He notes that in some cases it is difficult to decide whether a given reason people use the media involves needs, uses, gratifications, or desires, so he avoids these terms altogether when describing them. Berger offers a long list,

gathered from different sources, while admitting that it is incomplete and suggesting that anyone could easily add more elements that would help to understand how the media function (Berger 1998a, p. 115):

1) to be amused; 2) to see authority figures exalted or deflated; 3) to experience the beautiful; 4) to share experiences with others; 5) to satisfy curiosity; 6) to identify with the deity and the divine plan; 7) to find distraction and diversion; 8) to experience empathy; 9) to experience, in a guilt-free situation, extreme emotions; 10) to find models to imitate; 11) to gain identity; 12) to gain information about the world; 13) to reinforce belief in justice; 14) to reinforce belief in romantic love; 15) to reinforce belief in magic, the marvellous, and the miraculous; 16) to see others make mistakes; 17) to see order imposed on the world; 18) to participate vicariously in history; 19) to be purged on unpleasant emotions; 20) to obtain outlets for sexual drives in a guilt-free context; 21) to explore taboo subjects with impunity; 22) to experience the ugly; 23) to affirm moral, spiritual, and cultural values; 24) to see villains in action.

1.3.4.2.2.1. Television entertainment: emotional gratifications.

As we can see, a long list of motivations for using the media, and gratifications obtained from it, are provided by the numerous scholars that have worked on this theory of research. Among them I would like to emphasise the importance of emotional gratifications, as they are closely related to the entertainment function of television. In fact, in recent years new theories have underscored the importance of emotions and affective motivations when assessing the value of this communication and entertainment medium. From this approach, the needs of individuals to manage affective states are taken into account. Indeed, the function of television to provide entertainment and to respond to viewers' emotional and affective needs, to manage their affective states, is given value. Ruggiero mentions this new tendency and the academics who have worked on it (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 13):

...there has been a trend toward enlarging and refining theories concerning affective motivations toward media use (Finn, 1997). For instance, Finn noted that the rigid dichotomy between instrumental and ritualistic behaviors that formerly esteemed information-seeking over entertainment-seeking behaviors has been infused with new motivational theories. These take into consideration the individuals' need to manage affective states (D.R. Anderson, Collins, Schmitt, & Jacobvitz, 1996; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) or achieve optimum levels of arousal (Donohew, Finn, & Christ, 1988; Zillman & Bryant, 1994).

In this sense, I want to draw attention to the academic article 'The Use of Media Entertainment and Emotional Gratification', by Ane Bartsch and Reinhold Viehoff (2010). These scholars also comment on the fact that the desire to experience emotions is widely considered to be a key motivation for the use of entertainment media, which includes television programmes. They note the variety of emotions and other affective phenomena that have been studied in the context of media use, and provide a good overview of research on emotion-related gratifications. (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2247)

But, beyond that I would also like to focus on the main argument of Bartsch and Viehoff's academic paper, that is to say: 'the experience of emotions can be gratifying on different levels ranging from simple hedonistic gratifications to more complex gratifications such as the satisfaction of social and cognitive needs.' (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2247)

Likewise, there are other elements of their approach that I want to highlight. Indeed, they note that: 'Scholars from different theoretical and methodological backgrounds have studied the role of emotions in individual's media experiences, and they have proposed different explanations why emotions can be gratifying for media

users.’ But Bartsch and Viehoff’s explanations of their use of the concept of ‘gratifications’ is indeed interesting, as they clarify that their research overview proceeds on a wide notion of that concept which includes its use in the context of the uses-and-gratifications approach (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Rubin, 1983) but also goes beyond it as they assume that ‘self-reported gratifications provide an incomplete picture of what motivates people’s media choices’. (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2248).

Regarding that statement, these academics underline the fact that: ‘Emotions can be gratifying and motivate selective media use regardless of whether the person is consciously aware of that fact or not (cf. Vorderer, 1992; Suckfüll, 2004)’. They also explain the different approaches of their analysis, which I want to point out, because they take into account various methods, including a conceptualisation framework. (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2248)

Our understanding of emotional gratification explicitly includes rewarding media effects that have been studied within a selective exposure paradigm (cf. Zillman, 2000; Bryant & Davies, in press) as well as other related conceptualizations such as media enjoyment (Vorderer, Klimmt & Ritterfeld, 2004) and appreciation (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010).

Further on, they explain their proposal about the term ‘gratification’, which is used in a broad way:

In the absence of a theoretically elaborated definition of “gratification” we propose to use the term as an umbrella term for all those –gratifying, rewarding, enjoyable, etc. -aspects of behavior that explain why a behavior is consciously or unconsciously preferred over alternative behavioral options.’ (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2248)

According to those parameters - which I share - they list and define the concepts and theories related to the use of the media and the emotional gratifications, focusing on

media entertainment and referring to the literature and the researchers that have studied them. After carrying out thorough and detailed research, they build up an interesting and integrative framework to offer arguments, present their findings and draw conclusions based in the next theories and concepts: Mood Management, Affective disposition, Excitation Transfer, Sensation Seeking, Modes of Reception, Intrinsic Motivation, Mood Adjustment, Gender socialization of emotions, Relationship functions of entertainment, Parasocial Relationships, Vicarious Experiences, Downward social comparison, Eudaimonic motivation. (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, pp. 2248 - 2250).

For the purpose of my work I will emphasise some of those theories, together with the main concepts and facts related to them, which Bartsch and Viehoff explain in their thorough article on this matter. Specifically, I will focus on three areas they mention: mood management and adjustment, modes of reception, and the relationship function of entertainment, including the parasocial relationships. I would say that these theories and the aspects related to them underscored in this article offer interesting approaches when analysing the functions and contributions of television entertainment:

i) These scholars stress the importance of Zillman's (1988; 2000) theory of *mood-management* considering it as 'Perhaps the most prominent account of why individuals enjoy the experience of emotions in media use'. As they note, mood management theory assumes that individuals prefer an intermediate level of arousal that is experienced as pleasant, which is known as balanced arousal, but in addition to that they note that: 'mood management theory highlights the gratifications associated with positive affective valence, and with the absorption potential of strong emotions that can help distract individuals from negative thoughts (for reviews, see Knobloch-Westerwick, 2006; Oliver, 2003).' (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2248)

On the other hand, they also refer to Knobloch's (2003) concept of *mood adjustment* which assumes that individuals use the media to adjust their moods to the demands of their current situation. As they note, this approach also shows that media-induced emotions can also be instrumental for the attainment of goals that go beyond the process of media use per se. (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2249)

ii) Likewise, Bartsch and Viehoff also highlight the importance of the research on *modes of reception* carried out these last years. These analyses led to the conclusion that emotions are involved in the fulfilment of other various needs and goals, apart from those directly associated with the regulation of viewers' feelings.

Besides research that has dealt with the role of affective valence and arousal in individuals' enjoyment of entertainment experience, more recent approaches have drawn attention to the role of emotions in the satisfaction of more complex social and cognitive needs. Research on modes of reception (e.g. Vorderer, 1992; Suckfüll, 2004; Gehrau, Bilandzic & Woelke, 2005; Appel et al, 2002) suggests that media induced emotions can be functional for a variety of other goals in the reception process. (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2248)

They comment on the work conducted by Suckfüll (2004) and mention that 'Her results showed that emotional involvement correlates with other modes of reception, especially with diegetic involvement (getting absorbed in the fictional world), socio-involvement (identifying with characters) and ego-involvement (relating the film to one's own life)'. They also observe that 'There was also a weaker but positive correlation with elaboration (reading between the lines) indicating that emotional involvement can be helpful for the pursuit of a broader variety of goals in the reception process.' (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2249)

So, finally they conclude that: ‘the experience of emotions can be functional in a number of other ways than just regulating emotions in terms of affective valence and arousal’ (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2249). The centrality of the role that emotions play in the reception process for satisfying more complex social and cognitive needs is highlighted by these scholars.

iii) Among the functions of media entertainment that Bartsch and Viehoff research, the comments and conclusions regarding the *relationship functions of entertainment* are also worth mentioning. These scholars refer to the work developed by many researchers during these last years and note that media can serve social relationship functions on different levels: to connect with, or escape from real-life relationships, but that can also be used to form parasocial relationships with media characters and celebrities (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, pp. 2249 - 2250). Consequently, they emphasise the fact that: ‘In addition to building and strengthening social relationships with others, media induced emotions may also serve to cultivate parasocial relationships with the characters, persons, or avatars on screen (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Klimmt, Hartmann, Schramm & Vorderer, 2003; Rubin and Perse, 1987).’ (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2250)

But, regarding that statement I find important the additional conclusion they draw, as, when referring to Giles’s contribution they assert (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2250): ‘Unlike the premise of early theories (e.g. Rosengren & Windahl, 1972), such parasocial relationships do not seem to serve as a compensation for deficiencies in social life, but rather as a complementary source of social and emotional gratifications (cf. Giles, 2002)’.

As Bartsch and Viehoff explain (2010, p. 2252), bearing in mind these considerations, they define a research framework ‘to provide an integrated assessment of experiential and functional gratifications that can be associated with emotional media experiences’, and in their final conclusions they identify and classify the different factors according to their experimental or functional side: Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses revealed two types of gratification factors in individuals’ experience of movies and TV series. Three of the seven factors reflect experimental qualities of emotions: 1) Fun; 2) Thrill; 3) Being moved. The remaining four factors reflect the functionality of emotional media experiences with regard to social and cognitive needs: 4) Thought-provoking experiences; 5) Vicarious experiences; 6) Social sharing of emotions; 7) Acting out emotions that have no room in everyday life.

Beyond that, these scholars associate those factors with the previous research work conducted by other academics in that field of study during all these years, drawing what I consider very interesting conclusions. Thus, regarding the above mentioned experimental factors of emotions they note that: ‘The factors fun and thrill seem to reflect such well-researched entertainment gratifications as mood-management (Zillman, 1988) and sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 1979), whereas the factor being moved highlights the importance of the emerging research topic of sad and tender feelings in entertainment experience (Oliver, 1993; 2008).’ (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2252).

On the other hand they conclude that the results concerning the functional factors highlight the distinction between the thought-provoking effects of emotions and

the experiential gratifications of feeling moved per se. These scholars refer to previous work (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010) where moving and thought-provoking experiences formed a common factor, so they assert that more research is needed to follow up the relationship of both effects. Whether studied together or separately, both factors are identified as important functional effects of television entertainment viewing, but I find interesting their reflection in that sense.

I would also like to emphasise the links they make and the conclusions they draw regarding two other factors they identify among those that show the functionality of entertainment associated to what are taken as social and cognitive needs. I am referring to the vicarious experience and the social sharing of emotions. In both cases they take into account previous research work and conclusions reflected in other academics' analysis to underline the importance of these factors as gratifications and effects of entertainment viewing. I find these statements and conclusions rather interesting regarding my research work (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2252):

The factor vicarious experience bears resemblance with such concepts as transportation (Green & Brock, 2000), identification (Cohen, 2006; Igartua, 2009), involvement (Vorderer, 1993), and narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009), thus highlighting the significance of these concepts as entertainment gratifications-and idea that has remained secondary in extant research to their role as mediators of persuasion effects. The factor social sharing of emotions seems to reflect relationship functions and social communication functions of media use as revealed, for example, in the work of Rubin (1983) and Lull (1990). Our results draw specific attention to the functionality of emotions in stimulating rewarding experiences of communication and sociability among entertainment audiences, a topic that has remained under-researched so far.

We can affirm that the research of these scholars, their interesting approach and the conclusions they draw offer interesting contributions to the study of television entertainment as a means that responds to affective and emotional needs of the audience but, while doing so, also fulfils other social and cognitive needs. This paragraph compiles the main intention, findings and conclusions of this research, which I want to emphasise (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2250):

To summarize, entertainment research has accumulated an impressive body of theoretical and empirical work supporting the assumption that emotions can be gratifying for media users on different levels. On the one hand, emotions can be associated with pleasurable feeling qualities such as positive valence and arousal. On the other hand, emotions can be functional within the broader context of social and cognitive need gratification (cf., Bartsch, Mangold, Viehoff & Vorderer, 2006; Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold & Viehoff, 2008). As we have argued elsewhere, Bartsch et al. (2006; 2008), the gratification potential of emotions can be evaluated with regard to different concerns, and on different levels of complexity ranging from simple hedonistic needs to more complex assessments of the usefulness of emotions for personal goals, or their compatibility with the social norms and values. Through the lens of this multi-level appraisal framework, entertainment audiences are not mere hedonists, mere goal rationalists or mere moralists. Rather, they seem to pursue all these concerns simultaneously, only to a varying extent and with varying priorities.

I also think it is worth taking into account the final paragraph of this academic paper, where Bartsch and Viehoff stress the importance of developing further research on the functionality of emotions regarding the social and cognitive needs. These would hence be considered as additional gratifications beyond those related to the feeling quality of emotions, usually associated to the functions and effects of media entertainment (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010, p. 2253).

With the limitations in mind, we think that entertainment research could profit from expanding its current focus on rewarding feeling qualities of emotion per se to the functionality of emotions in the broader context of individuals' social and cognitive needs. More in-depth consideration of the functional roles of

emotions may help advance our understanding of how media entertainment can not only provide its audiences with fun, thrill and sentimental feelings- but how it can also stimulate social and cognitive processes that can be associated with additional gratifications.

Therefore, the affective needs and the importance of emotions both associated to their experimental qualities and their functional roles are studied as part of the uses and gratifications research framework. This analysis leads to interesting conclusions concerning the effects of media, and consequently, television entertainment. From the uses and gratifications' approach entertainment is a reason for the use of television, to watch it, but it is also an effect of this communication and entertainment medium. (cf. Ruggiero, 2000; Bryant and Oliver, 2009; Grindstaff, 2014; Perse & Lambe, 2017). In addition, it can be concluded that the reasons and motivations to consume, to watch, entertainment programmes are varied and so are the effects that entertainment programmes have on their viewers.

1.3.4.2.2.2. Uses and Gratifications and Reception Studies: main aspects.

In summary, as we can see in the information, reflections and research work of scholars that have analysed audiences according to the *uses and gratifications* model, shown in the preceding section, this theory provides interesting approaches and findings to the study of the audience's relationship with the media. They all, indeed, try to find answers to what Ruggiero points as the main question of this theory, when he asserts that:

Theoretically and practically, for U&G scholars, however, the basic questions remain the same. Why do people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another, and what gratifications do they receive from it? (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 29)

The broad and comprehensive work developed by many academics with the aim of answering those questions provides interesting findings in relation to the objectives of my research. I consider that the explanations given and the conclusions they have drawn are important with respect to the positive contributions of television entertainment. In this section I sketch out some of them to, finally, include some remarks from different and relevant researchers on this topic that I would like to emphasise because I find them interesting regarding both the questions and answers posited and provided by this model of enquiry.

Thus, academic Elizabeth M. Perse has researched and taught on media effects for many years, and she has both compiled and developed a lot of literature on this topic. Her book *Media Effects and Society* (2001/2008, 2017) is already a reference for the study of the effects of media. I below highlight some of her explanations, taken from those texts because, in my opinion, they put the focus on relevant aspects of this theory of research. Perse notes that the key concept in uses and gratifications is the reasons people have for using mass communication (motives/gratifications sought). She identifies three factors when assessing them and indicates that these reasons are important because they direct selective exposure to media and their content, they lead people to use the content in different ways, and they lead to different media effects.

In the same line as most academics, Perse also puts emphasis on the main changes brought by this model of research when comparing to previous perspectives, and she comments that the uses and gratifications perspective was a fairly dramatic shift in the direction of mass communication research because instead of focusing on media content it directed attention toward the audience, and rather than considering the audience as passively exposed to strong media messages, it considered an active

audience that consciously selected and used media content to satisfy various needs. But there is another fact that Perse comments on and that I would like to point out, that is to say, that instead of evaluating media content as cultural products, uses and gratifications suspended judgments about the cultural value of content and assumed that all content had potential functional value.

The contributions of Thomas E. Ruggiero to the study of the *uses and gratifications* theory are underscored by many academics in this field. His comprehensive article ‘Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century’ (2000) is taken as a reference by many researchers on this area.

That is why I mention this essay and the information included there on several occasions throughout this work, when referring to various topics related to the uses and gratifications approach and its application to different areas. Like all the scholars who have analysed this model, Ruggiero also stresses the fact that this perspective implies a change in the focus of influence when studying the relationship between the media and the audience, and he notes that: ‘Interpretation of the individual’s response by researchers has shifted from the sender to the receiver, from the media to the audience’ (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 25). In this case though, I want to underline his reflections with regard to two topics.

To begin with I shall look at his reference about the importance of culture and the way in which it affects both the needs and the gratifications of people when using and consuming media. This aspect is emphasised by Ruggiero (2000) in his analysis of the *uses and gratifications* model, underscoring Lull’s remarks on this matter (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 27):

Additionally, human needs are influenced by culture, not only in their formation but in how they are gratified. “Thus, culturally situated social experience reinforces basic biological and psychological needs while simultaneously giving direction to their sources of gratification.” (Lull, 1995, p. 99). Lull further suggested that the study of how and why individuals use media, through U&G research, may offer clues to our understanding about exactly what needs are, where they originate, and how they are gratified.

The second paragraph that I have taken from this scholar’s essay summarises some of the core aspects of the U&G theory as a model of research. Ruggiero notes that although research conducted under this framework measures individual’s actions, a great amount of psychological and social factors are taken into account, some of which he sketches out in the paragraph below. He also lists briefly the main motivations that are defined when using this theoretical framework, encapsulating in just a few those concepts that we have extensively referred to and outlined in the prior section, according to the studies carried out by different academics in this field (see chapter 1.3.4.2.2).

The primary unit of data collection of U&G continues to be the individual, but that individual’s activity is now analyzed in a plethora of psychological and social contexts including media dependency, ritualization, instrumental, communication facilitation, affiliation or avoidance, social learning, and role reinforcement. U&G research continues to typologize motivations for media use in terms of diversion (i.e., as an escape from routines or for emotional release), social utility (i.e., to acquire information for conversations), personal identity (i.e., to reinforce attitudes, beliefs, and values), and surveillance (i.e., to learn about one’s community, events, and political affairs). (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 26)

Jonathan Bignell’s thorough book on television studies also includes several interesting references to this model of research. I have chosen this paragraph below because in this text Bignell also comments on the main aspects of this approach, which are in the same line as those already expressed in this work. Thus, they contribute to reinforcing the arguments we have gathered so far in respect to the importance of this theory in the study of television, and for the purpose of this work specifically.

Moreover, there are other factors he mentions that I would like to highlight in this regard, as this author also emphasises the importance of the entertainment function of television and its value, associated to the construction of the identity of viewers. Likewise, the way television helps them to feel that they are members of a community, part of a group they identify with, is also pointed out in this text:

The strand of work in Television Studies called ‘uses and gratifications’ research describes the uses and pleasures which audiences derive from television, by focusing on how and why people use television. This approach is in contrast to the study of television’s effects on its viewers (such as making more violent, or more informed about science, for example) in that studies of effects regard audiences as passive vessels waiting to be filled up by television messages. Uses and gratifications research shows how television is used as an information source, as entertainment and as a resource for constructing the viewer’s sense of identity, often by identifying himself or herself as a member of a group. (Bignell 2013, p. 28)

And, finally, I will quote some comments of Ruggiero (2000) referring to the possibilities and evolution of this theory for the study of audiences, including some criticisms that he points out when analysing the evolution of the *uses and gratifications* model. These comments are related to levels of activity. In fact, most of the criticisms regarding the U&G framework, as well as other theories of active audience, are linked to the levels of activity conferred to viewers. In spite of that, the possibilities and the value of this theory of research as well as its evolution are given value by this scholar (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 26):

Furthermore, previous U&G researchers have primarily concentrated on choice, reception, and manner of response of the media audience. A key assumption has been that the audience member makes a conscious and motivated choice among media channel and content (McQuail, 1994). Yet, recent U&G researchers have even begun to question stock assumptions about the active audience concept. Although researchers continue to regard audience members as universally active, some now suggest that all audience members are not equally active at all times (Rubin, 1994b). This assertiveness of U&G researchers to continuously critique

basic assumptions suggests a dynamic and evolving theoretical atmosphere, especially as we depart the industrial era for the postindustrial age.

Ruggiero also notes the validity of this method for studying this topic even in the new media scenario, where technological developments have brought about changes in viewers' choices and habits 'As new technologies present people with more and more media choices, motivation and satisfaction become even more crucial components of audience analysis.' (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 14)

The importance of active audience in relation to the *uses and gratifications* theory of research is also underlined by academic Alain M. Rubin, who is well known for his prolific work on various fields of media studies (cf. Rubin, 1979, 1981a, 1981b, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1994a, 1994b, 2009a, 2009b; Rubin & Perse, 1987a, 1987b; Kim & Rubin, 1997; Rubin & Windahl, 1986 ...). In this paragraph below he defines that concept, mentions the different conclusions concerning the various levels of activity and notes the main criticisms related. His proposal about the valid view of audience activeness is worth taking into account. (Rubin, 2009a, p. 172)

Audience activity is the core concept in uses and gratifications. It refers to the utility, intentionality, selectivity, and involvement of the audience with the media (Blumler, 1979). Uses-and-gratifications researchers regard audience members to be variably-not universally-active; they are not equally active at all times. According to Windahl (1981), depicting the audience "as superational and very selective (...) invites criticism"(p. 176). A valid view of audience activeness lies on a continuum between being passive (and, perhaps, being more directly influenced by media or messages) and being active (and, perhaps, making more rational decisions in accepting or rejecting messages) (A.M. Rubin, 1993)

1.3.4.2.3. Active audience: other theories.

As can be observed in previous sections, the active audience paradigm has been defended by many scholars. Although I have focused on those that seem to be broadly considered as the two main theories related to this branch of research, namely the *encoding/decoding* and the *uses and gratifications* models, there are other concepts and theories that I would also like to mention, such as *the hegemony concept* and *the theory of resistance*, since researchers working on both of them offer interesting conclusions that I will point out.

1.3.4.2.3.1. The Hegemony Concept.

The concept of ‘hegemony’ is mentioned by Grindstaff (2014) among the different approaches and theories related to reception studies and active audience perspectives. It was developed by Gramsci in the 1970s, also in opposition to the approach and theories of the Frankfurt School. Scholars who developed this concept stress the active role of viewers and admit the contradictions and complexity of television:

Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony complicated Marxist critiques of the media and paved the way for another set of influential theories of television, beginning in the 1970s. In arguing that particular relations of ruling prevail not because they are imposed on people against their will but because they are accepted as common sense by the rulers and the ruled alike... (...) The hegemony concept also found expression in the work of Raymond Williams (1974), Horace Newcomb (1974), Gaye Tuchman (1974), Stuart Hall (1980) and Douglas Kellner (1981), among others, all of whom emphasized television as a site of contradictions where meaning is struggled over and not simply given or assumed. (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 341)

In this sense I would like to underline the fact that these academics started emphasising this consideration of television as a controversial and complex medium that needs broader and deeper analysis, further than the first approaches taken by the traditional study of effects. Regarding this analysis, it is also worth taking into account the work of Raymond Williams who also highlights this fact, as we can see in this mention of his essay *Television: Technology and Cultural form* (1974), by Laura Grindstaff (2014, p. 341). I would also underscore Williams' point of view about television, because he considers it an intention as well as an effect at the same time, as expressed by Grindstaff in this following paragraph:

Williams (...) who welcomed ways of thinking about television as something other than discrete programs to be analyzed or a capitalist institution to be condemned (see Spigel, 1992). His 1974 book, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, elucidated the concept of flow –the movement of fragmented text across time and space –and forced a consideration of television as a mode of address that structured experience apart from specific questions of content or message. Williams argued that television is both an intention and an effect ...' (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 31)

1.3.4.2.3.2. Theory of Resistance:

Amid the theories and models associated with active audience, John Fiske's work and his *theory of resistance* should be also taken into account. Fiske's early work and the analysis he conducted together with John Hartley, *Reading Television* (1978), opened new ways in the study of this communication medium, which ended up in the book that Fiske published ten years later, *Television Culture* (1987), where he articulated an overarching approach of his research, reflections and conclusions. The most prominent concept he posited and that he developed in further studies (Fiske 1989a, 1989b, 1992b, 1992c, 1994) was in fact the ability, the power and authority of

viewers over the television content, texts. As Newcomb (2005, p. 22) points out: ‘In some instances Fiske suggested that viewers could perhaps subvert messages and, by creating meanings of their own, create a type of ideological response to dominant ideology.’ Fiske strongly defended the ‘active, participatory quality of television consumption’ (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 345) and the so called theory of resistance (cf. Jenkins, 2011).

Toby Miller comments that Fiske’s analysis (1987) emphasises the ‘audience resistance to the way programmes are encoded by the producers’ (Miller 2010, p. 126). Likewise, Lockett asserts that ‘Fiske argued that traditional media analysis greatly underestimated the power of audiences to shape meaning and the positive dimension of commercially sponsored popular entertainment.’ (Lockett, 2002, p. 26)

According to Bignell (2013, p. 30), the concept of ‘resistance’ would define the ways in which audiences make meaning from television programmes that are counter to the meanings that are thought to be intended, or that are discovered by close analysis. The theory of resistance is clearly connected with the concept of active audience as it claims that audience are active makers of meaning and negotiators with the television they watch. Television audiences are regarded not as passive consumers of meaning but as negotiating meanings for themselves that are often resistant to those meanings that are intended or that are discovered due to analysis. According to this theory, television viewers are resistant and active audiences.

We have noted above that Newcomb mentions Fiske’s work when analysing the various theories and approaches associated to active audience, but we must also point out that Newcomb himself is considered one of the strong defenders of the active audience paradigm (cf. Grindstaff, 2014). Likewise, this scholar has conducted

interesting research on television which is in fact a very interesting source of knowledge about the development of this field of study. However, further than that, Newcomb's own contributions to this discipline are also worth highlighting. His emblematic work *TV: The Most Popular Art*, that he first edited in 1974 and which has already seven editions (1974-2006), is quite significant in this sense. In that text, and among other interesting aspects, he stresses the sophistication of television entertainment and notes the different layers and levels of meaning involved, as Grindstaff states: 'Newcomb emphasized the complexity of television entertainment with regard to plot, character and genre, and the multiple levels of meaning available to viewers in making sense of television narratives'. (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 341)

1.3.4.3. Television: from mass communication to popular culture.

I would also like to emphasise another aspect of Newcomb's work, also mentioned by Grindstaff, as she asserts that: 'Newcomb in particular helped shift the discussion of television from a discourse of 'mass communication' to a discourse of 'popular culture' (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 341). This fact is worth stressing because it is closely related to the consideration of television as part of what were taken at that time as popular, trivial and 'inferior' cultural expressions, along with the interest of some scholars to research on those television texts despite that.

Together with Newcomb, the importance of this approach when analysing television is nowadays emphasised by most relevant scholars that conduct research on television. Bignell (2013) notes this fact when referring to present media, and therefore, television studies: 'The premise that underpins media education is that academic studies should engage with everyday media experiences that are understood as an aspect of

everyday popular culture' (Bignell, 2013, p. 12), and he explains that 'The work of literary and cultural critic Raymond Williams (1974) was crucial in establishing this breadth in the field, as a result of his interest in evaluating television as an aspect of contemporary culture' (Bignell, 2013, p. 12). Therefore, as Bignell points out:

The discipline of Cultural Studies, pioneered in Britain in the 1970s at the University of Birmingham, recognises the significance of popular television and studies how television contributes to the assumptions and attitudes of sectors of society, a set of ideas and emotions described as a 'structure of feeling'. Key work in this field includes the books by Raymond Williams (...). (Bignell, 2013, p. 26)

Miller (2014, pp. xix-xliv) also refers to the importance of this shift, and among others, he mentions the work of Alvarado, who also called attention to the importance of approaching the study of television as part of popular culture, and the importance of taking into account this perspective when analysing the different aspects of television and television entertainment (Miller, 2014, pp. xx-xxi). In fact, from this approach, the importance of 'popular' tastes are taken into account when researching on television but, further than that, the breadth of 'popular culture' and, therefore, the range of areas that this discipline covers are understood as fundamental for the study of television, and television entertainment, by most scholars when conducting research on this field in these last years. This factor is also central when analysing television programmes and formats, either regarding content or in relation to their influence, effects and contributions in various fields. (cf. Alvarado et al, 2014)

Consequently, we could say that the work of Raymond Williams was fundamental for raising interest in taking this perspective within the discipline of cultural studies, but as we have previously mentioned we can also note that the contribution of Newcomb for the development of this approach is relevant. In fact,

Newcomb (2005) analyses the main features of this approach and offers arguments that support both his interest towards it as well as the importance of this perspective when studying television and television entertainment.

Hence, Newcomb (2005, p. 19) considers the rise of questions related to ‘popular cultural studies’ as an important influential turn in his work, to which he refers, noting that: ‘In the introductory essay to *Television: The Critical View* (2000), I chart one pathway -typically, the one most influential in my own efforts - leading to current developments’ and describes this discipline -“popular cultural studies”- as: ‘a movement primarily grounded in varieties of “literary” analysis and determined to take seriously works considered underappreciated because of structured hierarchies involving the sociology of taste and the aims of humanistic education as molders of citizenship’ (Newcomb, 2005, p. 19) .

Newcomb refers to this passage, quoted from his essay above mentioned, where he offers some arguments and suggests the motivations for these movements concerning ‘popular cultural studies’. His words show the broadly accepted consideration of television as an object of low, inferior, culture in many areas for a long time, and its consequences. I have highlighted this aspect in previous sections of this work as it is a matter of great interest for my research.

The choice to examine these “inferior” or “unappreciated” forms was motivated by a number of concerns. Philosophically, scholars in this movement often felt the works they wished to examine were more indicative of larger cultural preferences, expressive of a more “democratic” relationship between works and audiences than the “elite” works selected, archived, and taught as the traditional canon of humanistically valued forms of expression. Politically, these same impulses suggested that it was important to study these works precisely because their exclusion from canonical systems also excluded their audiences, devalued large numbers of citizens, or saddled them with inferior intellectual or aesthetic judgement.’ (Newcomb, 2000, p. 2)

The approach to the study of television as an expression of popular culture and, therefore its inclusion into the so called 'popular cultural studies' entailed an important shift in the study of television and its audience. From this new approach the interests of television viewers are taken into account and given value, going beyond those previous considerations of television watchers as a mass intellectually poor and of inferior taste both regarding aesthetics and content.

The statements of scholar Roman Gubern (1987) brings to the fore this fact when, referring to the so called *cultural stratification of taste* he notes that the cultural enrichment is based in the diversity of the offer. He holds that the public, the audience, has the right to choose the programmes they want to watch. Gubern points out that this implies that all sort of genres should be included in that offer, either those considered cult expressions such as opera, or those classified as light entertainment, so that the public feels free to choose among them. This academic states that under different circumstances either in life or during the day some programmes may be more appealing than others. He asserts that it is quite normal that after a hard work day people prefer a light entertainment programme and that this happens even to the brainiest intellectuals. I would also like to highlight his statement when he asserts that there are not higher or lower cultural genres and that in any genre, from opera to comedy, from a conference to a melodrama, there is place both for excellence and negligibility. (Gubern, 1987, pp. 238 - 239):

Por lo que atañe a la estratificación cultural del gusto, hay que recordar que la riqueza cultural está basada en la diversificación de la oferta y, por consiguiente: 1) Negar el derecho de cada público a elegir libremente los programas que desee significa defender una forma de censura, el monolitismo, o el despotismo cultural dirigista; 2) La diversidad de la oferta significa un amplio espectro que vaya desde la ópera culta hasta el vodevil escabroso, y que todas sus opciones

puedan ser elegidas libremente. Y en diferentes circunstancias de la vida y de la jornada puede aparecer más deseable o funcional una opción que otra. Es relativamente normal, por ejemplo, que tras la fatiga de una jornada laboral intensa se prefiera un programa de entretenimiento ligero o frívolo. Esto les ocurre incluso a los intelectuales más sesudos; 3) No hay géneros culturales mayores y menores. En cualquier género, desde la ópera a la comedia, y desde la conferencia al melodrama, cabe lo excelente y lo ínfimo.

In conclusion, although, as we have noted here, the need to an approach to the study of television audiences from a ‘popular culture’ perspective is accepted by the latest television researchers, these arguments related to the different assumptions about television and its audience, the various perceptions about the functions of television in relation to them, the diverse opinions to whether the ‘popular’ tastes should or not be taken into account, and the different approaches that either value or dismiss them have been and still are matters of discussion and analysis. These arguments are especially relevant when it comes to researching on television entertainment, as this function is certainly associated both to the concept of popular leisure as well as to popular culture. (cf. Butsch, 1990; Jenson, 1992; L.A. Lewis, 1992/2001; Harrington & Bielby, 2001; Miller & McHoul 1998; Miller 2010; Bignell, 2013; Alvarado et al, 2014...).

Due to that I will later on approach these issues more extensively, in the chapters devoted to both cultural studies and popular culture studies. In fact, as Bignell points out, this debate still continues among defenders of television as a means to raise cultural standards, and positions who claim that ‘broadcasting should be a public service but it should not impose the cultural standards of the few upon a majority whose “popular” tastes should not be denigrated’ (Bignell, 2013, p. 25). The ideas about passive and active audience exposed throughout this work are certainly linked to all these arguments and conclusions.

1.3.4.4. Audience-Reception Studies: evolution.

In these previous chapters I have provided information about the contributions of the audience reception studies to the analysis of the influence of television on the audience and vice versa. Some of the key aspects of this branch of research are noted by Klaus Bruhn Jensen, in his analysis of media audience reception. I have selected some of his statements to highlight various relevant concepts associated to this field of study (Jensen, 2002, p. 137).

In response to humanistic textual studies, reception analysis suggests that both the audiences and contexts of mass communication need to be examined as socially specific, empirical objects of analysis. (.....) At each point of the communicative process there is a scope of indetermination which allows for several potential meanings and impacts to be enacted. Also reception is a social act that serves to negotiate the definition of social reality in the context of broad cultural and communicative practices. The empirical findings on reception so far imply an important theoretical distinction between potential and actualized meanings, concepts which have been developed in literary criticism and semiotics, ... (...) The prevalence of readings that differ from the relatively few readings anticipated by media professionals or textual scholars, points both to the polysemy of media discourses and to the existence of quite different interpretative strategies that are applied to the same discourse by different audiences.

According to the information gathered so far, we can assert that the great amount of research undertaken as part of reception studies offer interesting conclusions about the relationship between the media and the audience. The research continues, and the evolution of this field of study is noticeable. Laura Grindstaff (2014, p. 346) stresses that fact: 'In television audience scholarship, the contours of reception continue to shift as more studies are carried out and more types and levels of context are considered'. She mentions the two different strands that have been developed due to the extensive work done by so many academics during all these years, and notes that one of them 'has

focused on viewer interpretations of specific programs, genres or sets of programs', mentioning the most relevant authors who have written on that, among them: Morley, 1980; Hobson, 1982; Ang, 1985; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Livingstone, 1990; Jhally and Lewis, 1992; D'Acci, 1994; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Gripsrud, 1995; Manga, 2003; Hill, 2005; Skeggs and Wood, 2012; Sender, 2012).

With regard to Grindstaff's classification, a second strand of reception research examines 'the broader domestic (and sometime public) context of television use/consumption in everyday life' and would analyse: 'who watches television, the various conditions under which watching occurs (when, where, why, how), and how television use intersects and overlaps with other aspects of daily life'. The work developed by many scholars in this area is highlighted by Grindstaff, such as: Hobson, 1982; Morley, 1986; Palmer, 1986; Lull, 1990; Gray, 1992; Buckingham, 1993; Brown, 1994; Gillespie, 1995; Gauntlett and Hill, 1999; Lembo, 2000; McCarthy, 2001; Fisherkeller, 2002; Bird, 2003; Mayer, 2003.

These authors focused on several and varied topics, and among them, I would like to highlight an area that I consider very interesting with regard to my research work. I am referring to the use of television and video in building community and recreating cultural traditions across ethnic diasporas, which was studied by Gillespie (1995) and Mayer (2003) among others. The contributions of television, and television entertainment, in this respect should, indeed, be taken into account. I shall end by quoting this passage by Grindstaff (2014, p. 345) that summarises the main inputs of this branch of study:

The main contribution of reception studies is to demonstrate the meaning-making capacity of audiences within particular cultural and historical contexts, underscoring the diversity of meanings, the diversity of interpretative practices

and the diversity of audiences, while still retaining notions of textual structure, industrial practice and social location.

1.3.4.4.1. Active audience: levels of activity.

Reception studies are therefore closely related to the concept of active audience. Nowadays the fact that different levels of activity occur when watching television, due to multiple factors, is generally accepted. Nevertheless, both the concept of active audience as such, as well as the levels of activity, of activeness, conferred to viewers have been, and still are, topics of discussion. They are certainly a matter of both criticism and development when it comes to studying television reception. We have already mentioned this fact in relation to the theory of *uses and gratifications* but, beyond that, the reflections, research and criticism regarding the concept of active audience, the different levels of activity as well as the various considerations about them, are matters of study for many academics when analysing the effects of television. For that reason I will next mention some of the work developed by various prominent researchers on this matter.

Mark R. Levy and Sven Windahl explain and define this concept, in his essay *Audience Activity and Gratifications. A conceptual Clarification and Exploration* (1984, p. 51):

As commonly understood, the term “active audience” emphasizes the voluntaristic and selective nature of the interaction between the audience and mass media (for example, see Bauer, 1964). More specifically, this receiver-oriented concept postulates that, conditioned by social and psychological structures and within the constraints of available communications, individuals choose what communication settings they will enter. It is further postulated that the decision to enter into communication is motivated by goals and uses that are self-defined, and that active participation in the communication process enhances, limits, and influences the effects of the exposure (Lin, 1977).

Levy and Windhal mention various critics and their arguments when noting the faults of this concept, such as Elliott, (1974), Bogart (1965), Goodhardt and Ehrenberg (1975), McQuail (1979) and Windahl (1981), to later on pinpoint the reflections of others who, in partial response to those criticisms, have tried to refine the concept of activity (Levy, 1978 and Blumler, 1979). They emphasise Levy's comments, which suggest that: 'audience activity might be better conceptualized as a variable construct, with audiences exhibiting varying degrees of activity, occurring at different times in the communication sequence'. (Levy & Windahl, 1984, p. 52).

Aligning with that suggestion, these scholars explore certain aspects of the concept of 'active' mass media and reflect on the different dimensions and types of audience activity. They identify two dimensions of audience activity (audience orientation and temporal sequence) and develop a typology of nine audience 'activities'. Finally, they propose a model that links audience activity to uses and gratifications and to exposure, as they explain when summarising the main aspects of their research:

The first activity dimension centers on the qualitative orientation of audiences toward the communication process. Audiences are seen as being "selective", involved, or in a "using" relationship to communications. The second activity dimension relates to specific phases in the communication sequence and includes a preexposure period, exposure itself, and a postexposure time. (Levy & Windahl, 1984, p. 51)

They propose that (Levy & Windahl, 1984, p.53): 'A typology of audience activity can be constructed from two orthogonal dimensions. The first dimension is the qualitative orientation of audience members toward the communication process; the second, a temporal dimension having to do with a particular time or phase of the

communication sequence (Levy, 1983)'. Afterwards, these authors describe the classification of the various factors they take into consideration for their analysis:

For our purposes here, the qualitative orientation of audiences may be considered as having three nominal values: (1) audience selectivity, (2) audience involvement, and (3) audience "use". The temporal dimension can be divided into three values or times: (1) before exposure, (2) during exposure, and (3) after exposure. This formulation of activity carries with it both a notion about the qualitative interaction of audiences with communications and a time consideration, namely different types and degrees of activity may be associated with particular phases of the communication process. (Levy & Windhal, 1984, p. 53)

Hence, Levy and Windhal establish a framework for their research and according to that classification, they relate the audience activity before exposure to selective exposure-seeking; during exposure the audience involvement would be associated to the decoding and interpreting process and, finally, they link the effects of the use of media after exposure to social utilities.

In summary, the contribution of the analysis conducted by these academics is worth mentioning. In fact they go beyond previous research about audience activity, because, as Rubin (2009a) notes: 'Levy and Windahl (1984) tested the proposition that audiences activity is variable, and identified three activity periods for television viewers: previewing, during viewing, and postviewing,...(Rubin, 2019b, p. 172). But, besides that, what I would like to highlight about their work is that, as we can see in the previous paragraphs, they identify three varieties of audience activity in order to, afterwards, link them with the aforementioned three different periods of television viewing.

1.3.4.4.2. Levels of activity: television effects.

According to all these previous explanations, we can state that the variability of the audience's activity is a key factor that is taken into consideration when researching on active audiences. In fact, most of the early criticism to the concept of active audience is due to the different degrees of 'activity' awarded to viewers, which is also linked to the roll and 'power' given both to television and to its audience. Discussions of the level of viewers' activity are fundamental in reception studies and in the analysis of the different theories and models included in this field of research that I have outlined in previous sections.

These discussions would be, therefore, about the levels of activity, attention, involvement and engagement of viewers, concepts and assessments that influence the development of the different theories, approaches and conclusions in relation to the effects that this medium has on the audience. However, besides that, these ideas are also associated with those models and the research that focus on what the audience do to, and with, this communication medium. These theories, models and approaches have been the main topics which in these previous sections we have tackled. According to the information gathered and presented here we can indeed assert that the concept of audience activity and the various factors linked to it are closely related to the study of the effects of television, its influence, impact and contributions. We can also conclude that these aspects are especially relevant when focusing on television entertainment.

Consequently, we can state that it is a fact that viewers give different levels of attention to the programmes they watch. Jeremy Tunstall (1983) distinguished between primary, secondary and tertiary involvement with media. The 'primary involvement' would respond to the most focused kind of attention. The viewer concentrates closely

on the television programme, excluding any other activity. The kind of attention where viewers are sometimes distracted, because they may be doing something else while they are watching television, is named 'secondary involvement'. The lowest level of attention is categorised as 'tertiary involvement'. In this case the television viewer is engaged in another activity that demands concentration while watching television, to which one is paying only momentary attention.

It can also be concluded that there are different levels of audience activity and that these are associated to different levels of involvement and engagement but, likewise, it can be observed that they are related to the various meanings that viewers can make of what they are watching on television, as Bignell points out:

Clearly the level of involvement in television makes a lot of difference to the meanings that viewers can make of what they see and hear. Television in contemporary culture is so deeply embedded in the routines of everyday life that the viewer's involvement with it can vary enormously. When studying television it is important to remember that there will be a whole spectrum of ways in which actual viewers engage with programmes.' (Bignell, 2013, p. 264)

Academic Alain M. Rubin (2009a) also reflects on audience activity, and he mentions that 'To a large extent, activity depends on the social context, potential for interaction, and attitude...' (p. 173). This scholar refers to the link between audience activity and media effects and notes different points of view in this respect, offering several arguments associated with the work of various scholars with regard to this matter:

Blumler (1979) argued that activity means imperviousness to influence. In other words, activity is a deterrent to media effects. This conclusion, though, is questionable. Activity plays an important intervening role in the effects process. Because activity denotes a more selective, attentive, and involved state of media use, it may actually be a catalyst to message effects. In two studies we

found more active, instrumental television use led to cognitive (i.e., thinking about content), affective (i.e., parasocially interacting with media personalities), and behavioral (i.e., discussing content with others) involvement with news and soap opera programs (A. M. Rubin & Perse, 1987a, 1987b). Later, we observed that different activities could be catalyst or deterrent to media effects (Kim & Rubin, 1997). Activities-such as selectivity, attention, and involvement-facilitate such outcomes as parasocial interaction, cultivation, and communication satisfaction. Other activities-such as avoiding messages, being distracted, and being skeptical-inhibit these outcomes because they reduce message awareness and comprehension. (Rubin, 2009a, p. 173)

Likewise, Rubin (2009a, p. 173) indicates that the effects are also related to the different audience activity noticed between ritualized and instrumental television viewing, and he asserts that :‘Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that differences in audience activity - as evidenced in ritualized and instrumental orientations - have important implications for media effects’. Rubin refers to Windahl’s arguments in this respect to back up that statement:

In other words, as Windahl (1981) argued, using a medium instrumentally or ritualistically leads to different outcomes. Instrumental orientations may be produce stronger attitudinal and behavioral effects than ritualized orientations because instrumental orientations incorporate greater motivation to use and involvement with messages. Involvement suggests a state of readiness to select, interpret, and respond to messages. (Rubin, 2009a, p. 173)

In summary, we can assert that there are different opinions about the different levels of activity of the audience, various types of activities are also identified, and diverse effects are also considered. It can also be stated that those facts are closely linked to the power conferred both to television and to its viewers. Likewise, it is broadly admitted that different meanings can be drawn from the same message, the

same television content, because that depends on several social and psychological factors, as we have already noted. According to the latest research, the level and type of activity of viewers should be also included among them. This factor, audience activity, and the discussions about it have determined the different theories in audience reception and their evolution. Beyond that, we can say that all of them influence directly the perception of the effects of television, and the positive and negative considerations towards this communication and entertainment medium.

1.3.4.5. The participatory audience: fans and fandom.

The concept of fan is commonly used to describe those viewers who like and follow a certain programme and have some sort of emotional relationship with it which, as Jo Whitehouse-Hart (2014, p. 30) mentions, quoting Joli Jenson's words, includes 'cherishing, desiring, admiring and celebrating the object of affection' (Jenson, 1992, p. 25). Taking into account the different theories and arguments explained in previous sections we could say that this term is linked to a concept of active audience and, in fact, it can be associated to different types of activities. According to Whitehouse-Hart's comments, as well as those of various researchers on this matter, it responds to a particular form of loyalty, an attachment with active and affective elements. As these scholars notice, it implies various actions and activities, for instance, the collection of memorabilia, writing fan letters, or attendance at awards ceremonies or exhibitions (Harrington & Bielby, 1995). (cf. Lisa A. Lewis, 1992; Jenson, 1992 ; Harrington & Bielby, 1995/ 2001; Bignell, 2013; Whitehouse-Hart, 2014; Grindstaff 2014; Alvarado et al., 2014 ...)

Following Alan McKee's explanations, the term 'fan' is an abbreviation of 'fanatic' and was developed in its current sense in the late 19th century to describe 'a keen and regular spectator of a (professional) sport, originally of baseball'. This description of the enthusiastic audience of this sport moved from its first use to other fields, television among them. (McKee, 2002, p. 67)

Scholar Lisa A. Lewis, editor of the book *Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media* (2001), mentions specific features and activities of fans which are commonly known, emphasising the concept of these followers as very active. She goes beyond that to stress the bad press fans have, and notes various reasons for it. Among them I would like to underline the arguments Lewis offers regarding the attitude of the academic community towards this matter. The confrontation of certain concepts, ideas and approaches previously tackled in this work are present in this area of research too. In fact, considerations about passive and active audience and high and low culture are within the arguments posited by Lewis when explaining this issue (Lisa A. Lewis, 2001, p. 1):

We all know who the fans are. They're the ones who wear the colors of their favorite team, the ones who record their soap operas on VCRs to watch after the work day is over, the ones who tell you every detail about a movie star's life and work, the ones who sit in line for hours for front row tickets to rock concerts. Fans are, in fact, the most visible and identifiable of audiences. How is it, then, that they have been overlooked or not taken seriously as research subjects by critics and scholars? And why are they maligned and sensationalized by the popular press, mistrusted by the public? For the academy, the answer may reside in its historical propensity to treat media audiences as passive and controlled, its tendency to privilege aesthetic superiority in programming, its reluctance to support consumerism, its belief in media industry manipulation. The popular press, as well, has stigmatized fandom by emphasizing danger, abnormality, and silliness. And the public deny their own fandom, carry on secret lives as fans or risk the stigma that comes from being a fan.

In spite of the different consideration of fans, according to the information gathered from those texts involved in research on fans and fandom we can assert that, in general terms, these concepts are associated with a consideration of an audience which is active at a high level, since, as Alan Mckee asserts (2002, p. 67):

Jenkins showed not simply that fans are ‘active’ (producers), but also that they engaged with the television text in a number of ways’. (...). What caught the imagination of many television researchers (particularly in the cultural studies tradition) about the ‘fans’ described by Jenkins was the fact that they produced *material* culture of their own. They did not simply react to an academic agenda ... Rather they displayed agency in their everyday media consumption.

This scholar is referring to Henry Jenkins’ *Textual Poachers* (1992) which, as he notes ‘is the work most commonly cited as introducing fans to television studies’. Grindstaff also mentions Henry Jenkins’ work as the baseline for fan studies. (Grindstaff, 2014, p. 347)

The analytic framework for this initial phase of fan studies came from French anthropologist Michele de Certeau via Henry Jenkins. De Certeau’s theory of ‘poaching’ offered media scholars a way of understanding fan activity as productive and participatory within an overall context of inequality and institutional marginalization (de Certeau, 1984)

On the other hand academic Bignell associates the work of John Fiske on active audiences, and more specifically his theory of resistance, with the fan culture. I would also like to underscore the link that Bignell establishes with various social activities, actions, carried out by fans and followers of television programmes. Referring to Fiske’s work on audience activity and his theory of resistance Bignell points out:

This theory (resistance) is most associated with the work of John Fiske (1992a, 1994) and with a body of research on fan culture. Television fans use programmes as the central resource for activities including: constructing social networks; setting up social and commercial events (such as conventions);

creating new texts (such as songs, fanzines or websites). So studies of fan audiences show how some television viewers take hold of television and transform it into their own cultural text, and it is argued that all television viewers, though to a lesser extent than fans, make their own meanings and social relationships out of television. Fans and audiences in general appear to resist swallowing whole the meanings which television programmes may have, and instead they take and reshape the aspects of television programmes that make sense to them and offer them opportunities. Fans, and indeed all viewers to some extent, are resistant and active audiences. (Bignell 2013, p. 30)

Jon Fiske's approach to the study of fans emphasises the concept of them as an active audience involved in various activities. Likewise, in addition to the reflections which associate that idea with his theory of resistance, he also presents an analysis of that fact from a popular culture perspective. All this can be observed in his essay 'The Cultural Economy of Fandom' (Fiske, 1992/2001) and also in Lisa A. Lewis' comments about his work:

John Fiske defines fandom as the register of a subordinate system of cultural taste. Applying Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural economy', he describes how the cultural criteria of fans differ from (and, at times, appropriate) official standards. In contrast to official culture, which relies on aesthetic evaluation of texts and the elevation of individual artistry, popular culture proponents tend to formulate personal (social) connections with texts and to participate in textual production. All audiences, Fiske declares, engage in production, not mere reception, but fans execute a broader range of producerly activity. Fans concentrate on popular culture, he suggests, because industrially-produced texts encourage identification and participation by audience members. (Lisa A. Lewis, 2001, pp. 2 - 3)

The concept of active audience also underpins the analysis of Lawrence Grossberg on this phenomenon. Although his remarks coincide with some of Fiske's statements, Grossberg's reflections include other interesting associations that I would like to highlight. Hence, he stresses the relationship between audience and culture, and ideas such as cultural activity and construction of identities are posited by this scholar.

L.A. Lewis also underlines these aspects when referring to this author's academic article, 'Is There a Fan in the House: The Affective Sensibility of Fandom':

Lawrence Grossberg approaches fandom as a distinct 'sensibility', a special relationship between audience and culture in which the pleasure of consumption is superseded by an investment in difference. In fandom, moods and feelings become organized and particular objects or personas take on significance. By participating in fandom, fans construct coherent identities for themselves. In the process, they enter a domain of cultural activity of their own making which is, potentially, a source of empowerment in struggles against oppressive ideologies and the unsatisfactory circumstances of everyday life. (Lisa A. Lewis, 2001, p. 3).

According to all the information gathered and analysed, I could say that the study of fans and fandom brings interesting conclusions for our research work. Among them I would like to focus on the contribution of this phenomenon, closely related to the concept of active audience, with regard to the next topics that I have already identified as core matters associated to the objectives of this research and the considerations about this communication and entertainment medium. I am referring to such issues as: audience engagement, the distinction between high and low cultural viewers and the importance of entertainment media as a means for creating communities. These ideas can, in fact, already be glimpsed in the paragraphs drawn from different well known scholars that we have quoted throughout this section.

i) Engagement: participatory audience:

I want to emphasise the concept of 'engagement' as part of the broader term of 'reception', but one step further from previous references to audience activity. I have already commented on this idea at the beginning of this section. As it can be seen in

those previous texts, this concept is also related to the 'fan' phenomena, because the behaviour of these followers implies some level of engagement with the products they watch.

In fact, the study of fans and fandom showed a higher level of activity on the side of some television viewers who were certainly 'enthusiastic', as the definition of the term mentioned at the beginning of this section suggests (cf. MacKee 2002, p. 67). However, further than that, it could be noticed that they also produced their own material and formed communities, being also active as members of those groups. Actually, the references to fans and fandom are associated to the concept of 'participatory audience' more than 'just', only, 'active audience'. (cf. Grindstaff 2014, p. 347)

ii) Television viewers: high and low culture.

Therefore, in relation to the study of fans and fandom I would highlight the concepts of 'engagement' and participatory audience as linked to this area of research, but I would also like to underline the idea that Alen Mckee shows in the already mentioned essay 'Fandom'. I find the next paragraph interesting, since he links this topic with the dichotomy of high and low culture as well as intellectuals versus 'plain', 'normal', ordinary television viewers, issues that I have previously highlighted and identified as key concepts of this research work. McKee notes that, in fact, there is not such a great difference between the way some intellectuals and academics of television studies read and analyse television texts and the way some of the audience, such as fans of certain television programmes, do it.

The academic study of cultural consumption since the industrial revolution has been consistently bifurcated (see Rose, 2001, pp. 393-438). On the one hand, studies of how ‘we’ (intellectuals) consume culture –the disciplines of English literature and art history- have worked on the assumption that readers actively make interpretations drawing on a detailed set of already held knowledges about similar texts, previous great works and other forms of cultural capital (‘One is immediately reminded of Cicero’s ...’). On the other hand, studies of how ‘they’ (the working and lower middle classes –the ‘masses’) consume culture have, for much of the century, assumed that these readers do not do any work of interpreting the texts. Rather, in some way, they have ideas put straight into their brains (through processes such as ideology, hegemony, etc.). Even when the same texts are being consumed, a tradition of thinking exists where the masses do not interpret in the same way because they lack ‘discrimination’ in their interpretation of these texts. Such a division has been employed by both right-wing conservative thinkers (such as F. R. and Q. D. Leavis) and by left-wing radical critics (such as Frankfurt School writer Theodor Adorno). (McKee, 2002, pp. 66 - 67)

This academic’s next paragraph summarises his conclusions about the division between intellectuals and non academic viewers:

Work on fan audiences has finally made clear that such a distinction –between ‘our’ (academic) processes of interpretation and ‘their’ (non-academic) ways of making meaning- is unsustainable. While there are undoubtedly many different ways to make sense of a text, a simplistic binary that keeps us at arm’s length from them does little to explain these; for fan studies show us that ‘they’ may indeed be ‘us’. (McKee, 2002, p. 67)

With respect to this matter, Alan McKee (2002) also mentions Mathew Hills, who noted that there is an ontological similarity between ‘fans’ and ‘academics’ (Mathew Hills, quoted in Tulloch, 2001, p. 231). McKee points out that ‘We can no longer insist that “we” (the intellectuals) watch television one way, while “they” (the masses) watch it another.’ His final statement at the end of his essay emphasises this argument (MacKee, 2002, p. 69):

Some people engage with texts in great detail. They consume them again and again; they publish articles examining elements of these texts in great detail; they engage in arguments about meaning and about the worth of various texts (see McKee, 2001). (...) Of course, some people are credentialed for this work, and paid to do it; we call them academics. And some do it on an unpaid basis: we call them fans. This is perhaps the most attractive element of fan studies: in setting up new distinctions –not between intellectual and mass, but between engaged or disengaged consumers (or positions in between) –a new relationship between categories emerges. Perhaps now we can see that the category of ‘humanities intellectual’ is, in fact, a subset of the category ‘fan’. We are them; we are the fans who are lucky enough to get paid to be fans.

Media scholar Joli Jenson refers to that distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’ too. She compares fan activities and academic activities, aficionados and fans, concluding that there are great similarities between them. Jenson observes that despite that, fans are viewed as irrational and uncultivated, while academia interest groups are depicted as rational, respectable and refined. According to her analysis, this differentiation stems back to the ‘minority culture’ theorist critique of popular culture in contrast to intellectually engaging, ‘high culture’. This assessment would be the consequence of a ‘cultural hierarchy’, the elitist difference established between ‘high culture’ products and attitudes and ‘low brow’ cultural objects and reactions (Jenson, 2001, p. 9, 10):

Fans, when insistently characterized as ‘them,’ can be distinguished from ‘people like us’ (students, professors and social critics) as well as from (the more reputable) patrons or aficionados or collectors. But these respectable social types could also be defined as ‘fans,’ in that they display interest, affection and attachment, especially for figures in, or aspects of, their chosen field. But the habits and practices of, say, scholars and critics are not deemed fandom, and are not considered to be potentially deviant or dangerous. Why? My conclusion claims that the characterization of fandom as pathology is based in, supports, and justifies elitist and disrespectful beliefs about our common life.

As said, this academic also associates the distinction between reason and emotion with the status, that is to say, with the dichotomy between high and low class and culture (Jenson, 2001, p. 20, 21):

This valuation of the genteel over the rowdy is based in status (and thus class) distinctions. (...) Unemotional, detached, ‘cool’ behavior is seen as more worthy and admirable than emotional, passionate, ‘hot’ behavior. (...) The division between worthy and unworthy is based in an assumed dichotomy between reason and emotion. The reason–emotion dichotomy has many aspects. It describes a presumed difference between the educated and uneducated, as well as between the upper and lower classes. It is a deeply rooted opposition, one that the ascription of intrinsic differences between high and low culture automatically obscures.

iii) Creating communities.

The disposition and ability to create communities on the side of those who are fans and followers of certain programmes is observed when studying the behaviour of this active and engaged audience. Most researchers on fans and fandom focus on the importance of forming communities, as a factor directly associated with this participatory audience’s activity. In recent years this aspect has gained importance since the internet and the new technologies have facilitated and boosted the creation of communities of followers of different programmes who are certainly very active. Hence, they take part both in making comments but also generating, disseminating and sharing content related to them.

I want to point up the importance of this feature of fans, understanding them (this term) as mentioned at the beginning of this section, since their various activities witness their capacity to create communities, groups that share their liking, their fondness and engagement, attachment, with a certain programme, its characters and participants. This capacity to communicate among them and with the programme, to do

things that they share, to form groups and communities due to common interests, counters the fears of the first researchers on television effects. These scholars claimed that television viewing would create isolated individuals and would disrupt the social interaction among members of society that was a characteristic of the times previous to the advent and development of this medium (cf. Perse & Lambe, 2017). As said before, McKee also comments on this fact in his essay, and he notes that:

The fact that television fans form communities has also been important. For Marxist-inflected forms of television studies, the community is vitally important: one of the charges repeatedly laid against capitalist culture is that it encourages individualism, and the lack of communal solutions to problems. Writers on television fans have therefore emphasised the importance of community formation: the fact that fans meet and discuss their ideas (...) we must also bear in mind that such communities exist virtually as well. (McKee, 2002, pp. 67-68)

Actually, we can see that the relationship between the fans and fandom phenomenon and their capacity to form communities is highlighted by most of the studies developed in this field. This fact can be considered one of the social effects of television on viewers but, together with that, the value of these active followers must be taken in account when analysing the effects that the audience and their activity have on this medium too.

In summary, in these sections we have approached the analysis of the effects of television from the field of audience and reception studies. According to the literature, information, explanations and reflections gathered until now we can observe that those theories and approaches associated with the concept of active audience permit a more positive approach to the assessment of the effects of television and more precisely of television entertainment among viewers. We can see that within that research

framework a broad list of positive effects associated to television entertainment viewing, in different fields, can be identified and defined.

1.4. Television entertainment's effects: Psychology.

1.4.1. Television entertainment: the psychology field.

In previous sections we have analysed the effects of television as part of audience and reception studies, for which approaches from sociology are dominant. Nonetheless, when studying the effects of television entertainment and its evolution, we can say that the contribution of the psychology field is crucial. Scholars who have conducted research on that field point out the scarcity of studies on that topic for many years despite its importance and interest, and note the contributions of psychological approaches to the study of entertainment and its effects. The studies on that topic from a psychological perspective have increased considerably during these last years, though. I quote below some comments extracted from several relevant texts of well known academics of this field which assert that.

Percy H. Tannenbaum, in one of the pioneer compilations on this topic, boosted by the Committee on Television and Social Behaviour of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) that, in fact he edited, *The Entertainment Functions of Television* (1980, pp. 1-2) points out that:

There has, nevertheless, been very little research on the entertainments functions of the media (...) Scholars of television, particularly, avoid this phenomenon (...) among the neglected items on the communication research agenda was the great appeal of the public media in general and television in particular as a means of disseminating entertainment fare on a broad basis. (...) if we are to

more fully understand and appreciate the television medium and its functions in our contemporary society, a more systematic study of its role as a popular entertainment device is called for. Indeed, one wonders how it has been so neglected for so long, especially considering how dominant sheer entertainment is on television and that, one way or another, the effect of television has probably been among the most researched social science phenomena to date. The time has clearly come, to use the phrase of Elihu Katz (1977), “to take entertainment seriously”.

Peter Vorderer and Tilo Hartmann in their article ‘Entertainment and Enjoyment as Media Effects’ (2009) included in the third edition of the book *Media Effects. Advances in Theory and Research*, assert that:

Research on media entertainment clearly has become an established field of study within communication science and media psychology. Although entertainment media had been under-researched for several decades, their significance, content, and consumption were never really questioned. (Vorderer and Hartman, 2009, p. 532)

Actually, Mary Beth Oliver, editor of the above mentioned classic book *Media Effects. Advances in Theory and Research*, comments on those facts in her essay ‘Entertainment’ included as a chapter in *The Sage Handbook of Media Processes and Effects* (2009):

Given the centrality of entertainment in the lives of most people, it is somehow surprising that compared with research on other aspects of media, such as news or persuasion, most of the theorizing on entertainment media specifically has occurred relatively recently (...). Within a short time span, though, scholarship on the psychology of entertainment has increased tremendously, with professional organizations now including specific divisions and interest groups on topics such as entertainment studies. (Oliver, 2009, p. 161)

Prestigious Professor Zillman also commented on that topic during his lecture at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, in 2006:

Given that the Age of Entertainment is upon us, it is astounding how little attention contemporary scholars have given to understanding what it is that draws us to entertainment and what, in cognitive and emotional terms, we get out of succumbing to the lure of these entertainments (...) But modern psychology has largely bypassed people's obtrusive fascination with entertainment, especially with media entertainment, seemingly considering these issues unworthy of serious theorizing and empirical examination. A reorientation is slowly taking place, however. New theoretical proposals are being made and their merits tested.

Studies on the psychology of entertainment state the fact of the importance of entertainment consumption in understanding emotions. Without leaving aside the potential negative implications of entertainment viewing, this approach permits more positive considerations of entertainment media, and therefore television entertainment, when analysing its effects. Hence, these perspectives mainly emphasise the fact that entertainment is as such a media effect, and they present entertainment as a positive emotion. Therefore, watching television entertainment would have positive effects on viewers since it would generate a positive 'meta-emotion' in them. Consequently, the positive psychological and even physical effects of those emotions brought out by entertainment consumption are analysed and born in mind when studying the effects of entertainment from the psychology field. In addition, watching entertainment media would fulfil some of people's affective and emotional needs, as we have already noted in the section dedicated to reception studies and to the application of the *uses and gratifications* model by that field of study.

These approaches and the conclusions drawn by scholars who conduct research in the field of psychology are regarded as important contributions for the study of the effects of entertainment. In the case of my research work I find them indeed very compelling too. In 'Entertainment and Enjoyment as Media Effects' Peter Vorderer and Tilo Hartmann (2009) highlight the aforementioned significance of the contributions of

psychology to the study of media entertainment and its effects (Vorderer & Hartman, 2009, p. 533):

...the field of psychology discovered the relevance of consumption of entertainment for understanding emotion. Comedy, pornography, mediated sports, and other forms of media entertainment trigger affective experiences, which attracted the attention of psychologists, especially that of Percy Tannenbaum (1980) and his mentee, Dolf Zillman. Zillman and his early collaborators -most importantly, Jennings Bryant and Joanne Cantor- built upon general foundations from the psychology of entertainment. In doing so, they formed and shaped the beginnings of a systematic, theory-driven enquiry of media entertainment, which still guide and inform contemporary approaches (cf., Bryant, Cantor, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2003; Bryant & Miron, 2002; Klimmt & Vorderer, in press; Raney & Bryant, 2002; Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004)

The contribution of psychology must indeed be taken into account when studying entertainment media and their effects. Regarding television, special mention should be made to the book edited by Percy Tannenbaum in 1980 and published on line in 2014, *The entertainment functions of Television*. This thorough text witnesses the interest of psychologists on this topic and compiles academic articles that focus on the various uses, functions and effects of television entertainment. Both sociological and psychological aspects of this genre are analysed. Tannenbaum defines it as a collective work of a variety of authors that intend to “more fully understand and appreciate the television medium and its function in our contemporary society”. (Tannenbaum, 1980, p. 2)

Throughout the different chapters of this volume, the result of the analysis of several topics related to television entertainment can be found, and positive contributions of this genre regarding them are noted in their conclusions. Conceptual analysis is conducted, the sociological perspective is included, the power and limitations of this genre are examined, but, together with that, research from both cognitive and

affective perspectives can be found. Likewise, the approach to this genre as a vicarious emotional experience presents interesting conclusions with regard to the positive functions and effects of television entertainment. Finally, I would like to emphasise the analysis of the effects of comedy, the role of humour, as an important feature of television entertainment when it comes to bringing to the fore the positive effects and contributions of this genre. Actually, when referring to this topic the importance of the physical and psychological benefits of humour are highlighted.

Finally, I would also emphasise the remark made by the promoters of this book, that is to say the *Committee on Television and Social Behavior of the Social Science research Council (SSRC)*, in relation to the need to study the role of television as a popular entertainment device. As the author explains, this volume is, in fact, an indirect product of the activities of this Committee. (Tannenbaum, 1980, p. 2)

Following the work initiated by Tannenbaum, Professor Zillman is considered one of the pioneers in studying the psychology of entertainment. His contributions are taken as fundamental in the development of this field of study. Zillman, in his university lecture previously mentioned (2006), noted some of the topics approached and focuses adopted when studying entertainment media: ‘Analyses of the creation of emotions and of their ultimate effect on mental and physical health have taken center stage. (...) Focus is on the elicitation of moods and emotions as well as on the implications of such affective reactivity for coping with adversity’.

Zillman and Vorderer wrote about the psychological aspects and the attraction of this genre in *Media Entertainment. The psychology of its appeal* (2000). Further publications that approach the study of media entertainment by the psychology field show the importance of that perspective for the study of this topic. They are indeed

interesting, for they tackle various issues that bring deep insight into matters related to the influence and the effects of television entertainment.

The compilation of articles gathered under the title *Psychology of Entertainment*, initially edited by Jennings Bryant and Peter Vorderer in 2006 and reedited in 2011 and 2013, presents detailed information about the study of entertainment from a psychological perspective. Interesting findings, reflections and conclusions with regard to the different areas of research related to entertainment, drawn from the work of many relevant researchers on this field are gathered in this volume. As the authors explain, this book ‘is dedicated to advancing understanding of the fundamental psychological processes and mechanisms of entertainment.’ (Bryant and Vorderer, 2011, p. x).

Jennings Bryant and Peter Vorderer, co-editors of this volume, explain that having taught numerous seminars in entertainment theory over the years, and having presented a plethora of lectures on various facets of entertainment on several continents they noticed that they concurred on most areas about which they had experienced delimiting knowledge gaps in entertainment theory and research. Therefore, they identified scholars who were doing excellent research and theory construction in those underserved aspects of entertainment theory, and they called upon those peers who seemed to be making the most significant progress in understanding those fundamental intellectual underpinnings of entertainment theory. Following the editors’ request, these scholars synthesized their research, as well as the cognate scholarships of others, in the several domains that Jennings Bryant and Peter Vorderer had identified. As they point out, *Psychology of Entertainment*, is the concrete product of their collaboration. (Bryant and Vorderer, 2011, pp. xix-x).

The result is a comprehensive volume that includes both the outcomes of the initial researchers on this field, the co-authors of this compilation being among them, as well as the contributions of other scholars that helped to fill the gaps they had noticed. Following the authors explanations and observing the topics that the six general sections and the 24 chapters that this book include, as well as the numerous scholars who contribute to their writing, we could say that this extensive volume compiles the results of relevant and varied research conducted regarding the various topics associated with the study of entertainment from a psychological approach. It shows the broad range of matters tackled as well as the main reflections and conclusions associated to that issue, as well as the different aspects involved in the analysis of entertainment, including television entertainment, from the psychology field, whose contributions, as we have already pointed out, are noticeable.

The work of those researchers together with that conducted by other scholars mentioned previously, analyse both the process and the effects of entertainment, which also includes television entertainment. Among their conclusions, positive effects and contributions of this genre are presented. All this proves the centrality of the psychology field for the study of television entertainment and its effects, as well as the relevance of this perspective when it comes to finding out about the positive influence and impact of this genre.

1.4.1.1. Mixed approaches: Psychology and Communication Research.

I have mentioned before that most of the research on the entertainment area has been developed from the field of psychology, although in recent years approaches that mix this discipline with other fields have been adopted. Perspectives that also take into

account either sociology or communication studies, or even both, are born in mind when studying entertainment media and, television entertainment in particular.

In that sense I want to highlight the work of Vorderer and Hartman (2009), because their contribution to the book *Media Effects. Advances in Theory and Research*, in the chapter ‘Entertainment and Enjoyment as Media Effects’, offers interesting reflections that they draw from an analysis that mixes various disciplines. According to their explanations, these scholars take the previous approaches to this topic as a starting point, but they go further in the study of entertainment and enjoyment as media effects. Hence, they propose a research framework that integrates approaches from psychology (evolutionary and positive) and from communication research. They take into account the reflections of various scholars from these different fields to point out the importance of entertainment. Its positive aspects and its links with emotions are emphasised. Likewise, entertainment, as such, is broadly conceptualized in positive terms. (p. 533):

On the basis of these early approaches this chapter proposes an integrative model of media entertainment and enjoyment. The conceptualization starts from the broad grounds of an ecological perspective, which in turn draws on recent integrative approaches to media entertainment proposed from perspectives such as evolutionary psychology (Miron, 2006; Schwab, 2003), positive psychology (Ryan, Rigby, & Przybylski, 2006; Vorderer, Steen & Chan, 2006) and communication research (Denham, 2004; Frueh, 2002; Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004). Such an ecological perspective regards the user as an organism that exists in a “real” (physical) world but is playfully involved in a “mediated” environment during exposure to media content (Bryant & Miron, 2002). Entertainment, in its broadest sense, is conceptualized as a positive mood-like meta-emotion, which arises from the appreciation of underlying primary emotions (cf. Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, & Viehoff, 2008; Frueh, 2002; Wirth & Schramm, 2007). Successful progress towards short –and long-term goals to reach both physiological and psychological life-balance (cf., Damasio, 1999) is seen as a key mechanism of meta-level appreciation.

1.4.1.2. Mixed approaches: Psychosocial research.

On the other hand, more recently, scholar Jo Whitehouse-Hart, has published a book entitled *Psychosocial Exploration of Film and Television Viewing* (2014) where she offers a perspective that combines the disciplines of psychology and sociology, as the author explains: "... this book will develop a new approach to audience studies and this approach is distinctive in that it is psychosocial and psychoanalytically informed" (p. 25).

The conclusions she draws go even further, because although she stresses the importance of psychology to tackle this topic, this author also emphasises the validity of a psychosocial approach. She highlights the need to combine various perspectives and disciplines to fully understand the implications of the process, and, consequently, of the effects, the impact, of television content viewing, among other audio-visual texts. The conclusions that this academic summarises in this paragraph are very interesting with regard to my research work. (Whitehouse-Hart, 2014, p. 166):

The most important conclusion is that viewing is a psychosocial activity *and* audiences are best understood through interdisciplinary approaches which combine insights from social science, film, television and communication studies and psycho-analysis. The latter is crucial, as it involves the existence of a dynamic unconscious which has its own effects. This premise brings something new to a series of disciplines that have shared similar objects of study but have lacked dialogue. A psychosocial approach overcomes some of the division between the study of texts, readers, uses and spectators found respectively in Film, Television, Cultural and Media Studies. The case studies demonstrated intricate viewing configurations, emerging from a range of mutually constitutive, social, emotional, historical, discursive and unconscious processes that can only be fully understood using a range of approaches and methods.

1.4.2. Entertainment as an effect of the media: the Uses and Gratifications approach.

Therefore, many academics stress the contributions of the studies on entertainment conducted in the field of psychology which, as Zillman and Vorderer (2000) note, has become a booming field since the last 1990s. When observing the work about media entertainment carried out in this area we can see that it mainly focuses on the relation between entertainment and emotions. We can also notice that these studies are mainly developed from the uses and gratifications approach. In fact, entertainment is studied by psychologists as a media effect, associated to this perspective of analysis. Many researchers comment on these facts. I have quoted just a few words of well known scholars that highlight each one of these statements.

Rubin (2009b, p. 148), referring to Fisher words, emphasises that: ‘Uses and gratifications is a psychological *communication perspective* (Fisher, 1978)’, Mary Beth Oliver (2009, p. 162) comments that: ‘Perhaps one of the most basic and widely used approaches to studying media entertainment is via uses and gratifications; and Perse and Lambe mention that: ‘Uses and gratifications is the theoretical perspective that underlies media effects that result from seeking enjoyment from media content.’ (Perse & Lambe, 2017, p. x)

I want therefore to end this chapter calling attention to the importance of this theory, this approach, for the study of the effects, the impact and, hence, to the research on the contributions of television entertainment. In previous sections we have referred to its key role when studying the effects from the perspective of audience and reception studies (1.3.4.2.2) but, as we have pointed out now, the analysis conducted by psychologists reinforce the importance of this research model for the study of effects, and the effects of entertainment in particular, from other perspectives too. Precise

mentions to television entertainment are made, and various forms and genres are taken into account. Studies regarding comedy and humour and analyses of specific programmes of different type are conducted. The effects on different areas are also a matter of interest and object of research from the *uses and gratifications* perspective. Likewise, positive effects of entertainment watching are pointed out.

The contributions of the scholar Alain M. Rubin to the study of media effects are well known. From his early work, this academic stresses the complexity of the process and the importance of the various conditions involved when studying the media uses and effects, as Ruggiero (2000, p. 13) comments: ‘Thus, the media uses and effects process is an increasingly complex one that requires careful attention to antecedent, mediating, and consequent conditions (Rubin, 1994)’.

Rubin (2009b) presents an evolving perspective of the *uses and gratifications* approach and shows the importance of this framework for the study of the effects of media entertainment, including television. I have selected some of his statements and arranged them according to various axes that I consider essential for understanding the main concepts involved, as well as the contributions and the validity of this approach for the study of the effects of media, and thus of television, entertainment:

- a) Key aspects of this model
- b) Main assumptions that define its framework.
- c) Core elements associated to effects by this approach: Motivation, activity and Involvement
- d) Assessment of U&G as a research model.

Consequently, in the next pages I will quote some of the statements and information extracted from Rubin's texts. Although I am aware that some of them refer to aspects that we have already noted in previous sections and they may, therefore, sound repetitive, I have decided to include them anyway, due to their importance with regard to the issues we are dealing with. Moreover, the fact that these main aspects that I note below are highlighted by most relevant scholars when referring to the *uses and gratifications* model, and by those who study media effects, and the effects of television entertainment in particular, from this perspective, reinforce their significance, which I also want to bring to the fore here.

Thus, I have previously commented on the theory of *uses of gratifications* in respect to audience and receptions studies (1.3.4.2.2), in this chapter though I am referring to this theory within the scholarship that focuses on the study of effects, and more precisely on those approaches that study entertainment as a media effect, within the psychology field. Nevertheless, as said, while referring to the same theory it is inevitable to focus again on some of the main principles of this model that we have also commented on. I have intentionally not avoided this aspect, according to the reasons just explained and as a means to emphasise them and their relevance.

1.4.2.1. Uses and Gratifications: key aspects: These words of Rubin (2009b, p. 147)

summarise the main factors that define this theory:

... Uses and Gratifications is an alternative to traditional media effects approaches for studying media processes (McLeod & Becker, 1974). It has evolved and matured as a perspective highlighting the role of the audience initiative to explain channel choice and message selection, interpretation, response, and impact (...) shifting the focus from the direct and undue influence

of the media on passive and isolated individuals to active audience members selecting and using the media.

1.4.2.2. The Uses and Gratifications framework: main premises. This scholar outlines the five main premises assumed when conducting analysis according to this model, as mentioned by some of the main academics who have written about it (Rubin, 2009b, p. 148):

Several assumptions underpin uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Palmgreen, 1984; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rosengreen, 1985; Rubin, 2002). First, communication behavior is purposive and motivated. Second, people are relatively active participants who select media and their content. Third, social and psychological characteristics, societal structure, social groups and relationships, and personal involvement mediate communication behavior and effects. Fourth, media compete with other channels -that is, functional alternatives- for selection, attention and use. Fifth, people are usually more influential than the media in the media effects process.

1.4.2.3. Uses and Gratifications: core elements.

Motivation, activity and involvement are identified by Rubin as the core elements of the *uses and gratifications* model. In this paragraph (2009b, p. 150) he also mentions the concepts related to audience activity as pointed by Blumler in 1979.

Across these studies, motivated behavior and involvement have been central to uses and gratifications' focus on active audiences choosing from available communications alternatives. How motivated, active and involved people are affects whether someone might select and attend to a message, and whether a message has the opportunity to affect people (Rubin, 1993). *Motivation* is a key component because it influences the selective and active manner in which we participate in communication and the possible outcomes of the encounters. We are motivated to communicate, we anticipate, and we form expectations about a

communication setting or relationship to coincide with our interests and desires. Motivation and audience activity are central to uses and gratifications (Rubin, 1993). According to Blumler (1979), *audience activity* includes utility (i.e., people use the media), intentionality (i.e., motivation directs media exposure), selectivity (i.e., individual interests and preferences lead to media choice and behavior), and imperviousness (i.e., media are less likely to influence obstinate audiences). The social context also affects activity.

1.4.2.4. Uses and Gratifications as a research model: assessment.

1.4.2.4.1. The Uses and Gratifications model: contributions.

Rubin mentions the validity of the *uses and gratifications* model for the analysis of media effects. He stresses the importance of this theory for the study of both uses and effects and highlights the contributions of that research method in that respect (Rubin 2009a, p. 170):

Uses-and-gratifications research has demonstrated systematic progression during the past few decades. Research has helped explain media behavior and has furthered our understanding of media uses and effects.” Researchers have provided a systematic analysis of media use by adapting similar motivation measures (e.g. Bantz, 1982; Eastman, 1979; Greenberg, 1974; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979; A.M.Rubin, 1979, 1981a, 1981b). Studies within and across research programs have included replication and secondary analysis.

This scholar identifies several research directions that have been developed under this paradigm, and refers to many scholars who have followed those different paths (cf. Rubin, 2009a, pp. 170-171). This information shows the great amount and variety of analysis conducted, as well as the centrality and evolution of that method as a means to study the uses, the gratifications and the effects of the media. These are the seven research directions that Rubin outlines: 1) the links among media-use motives and

their associations with media attitudes and behaviors; 2) comparing motives across media and with newer media; 3) examining the different social and psychological circumstances of media use; 4) linking gratifications sought and obtained when using media and their content; 5) assessment of how variation in background variables, motives, and exposure affect outcomes such as perception of relationships, cultivation, involvement, parasocial interaction, satisfaction, and political knowledge; 6) theoretical developments in thinking and extensions that link uses and gratifications with other communication perspectives; 7) the method, reliability, and validity for measuring motivation.

With regard to this model, Rubin's conclusions are also interesting when comparing the two main perspectives to approach the study of the effects of the media, that is to say, the so called traditional theory of media effects, and the here mentioned *uses and gratifications* model. In this paragraph Rubin collates both approaches and notes their similarities, finishing by highlighting the importance of the *uses and gratifications* framework due to the recognition of an active audience with initiative and choice capacity (Rubin 2009a, pp. 171-172):

Some have proposed a synthesis of uses-and-gratifications and media-effects research (e.g. Rosengren & Windahl, 1972; A.M. Rubin & Windahl, 1986; Windahl, 1981). The primary difference between the two traditions is that a media-effects researcher "most often looks at the mass communication process from the communicator's end" whereas a uses researcher begins with the audience member (Windahl, 1981, p. 176). Windahl argued that it is more beneficial to stress the similarities rather than the differences of the two traditions. One such similarity is that both uses and effects seek to explain the outcomes or consequences of communication such as attitude or perception formation (e.g. cultivation, third-person effects), behavioral changes (e.g. dependency) and societal effects (e.g. knowledge gaps). Uses and gratifications does so, however, recognizing the greater potential for audience initiative, choice and activity.

1.4.2.4.2. The Uses and Gratifications model: criticisms.

i) Audience activity

According to the great amount of literature related to this model of analysis we can assert that there is a great consensus about the contributions and validity of this theory, but we cannot ignore that it also has detractors. In a previous section (1.3.4.2.2.2) I have referred to comments of Ruggiero and Rubin mentioning that some of the early and most common criticisms of this model of research are related to different understandings, considerations and assessments of audience activity. Rubin responds to those criticisms noting that *uses and gratifications* researchers assume that audiences are variable - not universally active, and that they are not equally active at all times. Other researchers also point out that fact, among them we have already noted Levy's (1978) explanation, when he asserts that audiences exhibit varying degrees of activity, occurring at different times in the communication sequence. We have commented on that fact more extensively in the section dedicated to this topic included in the chapter devoted to the *uses and gratifications* model as part of reception studies.

Rubin's suggestion to a valid view of audience activeness brings interesting insight into that discussion. His reflections on that matter include additional arguments linked to the assessment of audience activity, he relates that to the influence of media texts and, finally, Rubin associates, connects, those two main approaches to the study of effects. We have already shown and argued that those different, and somehow conflicting, encountered, perspectives, are linked to the concepts of passive and active audience. Likewise, we have noted that those considerations influence the different assumptions about the real effects of media. Rubin's conclusions, though, emphasise the links between all these concepts. Moreover, he presents a perspective that takes into

account all of them. Hence, he proposes that: ‘A valid view of audience activeness lies on a continuum between being passive (and, perhaps, being more directly influenced by media or messages) and being active (and, perhaps, making more rational decisions in accepting or rejecting messages)’. (Rubin, 1993)

This statement is interesting for the objective of my research, as both in this comment as well as in his proposal about the valid concept of audience activeness mentioned previously, Rubin associates the two main existing approaches, traditions, on the study of effects. The fact that he ends up offering arguments which suggest that both perspectives should be taken into account for the research on this topic is worth mentioning.

ii) Methodology.

In addition to the issue of audience activity, criticisms to the *uses and gratifications* model have also referred to some aspects of the methodology used. We have previously outlined the five basic parameters of this theory that are generally assumed when using this method of research. Some critics, though, have questioned the validity of the additional methodological assumption of this approach, namely the centrality of self-report questionnaires as the main method for collecting data. Rubin mentions this aspect and argues that nowadays other additional methods are also used. Hence, he concludes highlighting the validity of this model. With respect to my research I would also like to stress these other procedures that Rubin includes, that is to say diary, ethnographic and experimental ones (2009b, p. 148):

Katz et al. (1974) suggested an additional methodological assumption: People can articulate their own reasons to communicate and provide accurate

information about media use. In fact, self-report questionnaires have been the primary method for data collection in uses and gratifications. Although some critics have questioned the validity of this assumption (e.g., Elliot, 1974), this method of data collection, which has been supplemented by ethnographic, diary, and experimental methods, has usually been shown to be valid and reliable (Rubin, 1981, 2002).

In summary, we can say that the Uses and Gratification research model is acknowledged as a relevant method for studying the effects of the media, and that it has been broadly adopted as a valid perspective to gain insight into this topic. Likewise, concerning the aims and objectives of my research work, we can also observe its centrality for studying the effects, the impact, of television entertainment, and to identify and analyse some of the positive contributions of this genre.

Having said that, I would add that the additional reflections and comments of Rubin are also worth considering, because he compares this model with the traditional theory of effects. When doing so this scholar links these two main theories both regarding the concept of audience activity as well as in relation to the main assumptions of each model, to draw conclusions that, at some extent, show common points of both approaches and propose a somehow middle point between the two for the study of the effects and influence of media, and consequently television, entertainment.

1.5. Studying television entertainment's effects: evolution.

1.5.1. Focus and scope.

Elizabeth M. Perse has been identified as a prolific researcher in communication (cf. Perse & Lambe, 2017, p. xii), and a great amount of her research and teaching work is devoted to the effects of the media. Perse stresses the importance and the evolution of

this field and notes the centrality of television and television entertainment as a core area of interest when studying the effects, the impact, of the media (Perse, 2001/2008, Perse & Lambe, 2017).

In the second edition of her book *Media Effects and Society*, written together with her colleague Jennifer Lambe, these academics explain that the study of effects has remained active and robust, and remark that much of the empirical research published in the major mass communication journals concerns the effects of the mass media. They point out that there is no longer discussion in that literature about whether the media have effects or not; although the question of whether media effects are strong or substantial has certainly not been settled, and assert that some of this disagreement is definitional. They conclude stating that ‘there is a consensus, for the most part, among scholars that media do have some impact on various dimensions of social life and structure’ (Perse & Lambe, 2017, p. 7).

These authors emphasise the importance of this field of study. They suggest that if we understand how media effects occur, then we can increase the likelihood of positive effects and lessen the chance of negative effects. Therefore the study of effects should help to understand how to enhance mass communication’s prosocial effects and mitigate its negative effects. (Perse & Lambe, 2017, p. viii).

With regard to the areas of study of this field of research, Perse and Lambe (2017, p. 1) explain that ‘One of the primary focuses of the study of mass communication has been the social, cultural, and psychological effects of media content and use’. Concerning the scope of research, these scholars comment that: ‘Media effects research focuses on the manifestations of the influence that the mass media have on

people, institutions, society and culture' but they also take into account that 'Mass media have been hypothesized to have effects across a broad range of contexts'.

As far as television is concerned, Perse and Lambe (2017, p. 4) note the amount of studies that have focused on this medium. These academics mention the work of Potter and Riddle (2007) who, being interested in the fact that scholars have published over 4,000 studies about the impact of mass communication, tried to get some insight into the scope of that research. They examined issues of 16 mass communication journals from a sample of issues over the years 1993-2005. They found that 962 articles reporting various media effects were published over that 12-year period –about a third of all the articles published in those journals. Perse and Lambe stress the fact that it wasn't a surprise to find out that television was the focus of most of the studies, and that cognitive behavioral and attitudinal effects were the most common topics of media effects research. (Perse & Lambe, 2017, p. 4)

Likewise, these academics outline and describe the effects that this field of study focuses on. They point out that, besides the affective and behavioral effects of entertainment, the cognitive impact of this genre is a matter of great interest for researchers. (Perse and Lambe, 2017, pp. 4-5)

In general, media effects are usually described as cognitive, affective, or behavioral (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; Bryant & Zillman, 2009; Chaffee, 1977). Cognitive effects are those that concern the acquisition of information: what people learn, how beliefs are structured (or restructured) in the mind, how needs for information are satisfied or not. These effects include concerns about what is learned as well as how much is learned. Whereas news and public affairs information is often the focus of cognitive effects, the cognitive impact of entertainment is also an important area of study. Affective effects involve the formation of attitudes, or positive or negative evaluations about something. Other areas of affective effects concern emotional reactions to media content, such as fright or amusement, or the development of feelings toward other objects as a result of media exposure, such as the generation of fear in society as a result

of watching violent television programming. Behavioral effects are observable actions that are linked to media exposure. The most studied kinds of behavioral effects focus on anti- or prosocial behavior.

1.5.2. Television effects: approaches.

Yet, in these previous chapters and sections we have focused on the studies of the effects in relation to the audience, the viewers, concentrating mainly in those three areas that Perse has identified as most researched during all these years, namely the cognitive, affective and attitudinal, behavioral, influence of media, and television in particular. The approaches and conclusions concerning the study of media effects have varied since the beginning though. The evolution of this field of research can be noticed in different areas. To begin with the approaches, the models of research, have varied, and so they have the conclusions drawn. Besides that, we can notice that a broader range of topics are now analysed, and we will comment on that later on. Among the different media, television is the most researched medium and we can observe that the analysis of television entertainment has increased significantly, especially in recent years.

When analysing the effects of television and television entertainment from these various approaches, reflections on both sides, positive and negative, are presented. However, I would like to emphasise the fact that in general terms these new perspectives open interesting paths to the study of television entertainment and its effects in a more positive way, contrasting with the first models, associated to the so-called tradition study of effects, that analysed this topic from a narrower view and emphasised the negative influence of this medium.

In fact, we have already explained that those first studies were conducted from a perspective that stressed the negative effects. Worries about the social and psychological isolation of viewers due to the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, and their consideration as a passive mass that were easily and deeply influenced by the all-powerful media were emphasised during those first years. Theories of *stimulus-response*, *isolation* as well as *fear and panic* were central at that stage. The theory of effects commonly known as *magic bullet* and *hypodermic needle* was assumed by most of the academics who studied the effects of media at that time.

In a second phase, the theory of limited effects was developed, which was based in the consideration of the audience as active. Likewise, the complexity of this medium and the influence of various factors associated to the real impact of television were taken into account.

The core role of those theories and the centrality of the *uses and gratifications* perspective for the study of the effects of the media and especially of television can be observed. The relevance of the psychological approach when studying entertainment and the implication of the viewing process and its effects is mentioned by many scholars. This perspective is mainly developed inside the framework of the *uses and gratifications* model, taking into account the main assumptions, both theoretical and methodological defined by it. The evolution of this theory including new premises and various methods of research contribute to the validity of this model. The combination of different disciplines and fields are also proposed and put into practice, which helps to obtain comprehensive information about the effects of entertainment. A more positive view towards television entertainment, in contrast to the negative perspective that the traditional study of effects emphasises, opens an avenue of research that helps to identify the positive effects, impact and contributions of this genre. Having said that, a

combination of both theories and approaches, of their premises, assumptions and conclusions and the work developed in various disciplines adequately melded seem to be the best way to identify, analyse and assess the real effects of television entertainment, its impact and its contributions.

1.5.3. Television effects: topics of research.

Consequently, we can assert that the approaches, the perspectives of research when studying the effects of television have changed, and so they have the conclusions drawn. Likewise, the fields of interest associated with the studies of effects have also varied since the first studies conducted around the middle of last century. The evolution regarding both the amount and the variety of topics studied is evident.

Hence, in previous sections we have mainly focused on the effects of media on the audience, either from a sociological or psychological perspective, because the first studies on television effects were, in fact, audience centred. However, now I want to bring attention to the fact that since those investigations, new issues are being studied, and the effects, the influence, the impact, that media has in other areas are also taken into account by most recent researchers on this field.

Perse (2001/2008, 2017) indeed, notes that mass media have been hypothesized to have effects across a broad range of contexts, and summarises most of the main topics of research since the first studies on media effects were conducted. This academic includes the list of the most commonly mentioned intended and unintended media effects that was sketched out a quarter of a century ago by W. J. McGuire (1986) to, later on, stress the fact that more recent compilations of media effects research highlight other areas of media effects. Among them, she mentions the rise of interest in issues

associated with societal and emotional effects, knowledge gained and changes in institutions and industry due to new technologies. An overview of some of the latest texts and compilations of articles published shows the broad range of topics and areas of study covered nowadays by this scholarship.

When compared to previous publications, the presence of new issues can be observed, and with regard to my research I would like to call attention to the recent increasing interest in studying the effects, the influence, of entertainment. Perse also enquires into this issue and she even adds a whole chapter devoted to this topic in the latest edition (2017) of her book *Media Effects and Society*, where she offers an overview of various effects of entertainment. Other recent compilations and text books, either on media effects or about television studies, in general, also include chapters and articles on this topic.

Nevertheless, it needs to be said that despite the growing interest and the increasing amount of research conducted in the area of media entertainment during these last years, for a long time academics were reluctant to study and publish on that issue, because they did not consider 'entertainment' a serious research topic deserving intellectual analysis, as we have commented at the beginning of this section. However, social changes encouraged research explicitly committed to overcoming elitist and prevailing ways of thinking and evaluating cultural products. In addition to that, as we have seen, the contribution of the field of psychology was essential in boosting research on that area, for it brought attention to the relevance of entertainment consumption for understanding emotion.

Since then, the effects of entertainment in relation to emotions and affective needs and consequences have been analysed, and also the positive psychological

influence of entertainment has been highlighted by media academics. Besides that the influence of media entertainment and television entertainment in particular, in other areas apart from the traditional ones are also studied. New approaches have been developed and new topics have also become a matter of analysis for media and television scholars of various fields.

In summary, as Perse and Lambe comment, although the most commonly studied areas of media effects are well known, it would be impossible to identify all the potential media effects. The breadth of the existing literature of the field illustrates the range of interests of this scholarship (Perse & Lambe, 2017, p. viii). Hence, as these academics highlight: ‘Mass communication is functional in society (C.R. Wright, 1986), and an important field of study because of its role as a major societal institution.’ (Perse and Lambe, 2017, p. 17)

1.5.4. Studying television entertainment’s effects: summary.

Consequently, we can affirm that the significance of the study of the effects of the media and television is broadly acknowledged. Likewise, the relevance of television entertainment and its influence both on television viewers as well as in other various fields is accepted. The evolution of this branch of study can be noticed both in relation to the different approaches used, the various fields involved, the amount and variety of topics analysed and the different reflections and conclusions drawn from of all the work that has been conducted and published since the early years.

The influence of media in economics, politics, public opinion; its psychological and socialisation effects as well as the impact of violent media, are some of the topics that are studied; behavioral, cognitive, and affective effects, are also analysed. Together

with that, the importance of media as a major source of entertainment is observed and its influence in various areas are taken into account. It is broadly assumed that mass media do have effects and it is clear that mass communication is an agent or catalyst to a variety of shifts and changes in people and institutions (cf. Perse & Lambe, 2017). These statements can certainly be applied to television, because the relevance of this medium within the media and when studying its various effects is commonly acknowledged.

So we can conclude that the study of effects is a solid and evolving field of study that includes different approaches, several theories, a large number of topics and areas both of research and influence, as well as varied conclusions. This leads us to assume that a broad range of aspects must be born in mind when analysing the effects, the influence and contributions of television, and, for the purpose of this work, of television entertainment.

Thus, the study of effects, this area of enquiry, has a great influence on the way that television and television entertainment are perceived. The influence of this discipline when analysing television and drawing conclusions about the several areas that the television studies scholarship covers, is indeed relevant. I will focus on that topic, that is to say, 'Television Studies', in the next section.

Actually, as well as the studies on the effects of television have evolved, so have the studies of television as such. Leaving aside the technical research needed for the launching and development of television as a technical medium, artifact - which was obviously paramount from the very beginning - we have seen that most of the early analysis conducted in the field of television studies was done by sociologists, and it was

centred on the negative effects of this communication and entertainment medium on the audience, focusing mainly on the effects on viewers' behaviour and attitudes.

Nevertheless, since those initial approaches the study of television has gained importance and has experienced a considerable change and evolution. This development can easily be noticed if we analyse the related literature and the interesting work conducted by several academics that have shown special interest in highlighting the relevance of this medium and the need to study it in a broader and deeper way. The various and different disciplines involved and the great variety of topics, related to various fields, that can be included as part of television studies witness the need and interest to study television and its influence, effects, impact and contributions from a much broader perspective than the initial one. In this coming chapter I will offer an overview of that.

1.6. Television Studies: evolution.

1.6.1. General overview.

Throughout this work I have referred to the amount of studies that have been conducted focusing on the audience and its analysis from various perspectives, as well to the importance and influence of this brand of research. However, as I have also mentioned, television studies have developed considerably in recent years. Together with the research on television audiences, other disciplines, topics and fields of study are taken into consideration and gaining importance when studying television. Miller (2010, p. 23) summarises very well the issues above mentioned, referring to other researchers' statements:

“Television is vast” – both as an institution and an object of analysis (Hilmes 2005: 113) (...) “It’s not surprising, then, that TV studies is characterized by major debates and differences, since its analysts “speak different languages, use different methods,” and pursue “different questions” (Hartley 1999: 18). Perhaps, “the most salient feature of the study of television may be its institutional dispersal” (Attallah 2007: 339).

Likewise, Janet Wasko (2005, p. 6) mentions this matter in her introduction to the compilation of essays from a wide range of expertise on the study of television, *A Companion to television*, focusing on the interest in various perspectives and approaches when studying television:

Indeed, debates continue to rage about what should be studied and what methods should be used to study television, as many (if not, most) studies of television still represent “single perspectives” or “specific agendas.” However, numerous authors in this volume argue that interdisciplinary, multi-perspective approaches are needed. Horace Newcomb calls for “blended, melded research strategies”, while Doug Kellner describes “multidimensional” or “multiperspectival” approaches to understand television not as an entity –economic, technological, social, psychological, or cultural – but as a site, the point at which numerous questions and approaches intersect and inflect one another.”

In the same line, almost a decade later, Bignell (2013), points out in his book *An Introduction to Television Studies*, that ‘Television Studies is a recent, dynamic and rapidly changing field of work’ (p. 1) and he also asserts that: ‘The discipline of Television Studies is a relatively new academic subject, and in its short history the questions that have been asked about television, and the answers which researchers have discovered, have changed in interesting ways’ (p. 12)

The work of well-known television researchers reflect this evolution and new interests towards television and ultimately over television entertainment too. Among them I would mention the essays, academic articles and various texts written by relevant

scholars regarding this matter (Newcomb, Kellner, Lewis, Lockett, Ruddock, etc.). Likewise, the special volumes either compiled or edited by some of them bring, indeed, insight and interesting contributions to this field of research. In this sense, I would say that Janet Wasko's *A companion to television* (2005b), the various editions of Jonathan Bignell's *An introduction to television studies* (2004, 2008, 2013) and those of Jeremy Orlebar's text *The Television Handbook* (2005, 2011) should be taken into account. I would also highlight one of the latest compilations of academic papers related to this medium, namely, *The Sage Handbook of television studies* (2014). This complete book, edited by Manuel Alvarado, Milly Buonanno, Herman Gray and Toby Miller in 2014 gathers updated contributions of many scholars around different topics and areas of research; issues and matters which are all part of this broad and deep area of study, that is to say, television.

In this respect I would like to highlight the work carried out by academic Toby Miller, whose contribution to this field is very well known due to his own research work, in addition to the various books compiling academic articles of different authors such as *Television Studies* (2002), as well as the comprehensive 'Routledge's five-volume latest hits and greatest memories of academic writing on television', as he describes it (Miller, 2005) when referring to the compilation of academic articles gathered in five volumes and entitled *Television Studies: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* (Miller, 2003). This researcher and editor of Sage's journal *Television & New Media*, is also well known by other articles and books that he has written, promoted or edited mainly from the beginning of this century until now, either on his own or together with other academics, (cf. Miller, 2005, 2010, Alvarado, Buonanno, Gray, and Miller, 2014, ...). Miller's words in his introduction to the above

mentioned compilation book *The Television Studies* (2002) reflect the development of this field of research:

A scholarly book about the study of television published thirty years ago would have focused on two topics: engineering and panic. At that time TV was understood along twin axes (...) the engineering axis was driven by technocratic questions (...). The second axis, the panic axis, was driven by moral and social anxieties – what would TV ‘do’ to its viewers. (p. 1)

The field has shown immense development in the last few years (...) what I see the strengths of our field: close reading, ethnography, historicisation and political economy (...). An evolving, contested domain that draws from the humanities, the social sciences and cultural studies, television studies (...) encompasses production and audience ethnography, policy advocacy, political economy, cultural history and textual analysis. This TV studies borrows from and contributes to media studies, mass communication, critical race theory, communication studies, journalism, public policy, media sociology, critical legal studies, queer theory, science and technology studies, psychology, film studies, economics, cultural studies, feminist theory and Marxism. (pp. 2, 3)

The contributions of Horance Newcomb are also considered very relevant among researchers on this discipline. I would say that this scholar’s research work on television studies as well as on various topics related to this field is indeed interesting. In his article, ‘The Development of Television Studies’ (2005), he explains the evolution of this area of research. He starts, though, mentioning the complexity of this communication medium and its analysis. He refers to his agreement with various of Miller’s research interests and approaches and mentions (p. 16) ‘the troubling complexities encountered in any attempt to place this particular medium inside clearly defined boundaries’ and the interest of defining ‘how it can be analysed and changed’ which he asserts ‘is indicative of a forceful motivation shared by many of us who have spent considerable time and effort in examining the complex phenomenon we call television’. He also reinforced the importance of this medium and the need to change it:

Indeed, that television needs changing is probably one of the most widely shared assumptions of the second half of the twentieth century, and certainly one that shows no signs of diminishing presence. (Newcomb, 2005, p. 16)

However, despite that general opinion about the need to change television as such, he notes that not many people agreed about the analysis and studies required for that. We have already mentioned that television studies were considered irrelevant for many years and academia didn't take considerations to this field of study seriously.

By contrast, the notion that television requires, or even that calls for change would somehow demand, "analysis," is widely considered silly. As Miller's comments indicate, the mere suggestion that television needs analysis itself requires supportive argument. "Everyone" knows how to think about, presumably how to "change" television. The sense that any change would either imply, or explicitly rely upon, *specific types* of analysis, *specific questions*, *particular bodies of knowledge*, flies in the face of our common and "commonsensical" experience of the ubiquitous appliance and its attendant "content". And if some of these bodies of knowledge, these questions, these strategies for analysis might be contradictory, or subversive of one another, or perhaps internally incoherent, the waters are muddied more thickly. (Newcomb, 2015, p. 16)

Newcomb refers to various periods and perspectives within the area of Television Studies (cf. *Television: The Critical View*, 2000; *The Development of Television Studies*, 2005) to some of which we have extensively referred throughout this work, such as those conducted as part of critical sociology, within the Frankfurt School, and the development of Cultural Studies in Britain. However this scholar also identifies other strains of influence in television studies, as he notes the importance of 'popular cultural studies' and 'film studies' for the development of this field of research (Newcomb, 2005, pp. 19-21).

... the rise of questions related to "popular cultural studies", a movement primarily grounded in varieties of "literary" analysis and determined to take

seriously works considered underappreciated because of structured hierarchies involving the sociology of taste and the aims of humanistic education as molder of citizenship. In higher education settings in the United States in the late 1960s those who decided to study popular expressive culture – popular literature, comics, sport, popular music – made particular choices that would involve struggles for place within university curricula and charges of triviality in the general press. Film Studies had secured a foothold by focusing on international cinema as art, but also faced uphill battles when the field turned to American popular movies. Television was among the last topics for which legitimacy was sought. (Newcomb, 2005, p. 19)

Therefore, as film studies were gaining importance, their influence in television studies could be noticed too. Newcomb mentions the first attempts to study popular American films and the negative response obtained by most of academia, similar to that provoked by the study of television.

As suggested earlier, a fourth influence in this account must be the array of film studies expanding in academic settings. “Art” films, “foreign” films, often constituted the subject matter in some earlier classes devoted to film studies, and, as with television, many analytical approaches were modifications of literary studies. “Film appreciation” classes were also popular among students (and, because they enrolled large numbers, equally popular with administrators and teachers in liberal arts literature departments), as were the offerings, relatively few in number, devoted to the technical production of films. The push to study popular American film –to study “Hollywood”- drew many of the same negative responses as those leveled at the study of television. Still, with a degree of “support” from European scholars and critics/filmmakers who praised the unrecognized “artistry” of Hollywood film and filmmakers, American film topics found their place in the academy. (...). By the 1980s a number of film scholars were also attending to television. In some cases the turn to the newer medium enriched approaches that were already being applied. In others, film theory and analysis foundered in encounters with features fundamentally distinct from those for which they were developed. (Newcomb, 2005, p. 21)

Besides that, referring to his own analysis (*Television: The Critical View*, 2000), and the approaches and theories of various scholarships previously commented, Newcomb also mentions other television researchers and their conclusions regarding the

different steps and approaches to the study of this medium, that I would like to underscore.

Among them is ‘The survey of the development of television studies constructed by Charlotte Brundson’ (Newcomb, 2005, p. 22). In her article, this scholar defines various steps and approaches within television studies developed during the last century, related to the last three decades of this period. According to Brundson’s analysis (1997), these are the various areas of research within television studies, as quoted by Newcomb (2005, pp. 22-23):

Television studies emerges in the 1970s and 1980s from three major bodies of commentary on television: journalism, literary/dramatic criticism and the social sciences. (...). Television studies in the 1990s, then, is characterized by work in four main areas. The most formative for the emergent discipline have been the work on the definition and interpretation of the television text and the new media ethnographies of viewing, which emphasise both the contexts and the social relations of viewing. However, there is a considerable history of “production studies” which trace the complex interplay of factors involved in getting programmes on screen ... Increasingly significant also is the fourth area, that of television history ... This history of television is a rapidly expanding field, creating a retrospective history for the discipline, but also documenting the period of nationally regulated terrestrial broadcasting –the “television” of “television studies”- which is now coming to an end.

Newcomb mentions that ‘these same lines of influence are again reconfigured in John Corner’s overview text, *Critical Ideas in Television Studies* (1999)’, as Newcomb remarks (2005, p. 23, 24):

Corner begins with a distinction between “Television as Research Object”, (p. 6) and “Television and Criticism” (p. 7). As in other accounts he identifies the former with “anxiety about [television’s] influence. (...) Criticism, on the other hand, has a different set of concerns: “I take a defining feature of critical activity to be an engagement with the signifiatory organization of television programmes themselves, with the use of images and language, generic conventions, narrative patterns, and modes of address to be found there” (p. 7).

Among the various conclusions regarding Corner's analysis mentioned by Newcomb I would like to note a fact that he focuses on, that is to say that: 'Corner, like others, cites the influence of "European social thought", the Frankfurt School, and various strands of Marxism. But he also adds a key notion, the development of "postmodernist thinking" and its influence on the study of television.' (Newcomb, 2005, p. 24). Newcomb also quotes Corner's words about this reflection:

Not surprisingly, television, with those features of space-time manipulation, social displacement, and scopic appeal (...) has often been regarded as an agency of postmodern culture, despite its origins as a modernist cultural technology. It has been seen as the representational hub of a new pattern of knowledge and feeling and of new kinds of political organization, self-consciousness, and identity. (Corner, 1999, p. 8)

The analysis work conducted by John Hartley (*Uses of Television*, 1999) is also emphasised by Newcomb regarding the development of television studies, and he notes the main areas that Hartley identifies:

John Hartley (1999) quite succinctly sums up many of the sequences of issues addressed in these other accounts by clustering studies of television under four headings: television as mass society, television as text, television as audience, and television as pedagogy. (Newcomb, 2005, p. 24)

Among the various scholars that carried out research in different areas of study Newcomb also highlights the work developed by various academics who made an effort in 'mapping the lines of force and influences most pertinent to any case at hand', and indicates that 'some studies stand out as exemplary in this difficult process', commenting that: 'In the early 1980s the collection of essays by Jane Feuer and colleagues, *MTM: Quality Television* (1984), admirably linked certain shifts in the US

television industry and various aspect of US sociology and culture to examine what seemed to be fundamental stylistic alteration in programming'. Newcomb also mentions the importance of studies of specific television programmes for the development of television studies, emphasising the contributions of those that 'link analyses of television industrial practices, production practices, texts and audience responses' (Newcomb, 2005, p. 26).

However, Newcomb ends up underlining the conclusions of John Hartley and the way he summarises the development of television studies, because Hartley identifies just two main trends of research, which he relates to desire and fear respectively. Newcomb also indicates that from Hartley's point of view television's key function was pedagogical. He refers to those aspects in this paragraph quoted here:

Finally, in Hartley's *Uses of Television* (1999), I find what is, for me, the most challenging and from its own perspective explanatory treatment of television to date. Among other taxonomical gambits Hartley lumps the history of television studies into two large, crude clumps – The Desire School and The Fear School (p. 135), placing most of the work concerned with television presumed "effects" in the latter, most of the work treating television as an expressive form in the former. But the clustering is secondary to his own perspective that television primarily serves a "pedagogical" function in contemporary culture, spreading forms of broad knowledge and information into corners that might otherwise have missed such perceptions, or challenging received notions with purposeful provocations. (Newcomb, 2005, p. 26)

Newcomb highlights the importance of the main issue that in his opinion Hartley brings to the fore because, beyond the various fields and areas of research involved, this scholar focuses on a core question about television: the question of the real definition of what television is and what it means. Inquiries about how it has operated and why it is considered relevant in one way or another are posited by this academic. This matter is

underlined by Newcomb as one of the main contributions of Hartley's research and conclusions:

In short, without focusing precisely on particular program "texts", or on specific analysis of overarching "ideology," on specific industrial formations or practices, or on details of audience response and activity, he returns to fundamental philosophical questions: What is television? How has it functioned? Why is it even important, or at least, why and how it is more important than the refrigerator? (Newcomb, 2005, p. 26)

Throughout his various works, Newcomb carefully analyses the contributions of important researchers on television and, as we have seen, he underscores interesting points about their work and findings. However, Newcomb's own research, perspectives and conclusions in this regard are also worth highlighting. These words quoted below summarise, in fact, his point of view both about television and the studies involved.

At this point, we can say that television studies is a conflicted field of study in need of one or more controlling or guiding metaphors. Such terms should somehow acknowledge the "site-like" qualities of television, recognizing it as one of the most powerful such points of conjunction in human history. (...) My own preference for metaphor would be that "television" is a "switch-board" through which streams of information, power, and control flow unevenly. Struggles for control of the switchboard occur at many sub-points. In the "creative communities" the struggles might be over the control of textual content, style, or even budgets. At the corporate level they are most likely focused on budgets, but even the dullest accountant employed in a media industry recognizes that it is impossible to predict the next "hit", and must therefore adapt a calculus allowing for failures. And these failures cannot be fully explained by research departments or demographers any more than they can by critics, political economists, or cultural historians. (Newcomb, 2005, p. 25)

Jonathan Bignell also writes and researches over Television Studies and he shows as well as analyses the evolution of this field of research. In the first pages of the

third edition of his book *An Introduction to Television Studies* (2013), this scholar points out the different areas of focus when studying television (p. 2):

- i) Analytical study of television programmes as texts.
- ii) The television industry as an institution and its production practices and organisation
- iii) Television in contemporary culture and the sociology study of audiences
- iv) Television history and developments in broadcast policy

The organisation of chapters and their content also reflects the different issues that TV Studies cover in most recent years: (Bignell, 2013, pp. 5-9) which, Dr. Deborah Jermyn points out as ‘the most significant debates in the field’ (Bignell, 2013, p. ii). Among these issues are: The critical approaches in academic television studies; The evolution of television, its histories; Television cultures, television institutions, national and international cultures and social and cultural frameworks of television broadcasting; Television texts and narratives, genres and formats; Television production and, finally, television audiences.

When researching the different matters that have been analysed within this discipline, the content of other books on television studies, as well as those compilations of essays and academic papers by different scholars and researchers, give us a good idea about the various and abundant topics of research developed during all these years related to this scholarship. The table of contents of these books offer a good overview of this (cf. Miller 2002, 2003, 2010; Wasko 2005b; Orlebar 2005, 2011; Bignell, 2004, 2008, 2013; Alvarado et al., 2014).

Together with that, the articles focusing on issues related to television, published in different specialised journals of different disciplines, show the interest of researchers in a great amount and variety of topics. Toby Miller presents an exhaustive compilation

list both of these journals (2010, p. 36) as well as of the main topics and authors they include (Miller, 2010, pp. 39-40; pp. 42-46). (cf. *The Handbook of Television Studies*, Alvarado et al., 2014)

1.6.2. Topics, academic disciplines and forms of enquiry.

In this regard, it is worth underpinning the reference to the topics, academic disciplines and forms of enquiry related to television and its study that Toby Miller offers in his book *TV Studies. The Basic* (2010, p. 23, 32), which can also be found in the first pages of *The Sage Handbook of Television Studies* (2014). In fact, we could say that the next information summarises very clearly the main issues related to television studies. We will, therefore, reflect them below as they appear in both books. We must note that reflections on this matter were indeed foreseen by Miller some years before the publication of those volumes. In his academic article 'Turn off TV Studies' (2005) we can already observe some of his opinions in that sense, points of view and conclusions that I will comment on and quote further below.

In those texts published in the first years of this decade (2010, 2014), Miller distinguishes three major topics of scholarly inquiry, and proposes three further divisions within them. He also points out the academic disciplines involved as well as the types of research and approaches related to them (2010, pp. 23-32; 2014 pp. vi-xxix). In this next paragraph Miller mentions and explains the three main issues that have been tackled when studying about television, and explains the different approaches taken during all these years when researching them (Miller 2010, p. 23):

TV has given rise to three major topics of scholarly inquiry: technology, ownership, and control – its political economy; textuality – its content; and audiences – its public. Within these categories lie three further divisions:

- i) approaches to technology, ownership, and control vary between neoliberal endorsements of limited regulation by the state, in the interest of protecting property and guaranteeing market entry for new competitors, and Marxist critiques of the bourgeois media for controlling the socio-political agenda;
- ii) approaches to textuality vary between hermeneutics, which unearths the meaning of individual programs and links them to broader social formations and problems, and content analysis, which establishes patterns across significant numbers of similar texts, rather than close readings of individual ones;
- iii) approaches to audiences vary between social-psychological attempts to validate correlations between TV and social conduct, political-economic critiques of imported texts threatening national culture, and celebrating of spectators making their own interpretations.

After that Miller refers to the academic disciplines involved when researching on television and the issues related, as well as to the areas and topics of interest included in each of them (Miller, 2010, p. 23-24):

These tasks in turn articulate to particular academic disciplines, which are tied to particular interests of state and capital:

- i) engineering, computing, public policy, and “film” schools help create and run TV production and reception via business, the military, the community, and the public service;
- ii) communication studies focuses on socio-economic projects such as propaganda, marketing and citizenship; economics theorizes and polices doctrines of scarcity, and manages over-production through overseas expansion;
- iii) Marxism points to the impact of ownership and control and cultural imperialism on TV and consciousness; and cultural criticism evaluates representation, justifies protectionism, and calls for content provision.

As we can see, Miller’s outline permits a quick and effective overview of the various disciplines associated to the study of television as well as what we would define

as ‘a comprehensive summary’ of the topics related and the social fields and issues involved. Miller’s analyses and explanations go even further though, as he also summarises the various ways in which scholars have conducted research on this matter, identifying seven different forms of enquiry. In the paragraph quoted below we can also observe the link that he establishes between these various approaches and the different disciplines and scholarships involved. (Miller, 2010, p. 23)

Today, major engagements with television come from the psy-function, other social sciences (sociology, economics, communication studies, anthropology, and law), and the humanities (literature, cinema studies, media studies, and cultural studies). There are seven principal forms of inquiry, which:

- i) borrow ethnography from sociology and anthropology to investigate the experiences on audiences;
- ii) use experimentation and testing methods from psychology to establish cause-and-effect relations between media consumption and subsequent conduct;
- iii) adapt content analysis from sociology and communication studies to evaluate programming in terms of generic patterns;
- iv) adopt textual analysis from literary theory and linguistics to identify the ideological tenor of content;
- v) apply textual and audience interpretation from psychoanalysis to speculate on psychological processes;
- vi) deploy political economy to examine ownership, control, regulation, and international exchange ; and
- vii) utilize archival and historiographic methods to give TV a record of its past.

It is also interesting to examine the different tables included both in Miller’s book (2010) and in the Introduction of *The sage handbook of Television Studies* (2014), a compilation of contributions from different researchers of which Miller is one of the editors, together with Alvarado, Buonanno and Gray. In fact those matrixes, tables, include and summarise relevant information related to television studies, as they compile comprehensive data of different issues regarding this brand of research, and

above mentioned. We can observe that topics, objects, methods and disciplines are clearly outlined and ordered (Miller, 2010, p. 33), relevant professional associations housing TV studies are included (p. 34), core sources for studying television via the Internet are listed (p. 38), and the main contributions, articles, to the various topics and from different authors since the 60s until recent years are sketched out (pp. 39, 40; pp. 42-46). In fact, if we analyse all that information, a great development in television studies can be observed. The amount and variety of articles detailed in the compilation list when referring to the last two decades (pp. 42-46) is very noticeable, even more so if we compare that with the list outlined about the work developed from the late 60s to the 80s (Miller, 2010, pp. 39-40).

In any case, we could say that, altogether, the information presented in those tables offer a good, thorough, and at the same time summarised, overview of the topics, objects, methods, disciplines and authors related to television studies from the early years until the most recent ones. Furthermore, this quick and clear overview enable us to observe at a glance the great interest that television studies has aroused as well as the way it has developed.

1.6.3. Television Studies - Studying television: evolution.

When researching on Television Studies and about the evolution of this discipline I would like to highlight the difference that both Newcomb and Miller make between two concepts, that is to say ‘Television Studies’ and ‘Studying Television’. According to their analysis and conclusions I would say that these two authors establish the difference between these two terms according to the topics of research and to the approach taken when studying and analysing this medium. ‘Studying Television’ would

therefore respond to a further step from that first stage of ‘Television Studies’, for which they note that multidisciplinary, blended perspectives are needed when approaching the study of this medium. Both Newcomb and Miller argue that a step further should be taken in this sense, so as to tackle the study of television in a way that will respond to the various needs and interests towards this communication and entertainment medium. These scholars acknowledge the complexity of television and they understand that media, as well as this medium as such, has changed a lot since its advent. Likewise they note that society and the interests towards it have evolved too, for which they conclude that these changes would entitle new approaches towards the research, analysis and study on television.

I would say that this new multidisciplinary approach would somehow confront the initial mostly negative perspective towards television, when the analysis and research was mainly conducted within the field of specific scholarships, and mainly from sociology, and more precisely critical sociology. These new approaches that both Newcomb and Miller propose would also counter those perspectives that consider television and its analysis irrelevant, and even silly, as an academic field of study. Those previous approaches didn’t assess it as a specific area of research that may demand a comprehensive analysis as such, due to both the complexity of this medium and to its influence. (cf. Newcomb, 2005; Miller, 2005)

We can observe that Newcomb offers various arguments in this sense in the texts I have quoted in the preceding section, where this scholar mentions the various steps and different approaches to the study of this medium. However, he refers to these aspects specifically in the next paragraph (2005, pp. 16-17) where he explains the difference between these two concepts (‘Television Studies’ and ‘Studying Television’)

and highlights the importance of tackling the analysis of this medium from the varied perspectives and approaches that ‘studying television’ implies.

Moreover, there is yet another angle on this topic that is preliminary to any thorough description of the “development” of “Television Studies”. It is important to recognize that “Television Studies” is not the same thing as “studying television”. Even the most skeptical or hostile critic of the former may have no hesitation in supporting the latter. Indeed, the skepticism and hostility emerge precisely with attempts to extract television from other “studiable” topics and problems inside which television, while perhaps hugely insignificant, remains subordinate. It is with these varied approaches to “studying television”, however, that any account of the development of the potentially institutionalized and focused designation must begin.

Therefore, we can see that both Newcomb and Miller emphasise the importance of developing new and multidisciplinary approaches when analysing this medium, that is to say when ‘studying television’. Together with that, we can observe that they define quite a similar framework when they identify the main areas of research within this analysis. These main areas are, in fact, those that most relevant scholars consider crucial for comprehensive research on this field. I have mentioned them in the preceding sections, when referring to the content of articles and books that deal with this matter, and I have also quoted the texts where Miller outlines and explained these areas of enquiry (Miller 2010, 2014). Miller, however, explains and summarises them already in 2005, in the above mentioned article (‘Turn off Television Studies’, 2005), where he starts defining the three core areas of academic research, in the same line as in his latest texts, which goes on to explain the main approaches to each one of them (Miller, 2005, p. 98):

Like most domains of the human sciences, the study of television is characterized by contests over meanings and approaches, not least because its analysts “speak different languages, use different methods,” and pursue “different questions.” Broadly speaking, TV has given rise to three key

concerns of academic research: (1) ownership and control (television's political economy); (2) texts (its content); and (3) audiences (its public). Within these categories lie several other divisions:

Approaches to ownership and control vary between neoliberal endorsements of limited regulation by the state, in the interests of guaranteeing market entry for new competitors, and Marxist critiques of the bourgeois media's agenda for discussing society.

Approaches to textuality vary between hermeneutic endeavors, which unearth the meaning of individual programs and link them to broader social formations and problems, and content-analytic endeavors, which establish patterns across significant numbers of similar texts, rather than close readings of individual ones.

Approaches to audiences vary between psychological attempts to validate correlations between watching TV and social conduct and culturalist engagements with viewers' sense-making practices.

In this paper Miller questions the initial TV Studies that, both in the U.S. and the U.K. approached the analysis of this medium from the humanities' field. Miller also mentions that, after analysing most literature related to this matter, due to his prolific work as researcher, writer and editor of many papers, books and compilation volumes on this topic, he concluded that the perspective of the humanities TV studies was indeed insufficient, as he asserts that: 'I have been struck by the narrowness of humanities TV studies' (2005, p. 99).

Due to that, Miller shows interest for further analysis and new approaches that would respond to other questions and would allow broader perspectives. He poses the need for multi-interdisciplinary research for that, to fulfil the demand of new ways of enquiry to respond to the wish to understand what moves so many people in the world to engage with this communication and entertainment medium. Miller starts by referring to the background of these theories that he puts into question, and explains their evolution both in the U.K. and in the U.S. The importance of television

entertainment and the analysis of this genre from different, multidisciplinary, mixed perspectives that would help to respond to the questions about this medium in new ways can be observed in Miller's reflections (2005, pp. 99 -100).

The strand of U.S. TV studies that I am questioning emerged from venerable U.K.-based critiques of cultural pessimism, political economy, and current affairs-oriented broadcasting. These critiques originated in reactions against a heavily regulated, duopolistic broadcasting system -1970s Britain- in which the BBC represented a high-culture snobbery that many leftists associated with an oppressive class structure. Hence, the desire for a playful, commercial, noncitizen address as a counter. Change the angle a few degrees to the United States. When these accounts of TV made their Atlantic crossing, there was no public broadcasting behemoth in need of critique-more a squibby amoeba. And there were lots of not-very-leftist professors and students seemingly aching to hear that U.S. audiences learning about parts of the world that their country bombs, invades, owns, misrepresents, or otherwise exploits were less important, and less political, than those audiences' interpretations of actually existing local soap operas, wrestling bouts, or science-fiction series. In the United Kingdom, where deregulation has opened up the TV landscape to more commercial endeavors, as per the United States, the original critique of documentary seriousness looks tired and when added to new forms of academic and government codification of media studies, it has helped depoliticize much research there, as well.

This next paragraph is indeed significant as here Miller offers some hints about the approach he proposes, the topics for research and the way to tackle them. As he notes, he takes into account the matters of interest expressed by students of media studies and of those interested in television in particular. Miller indicates the paths to answer those questions which are, in fact, linked to various disciplines and approaches within the study of television that he points out (Miller, 2005, p. 100).

Guidance comes from three questions I keep hearing from undergraduates: "Will this get me a job in the media?"; "Is television bad for you?"; "How do we get that show back on?". These queries have direct links to the relationships between text and audience, as understood through ethnography and political economy. The respective answers are: "If you know who owns and regulates the media, you'll know where and how to apply."; "The answer depends on who is asking

the question and why.”; “If you know how audiences are defined and counted, and how genre functions, you’ll be able to lobby for retention of your favorite programs”.

Finally, Miller concludes that the approaches from the traditional field of Television Studies must be replaced by a new discipline that he refers to as ‘Studying Television’. Indeed, he graphically proposes to ‘turn off Television Studies’ and to focus on ‘the study of television’ instead. According to his proposal new matters of interest have to be born in mind, and the great amount of influences involved should be taken into account when studying and developing both research and criticism over television. Miller highlights the relevance of television in understanding society and expresses the need to take new and persuasive, convincing, interdisciplinary approaches to get to know and interpret it (2005, p. 100).

So I think it is time to turn off U.S./U.K. humanities-style TV studies, to look instead at the study of television-what animates those it engages across the world. Television is an alembic for understanding society, so we need a compelling interdisciplinarity to comprehend it. (...). A new critical TV studies must draw on the fullest-possible array of influences available, transcending “TV studies” in favor of “the study of TV.”

After analysing all this literature, we could say that most relevant researchers on television in this century acknowledge the complexity of this medium and agree about the need for mixed, blended, melded, multidisciplinary, multidimensional, multiperspectival, research when studying and conducting research about it (cf. Miller 2002, 2005, 2010; Newcomb, 2005; Wasko, 2005, Bignell 2013, Alvarado et al 2014 ...). I would also say that they agree when defining the main areas of research and interest within this discipline. The importance of analysing television, and television programmes taking into account three main areas, that is to say, content, production and

audiences, is highlighted by most academics on this field. Together with that, the ownership and control of media, is also understood as relevant when analysing television. Finally, the contributions of the research on television, and the analysis of television programmes as well as the stories about them, to the history of television are also noted by these scholars. The way in which these various topics are associated with the different academic fields, disciplines and research approaches, is both presented and explained in their various texts and books mentioned in this chapter.

1.6.4. Television entertainment: culture and popular culture.

Throughout this work we have referred to the importance of the study of television and television entertainment from various perspectives. In this prior section we have extensively written on the importance of the discipline of television studies and the great amount of topics that have been analysed within the various areas that it comprises. Among them, the importance of the analysis of audiences within the field of reception studies and the research on the effects of this medium have been especially highlighted in this work, due to their relevance when studying television and television entertainment in particular. A great amount of studies have been developed within those two areas from the beginning of academic research on mass media and more specifically about television, either as part of them or when focusing specifically on it. In fact, it is accepted that most studies have been audience centred and the great amount of research developed within the discipline of the study of effects is also broadly accepted. Due to that, as can be observed, several chapters of this work are devoted to those main fields of study. The relationship between the research developed within

those disciplines and the objectives of this work has also been shown throughout these previous chapters.

Nevertheless, and while writing on those topics, several mentions to Cultural Studies and Popular Culture Studies have been made. I would say that these two disciplines and areas of study are also relevant when approaching the study of television entertainment from a positive perspective.

In fact, when researching on television entertainment the analysis of popular entertainment programmes is very significant. It can be said that the importance of them as objects of research which were indeed worth analysing, started being taken into account within the research fields of cultural studies and popular culture. In addition, both schools of thought offered new approaches in comparison to previous scholarships regarding this topic, which permitted new and more positive views of this medium and the entertainment genre in particular.

Cultural studies focuses on the study of culture and, when doing so, it includes the study of television. Within this discipline television is analysed from a cultural perspective, consequently the cultural aspects of television, television programmes, television production and programming, are taken into account. Furthermore, the relationship between television and society is also born in main from both perspectives, that is to say the effects of television on its viewers on the one hand, and the influence of the audiences and therefore of society over this medium on the other. In fact, first researches on cultural studies took place within the field of sociology so sociological aspects were central. It has to be said that, as scholar Chris Barker states (Barker, 2007, p. 297): ‘However cultural studies can now be considered as an academic domain in its own right, so that neither CCCS nor cultural studies is best described as a subcategory

of the discipline of sociology per se. Rather, sociology and cultural studies are cousins with “family resemblances”.

I also would like to highlight the fact that since the early years of Cultural Studies, this discipline enhanced the study of popular culture, which started gaining importance as a field of research. This entailed a more positive view towards this area. Furthermore, the sharp association between ‘popular’ culture and ‘low’ culture that had been established for many years started softening. Questions of aesthetics and taste were avoided when assessing popular culture products as it was argued that, when doing so, hierarchies of taste were applied. Political reasons rather than aesthetic ones were identified as underpinning categorisation of cultural products, which, in addition, started to be considered as texts and consequently were also analysed as such.

Eventually, television was also researched from this perspective and, as a consequence, the importance of television as a popular entertainment device started to be considered. Moreover, the analysis of television programmes as audio-visual texts allowed other approaches that contributed to highlighting their value from various perspectives.

Therefore, it can be said that the importance of television as a cultural object and the various contributions of television popular programmes are often taken into account when analysing television entertainment programmes from these perspectives. Most recent studies about specific popular television formats and programmes, including various genres and subgenres are also analysed regarding their classification as ‘popular’, in many of these cases their positive features, their contributions and value are highlighted by media and television researchers. (cf. Blakley, 2001; Harrington and

Bielby, 2001(a) (b); Gabler and Kaplan, 2004; Yngvar Kjus, 2009; Bignell, 2010, 2013; Boyle and Kelly, 2013)

This having been said, it is also admitted that many popular entertainment products, texts, are still linked with the concept of the ‘popular’ as ‘lowbrow’ ‘low culture’ expressions and practises and they are, therefore, dismissed. As we have already explained throughout this work the negative perception of television and television entertainment programmes in particular is very often related to this association, relation that, irrespective of the evolution of academic research in this regard, many people still seem to make.

Taking all this into consideration, we can observe that both Cultural and Popular Culture Studies are disciplines that are closely related to the objectives of this PhD work. References and some explanations about them have already been offered in previous chapters due to the link to specific topics covered in them. In this section, though, I want to clear up some concepts related to this matters and offer additional information that can be helpful to understand the opportunities that studies from these approaches present for the analysis of television entertainment, as well as to identify the contributions of this genre within the broader field of the media and this medium in particular. To do so, I have included several paragraphs by different authors that are indeed illuminating regarding these issues.

The discipline of Cultural Studies started in Great Britain at the late 60s with the work developed by the School of Birmingham, and, more precisely, by scholars of the CCCS (Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies). The work carried out by Stuart Hall and the experimental research that David Morley conducted mainly in the 80s, were certainly relevant for the development of this scholarship and for the study of television

from this perspective. Eventually, The Popular Culture Studies started flourishing within this broader field; the work of Raymond Williams is acknowledged as fundamental for its development, although it has to be said that contributions of prominent Italian scholar Gramsci were very significant at this first stage too. Although they started in Britain, and were influenced by contributions of other European scholars, such as the Italians Eco and Gramsci, both disciplines soon gained importance in the United States where a great amount of research within television studies from both perspectives, namely cultural studies and popular culture has been undertaken.

1.6.4.1. Cultural Studies.

Toby Miller's relevance within Television Studies is well-known, as we have shown throughout this work, where we have included many of his reflections and mentioned his numerous publications in this regard (1.6.1), but Miller is also considered a leading academic in Cultural Studies. I quote below his response when, reflecting on this topic, he was asked by philosopher Nigel Warburton about what Cultural Studies is, and what makes it 'cultural', that is to say what it means.

By 'culture' I think most of us in the field would mean two things. First of all what's often thought of as an aesthetic inheritance or an aesthetic heritage, namely the world of arts, the world of meaning, the world of textuality, the world of content. The way in which artists, authors, writers, radio producers, etcetera generate things of beauty, things of truth, if you like –what we understand by the Arts of Humanities. Secondly there is the understanding of culture which is more ethnographic, perhaps more anthropological which is about customary ways of life: the understanding that society is authored not only through formal rules and regulations but informal ones –the way in which we organize our daily routines, the way in which you and I are taking turns politely, so far, with each other's sentences and interrupting and so on right. And in cultural studies those things actually merge: in order to understand how art

works, you need to understand everyday life and in order to understand everyday life increasingly you have to understand how art works. (Miller, 2012, p. 2)

The book *Introducing Cultural Studies*, by Brian Longhurst, Greg Smith, Gaynor Bagnall, Garry Crawford and Miles Ogborn, the 3rd edition of which has recently been published (2017), offers a comprehensive overview of this scholarship. In this section I will refer to this text from which I have selected various paragraphs, because it poses several issues and offers information that, from my point of view, show the opportunities that the cultural studies approach has for the study of television.

These authors highlight the importance of cultural studies for the study of culture, an area that, as they note, has been drawing increasing attention in recent years. The significance of this field of research for the understanding of the character of human cultures is underlined by these scholars. They also note that the study of culture in various disciplines is becoming increasingly common nowadays, due to its influence in various areas and fields (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 3):

Cultural studies is an important and contemporary way of engaging in the study of culture. Over time many academic subjects –including anthropology, history, literary studies, human geography and sociology- have brought their own disciplinary concerns to the study of culture. However, in recent decades there has been a renewed interest in the study of culture in a number of other disciplines, such as economics, politics and psychology. In addition, those disciplines that have long studied culture have taken a fresh look at how this can be done, drawing on new theories and contemporary methods. This renewed attention to culture across the social sciences and humanities is often known as the ‘cultural turn’. Moreover, attention to culture has also crossed disciplinary boundaries. The resulting activity, cultural studies, has emerged as an intriguing and exciting area of intellectual inquiry that has already shed important new light on the character of human cultures and which promises to continue so to do.

It is interesting that they adopt what can be seen as a ‘wide’ definition of cultural studies. Therefore, as the authors explain, they are in line with the version of this field of study that was developed at its first stage by the scholars of the School of Birmingham. Nonetheless, although they take those first approaches as a basis, they also take into account new perspectives, as they observe the potentiality of this broad area of research. While underscoring the importance of this field of study, they note that it is highly questioned too. According to their comments, the complexity of the term ‘culture’, and its various definitions and approaches through history, as well as the different ways in which the term is explained depending on the various areas and disciplines of study, are to a great extent the reasons for that.

This book does not simply concern itself with a version of cultural studies that was developed at and promoted from the Centre for Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham in the 1960s and 1970s (see Key Influence 1.3. on p. 31). Further, it does not restrict itself to those forms of cultural studies that even if they take a wider compass than the original work from Birmingham, continue to take their main inspiration from that approach. While there is little doubt that cultural studies is widely recognized as an important, distinctive but highly contested field of study, it does seem to encompass a potentially enormous area. This is at least partly because the term ‘culture’ has a complex history and range of usages, which have provided a legitimate focus of inquiry for different academic disciplines, which often use the term in distinctive ways. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 3)

Consequently, these authors start focusing on the various definitions of ‘culture’. They point out the fact that this term is broad and that ‘has a complex history and diverse range of meanings in contemporary discourse’. Moreover, they add that ‘culture’ is a word that has grown over the centuries to reach its present broad meaning. Therefore, as they assert, it is essential to begin by defining what culture is (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 4), affirmation that I indeed agree with.

Defining ‘culture’ is, hence, fundamental. When looking for the various meanings of this term most scholars mention Raymond Williams approaches to it, because as these authors also note ‘One of the founders of cultural studies in Britain, Raymond Williams has traced the development of the concept and provided an influential ordering of its modern uses’ (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 4). They refer to these definitions in the next paragraph:

Outside the natural sciences, the term ‘culture’ is chiefly used in three relatively distinct senses to refer to the arts and artistic activity –which we will refer to here as ‘culture with a big “C”’; the learned, primarily symbolic features of a particular way of life; and a process of development. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 4).

I shall now refer to and quote below some of the explanations provided by these authors about the three definitions given by Raymond Williams just mentioned. I will do so because I believe that the clear understanding of the term, of its different meanings, is fundamental to being aware of the existing various positions towards television as a cultural medium as well as for the analysis of it as such.

1.6.4.1.1. Culture: artistic activity. As these authors point out in their book they refer to the first definition of this term as ‘Culture with a big ‘C’ ’, that is to say, the sense of culture as an artistic activity. They explain this interpretation of the term in this paragraph, in which they mention William’s words.

In much everyday talk, culture is believed to consist of the ‘works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity’; thus ‘culture’ is the word that describes ‘music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film’ (Williams, 1983: 90). Culture in this sense is widely believed to primarily concern ‘refined’ pursuits in which the ‘cultured’ person engages. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 4).

1.6.4.1.2. Culture: way of life. The second sense of the word ‘culture’ considers it as a ‘way of life’. The importance of the creation and use of symbols is emphasised when defining the term from this perspective (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 4):

In the human sciences the word ‘culture’ has achieved wide currency to refer to the creation and use of symbols which distinguish ‘a particular way of life’, whether of a people, a period of group, or humanity in general’ (Williams, 1983: 90). Only humans, it is often argued, are capable of creating and transmitting culture and we are able to do this because we create and use symbols. Humans possess a symbolising capacity, which is the basis of our cultural being.

In relation to this definition there are several reflections expressed in that paragraph that I would like to bring to the fore. To begin with, the comments about the importance of the use of symbols and their significance for the creation and transmission of culture; secondly, the statement that the creation and transmission of symbols entail conveying shared ideas, finally the fact that, as noted in the explanation above, the creation and use of those symbols do indeed define an specific, distinct way of life.

As these authors explain, a symbol defines what something means, although a single symbol may have many meanings, and to study culture is thus to ask what is the meaning of those symbols. They start by defining what a symbol is to, further on, associate the study of culture with the analysis of those symbols, their being understood according to the explanation previously given:

What, then, is a symbol? It is when people understand among themselves that a word or drawing or gesture will stand for either an idea (...) or an object (...) or a feeling (...). When this has happened, a symbol conveying a shared idea has been created. These shared ideas are symbolically mediated or expressed. (...) To study culture is thus to ask what is the meaning of a style or dress, a code of manners, a place, a language, a norm of conduct, a system of belief, an architectural style, and so on. Language, both spoken and written, is obviously a vast repository of symbols. But symbols can take numerous forms: flags,

hairstyles, road signs, smiles, BMWs, business suits- the list is endless. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 4, 5)

These statements present a broad definition of culture, and, as these scholars indicate, 'it may be thought that culture is everything and everywhere', but they explain that some approaches to the study of culture take that position, which is most noticeable in those analysis conducted from an anthropological point of view. They include a well-known example and conclude that this wide definition shows the importance and ubiquitousness of culture in society. Moreover, they underscore the fact that this concept of culture entitles the notion that culture is created by humans who live together and that culture is not simply absorbed, but that it is learned. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 5):

Thus, to take an influential example, the nineteenth-century anthropologist Edward Taylor (1871: 1) famously defined culture as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [sic] as a member of society'. This definition underlines the pervasiveness of culture in social life. It also emphasises that culture is a product of humans living together and that is learned.

The definition of the American poet and critic T.S. Eliot, which is often quoted by researchers on cultural studies, expresses a similar idea (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 6):

Culture ... includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people; Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the 12th of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth century Gothic churches, and the music of Elgar. (Eliot, 1948, quoted in Williams, 1963 [1958]: 230)

With respect to these concepts of culture I will also include additional information and reflections presented in this book, in relation to the areas that,

according to the different approaches to the term, are considered as ‘culture’ and, therefore, part of this field of research. The distinction they make between the sense of culture as a way of life and the concept of society, as well as the explanation they offer regarding this topic are also interesting. The affirmation about the capability of societies to reproduce and share their own culture as well as the statement about the mixture of cultures in modern societies, are worth taking into account, too.

Other approaches, less influenced by anthropology or the humanities, have tended to argue that some areas of social life are more properly thought of as political or economic than cultural and thus can in some fashion be separated from culture. Thus, those who would define culture in the sense of ‘arts and artistic activity’ would tend to exclude some institutions and phenomena that others who accept the definition of ‘way of life’ would see as part of culture. There is little consensus on this matter, but we will use these analytic definitions to inform our discussions of these issues in this book. Culture in the sense of way of life, can be distinguished from the neighbouring concept of society. In speaking of society we refer to pattern of social interactions and relationships between individuals and groups. Often a society will occupy a territory, be capable of reproducing itself and share a culture. But for many large-scale, modern societies it may make more sense to say that several cultures coexist (not always harmoniously) within the society. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 6):

1.6.4.1.3. Culture: process and development.

Finally, the third definition of culture described by Welsh cultural analyst Raymond Williams and mentioned at the beginning of this section, understands culture as a process and development. Scholars Longhurst, Smith, Bagnall, Crawford and Ogborn, explain in this paragraph below this interpretation of the concept, which is related to the abilities humans have and their nurture and development (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 6).

The earliest uses of the word ‘culture’ in the late Middle Ages refer to the tending or cultivation of crops and animals (hence agriculture); a little later the same sense was transferred to describe the cultivation of people’s minds. This

dimension of the word 'culture' draws attention to its subsequent use to describe the development of the individual's capacities, and it has been extended to embrace the idea that cultivation is itself a general social and historical process (Williams, 1983: 90-1).

These authors present different examples to illustrate these three definitions; among them we can take the case of a play by Shakespeare, which, according to the various meanings previously explained, might be said to be a distinct piece of cultural work (sense: culture with a big 'C'), to be a product of a particular (English) way of life (sense: culture as a way of life) and to represent a certain stage of cultural development (sense: culture as a process and development). (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 6).

We can observe that these three senses of culture are commonly accepted within cultural studies but, however, as most scholars in this discipline admit, 'it is important to note that these definitions and their use raise a number of complex issues and problems for the analysis of culture' (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 6). The importance of cultural studies is acknowledged nowadays within academia but, equally, it is admitted that it is a contested field. At present, the study of culture is approached from various perspectives and as part of different academic fields and its influence in various areas is commonly accepted. Likewise, the controversy around its definitions and approaches cannot be denied.

Regarding the three senses of culture identified previously, it can be said that they have tended to be studied from different points of view, and each one can be associated to certain academic disciplines:

Hence, artistic or intellectual activity has commonly been the province of the humanities or literary scholar. By contrast, anthropologists and sociologists have examined ways of life. Meanwhile, the province of the historian using historical documents and methods has been to consider the development of culture. These

disciplines have tended to approach culture in distinctive ways and from different perspectives. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 7).

Having said that, these scholars highlight the value of the cultural studies perspective to find and solve questions that other disciplines cannot respond to individually: ‘One of the special merits of a cultural studies approach is that it facilitates the identification of a set of core issues and problems that no one discipline or approach can solve on its own.’ (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 7) The way people become part of culture is also analysed in this book, as it is generally accepted that ‘Culture is not something that we simply absorb –it is learned’ (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 7). Although this learning process is labelled differently depending on the discipline within which it is analysed (acculturation, enculturation, conditioning, socialisation), in all cases this research helps to understand the way people learn about meaning and how they become part of cultures.

In anthropology this process is referred to as acculturation or enculturation. In psychology it is described as conditioning. Sociologists have tended to use the term ‘socialisation’ to describe the process by which we become social and cultural beings. (...) The concepts of acculturation and enculturation, conditioning and socialisation draw attention to the many and various social arrangements that play a part in the ways in which humans learn about meaning and become part of cultures. (Longhurst et al., 2017, p. 7)

Taking all this into consideration, we can surely assert that the study of television from a contemporary cultural studies approach, within the framework explained above, can help to understand the role that television, and television programmes, can play as cultural products. The study of this medium taking into account the three different meanings of ‘culture’ described in this section, presents a broad range of possibilities. In fact, television, and television programmes can be

analysed according to their artistic value, as representations of ‘a way of life’ and by the way they reflect a particular stage of cultural development. The capacity that this device has for the creation and use of audio-visual symbols can also be studied from a cultural approach. In addition, this type of analysis can help us to understand the role of television as a medium that creates and transmits culture while helping in the learning process involved to become part of a certain culture, as well as of various cultures that, in modern societies, coexist.

1.6.4.2. Cultural Studies and Popular Culture.

In this previous section we have pointed out the importance of the area of cultural studies for the study of culture, from different approaches and within various disciplines. We have also noted that new theories have been drawn and contemporary methods have been taken for the study of culture, since new areas of influence on both sides and directions (influence of culture and on culture) have been identified. It can be observed that the research on this topic has evolved since those early years of Cultural Studies in Great Britain during the second half of last century. In fact, as we have already mentioned, the development of Cultural Studies started in the United Kingdom, from the late 1960s until the late 1980s, by researchers of the School of Birmingham.

The importance of this scholarship developed within the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) as well as their role for the study of popular culture, is explained in this paragraph below, written by Chris Barker in the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (2007). I would like to highlight here the fact that, as Barker notes, this school of thought was crucial for legitimising popular culture as a field of academic research. Regarding this work it is also interesting the point Barker makes

about the importance of the study of the media, and therefore of television, among the areas of analysis, due to their key role in the production of texts of popular culture at present.

The Birmingham School refers to the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), which operated as a research center at the University of Birmingham (UK) between 1964 and 1988. The Birmingham School represents a decisive moment in the creation of the intellectual and institutional project of cultural studies, as well as “cultural turn” in sociology. The substantive focus of the Birmingham School was popular culture as explored through the concepts of ideology and hegemony. Indeed, the work of CCCS contributed to the legitimization of popular culture as a field of academic inquiry. Among the substantive topics of research undertaken by CCCS were the mass media, youth subcultures, education, gender, race, and the authoritarian state. The media were of special significance insofar as the texts of popular culture in the contemporary world are forged within their framework. (Barker, 2007, p. 297)

The main work of the CCCS took place under the leadership of Stuart Hall and, as Barker mentions, it is during the period of his directorship (1968-79) that one can first speak of the formation of an identifiable and distinct domain called cultural studies. Within this domain, as said, the study of popular culture was indeed relevant. I would like to highlight the fact, that when doing so, they challenged the perception about popular culture that was prominent at that time, when popular culture was considered low culture. Barker’s explanations quoted here focus on this fact:

Within the English literary tradition that formed a backdrop to the early work of CCCS, popular culture was commonly regarded as inferior to the elevated cultures of “high” art. However, CCCS sought to challenge the criteria used to police the boundaries of “good works”, arguing that they are not universal but rather are derived from an institutionalized and class-based hierarchy of cultural tastes. More importantly still, the Birmingham School understood popular culture to be the decisive arena in which consent and resistance to the ascendant meanings of a social formation were won and lost. This is a political conception of popular culture as a site where cultural hegemony is secured or challenged. For CCCS, then, evaluation of popular culture were not made on the basis of

cultural aesthetic value per se, but are concerned with issues of power, politics and ideology. (Barker, 2007, p. 297)

The work of Raymond Williams became crucial for the study of popular culture and his main approach to it implied the broad definition of culture taken from an anthropological point of view, which considers it as part of everyday life. We have already written about the various definitions of culture in previous sections, and we will do so about the different meanings of popular culture in further passages. At this point I just want to note that this perspective, which Stuart Hall defined as “culturalism”, was taken since the early stage of the Cultural Studies.

The initial focus of CCCS was on “lived” class culture, a focus that chimed with the work of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. This has been described by Hall (1992) as the moment of “culturalism” and is associated with the adoption of a broadly anthropological definition of culture that takes it to be an everyday lived process. Culturalism stressed the “ordinariness” of culture and the active, creative capacity of people to construct shared meaningful practices. (Barker, 2007, p. 298)

In addition, I want to stress another fact that I consider a fundamental contribution of the work carried out within this branch of research, as these scholars argue that television programmes can be read and analysed as texts.

As Barker (2007, p. 299) explains, scholars studying in this field use the concept of text as ‘a metaphor for the construction of meaning through the organization of signs into representation’. According to the meaning of this term for researchers on this area it can be observed that they understand it beyond the initial definition associated merely to written words. As we can read below, from this perspective television programmes are considered texts and, consequently can be analysed as such. Textual analysis conducted within the cultural studies approach entails the study of the cultural aspects of these

texts and their influence in the production of meanings. This approach, in addition to their broad concept of texts, enables the study of television and television programmes from this perspective.

A text is constituted not simply by the written word, but includes all forms of signification so that dress, television programs, advertising images, sporting events, pop stars, etc. can all be read as texts. Textual analysis for the Birmingham School usually involved deconstructing the practices of cultural coding to show us how the apparent transparency of meaning is an outcome of cultural habituation. (Barker, 2007, p. 299)

I would also like to point out the fact that scholars of the School of Birmingham also explored the relationship of audiences to texts, as Barker mentions too. We have already written extensively on that in the section dedicated to the analysis of television and television entertainment within audience and reception studies (1.3). In this respect, Barker notes that ‘they moved away from the idea that texts fixed the meanings for readers in order to investigate the way that audiences produced a variety of meanings’, and adds that ‘This was theorized by Hall through his “encoding-decoding” model and research empirically by David Morley’ (Barker, 2007, p. 300). We have already given information on that throughout this work (1.3.4.2.1), nevertheless I will below quote part of Barker’s text regarding Hall’s *encoding/decoding* theory due to the various aspects of this perspective that he highlights in it:

Hall conceived the process of encoding-decoding as an articulation of the linked but distinct moments of production, circulation, distribution, and reproduction, each of which has its specific practices which are necessary to the circuit but which do not guarantee the next moment. In particular, the production of meaning does not ensure consumption of that meaning as the encoders might have intended because television texts are polysemic and can be interpreted in different ways. That is not to say that all the meanings are equal among themselves; rather, the text will be structured in dominance leading to a preferred reading. (Barker, 2007, p. 300)

Furthermore, Barker explains the different decoding perspectives that Stuart Hall defended, which, as we can observe, show that audiences can draw different meanings from a certain text, and, therefore, from a specific television programme. We have also mentioned them in other sections of this work, when dealing with the active audience perspective for the analysis of television. Nonetheless, I want to bring them to the fore here as well, because these explanations of Hall's theory help to understand the process of production of meanings of cultural media products.

Hall proposed a model of three hypothetical decoding positions: (1) the dominant-hegemonic decoding which accepts the preferred meanings of the text; (2) a negotiated code which acknowledges the legitimacy of the preferred meanings in the abstract but makes its own rules and adaptations under particular circumstances; and (3) an oppositional code where people understand the preferred encoding but reject it and decode in contrary ways. (Barker, 2007, p. 300)

Finally, Barker also refers to the work of David Morley, and his first analysis of a television programme from this perspective - the British news 'magazine' programme, *Nationwide* - that gave empirical backing to it, *The Nationwide Audience* (Morley, 1980). Barker comments that according to this analysis, it was argued that dominant, negotiated, and oppositional decodings had been made by different groups of viewers according to their social class. We have also mentioned all these aspects previously in this work, when writing on the importance of Hall's *encoding/decoding* theory and the work carried out by Morley for the analysis of television from an active audience perspective (1.3.4.2.1).

In this case, I would also like to highlight the importance of Hall's theory and Morley's work because they permit the analysis of television programmes from a new

perspective, which emphasises the importance of various cultural aspects with respect to the creation of cultural products, texts, their dissemination and reception. Likewise, they brought to the fore the importance of these aspects in the creation of cultural meanings.

Having said that, I would add that despite the interesting contributions of these initial analyses to the study of television from a cultural perspective, further research work conducted during recent years, mainly within a contemporary cultural studies approach, emphasises other aspects beyond those associated to different social classes when referring to the polysemic nature of television texts and the various meanings that can be extracted from them. I would, therefore, highlight the validity of the *encoding-decoding* theory to the study of television programmes from a cultural perspective but I also understand that new parameters should be taken into account in addition to those when analysing the different meanings of television texts and the contributions of television programmes to the production and dissemination of culture.

Regarding the analysis of television programmes as texts, and the reference to them as such I would also like to quote scholar Miranda J. Banks' words as she makes two interesting points in relation to this topic that bring to the fore two issues that we have dealt with throughout this work, namely the consideration of media products as objects of low popular culture and the relationship between production and reception in their analysis. Currently, in contemporary cultural studies and in television studies in general, media products, and therefore television programmes, are often referred to as texts. According to Banks' reflections, the use of this term would entail a better status for those cultural products that have long been considered objects of low popular culture, popular entertainment television programmes being among them (Banks, 2014, p. 129):

This choice to use the term “text” adds prestige to media often considered popular or low-brow, but also addresses ideas that the object of study constantly shifts in relation to its production and reception. See Roland Barthes ‘From Work to Text’ (1977, pp. 155-164).

In this regard the information and reflections presented by this author in her article ‘How to study Makers and Meanings’ (Banks, 2014, pp. 117-132) are worth to take into account. Likewise, other essays that, as well as this one just mentioned, are compiled in *The Sage Handbook of Television Studies* (Alvarado et al. 2014), including the introductory text by Toby Miller (pp. xix - xliv), research on various issues associated to the study of television from a cultural and popular culture perspective. These articles present interesting information and reflections about the various topics related to the issues that we have mentioned in this section. Among them are those included in the second part (‘Makers and Meanings’, pp. 115 - 202) and in the third one (‘Cultural Forms’, pp. 203-336) of this book, which offer comprehensive information about contemporary research of these matters regarding the television medium. Among them I would also like to highlight Albert Moran’s contribution and the analysis and reflection presented in her article ‘Television Programme Formats: Their Making and Meaning’ (pp. 205-224).

1.6.4.3. Popular Culture Studies.

We have explained in the preceding section that Popular Culture started to be analysed as part of Cultural Studies in Great Britain, and that this scholarship nurtured the new branch since the early years. The work of academic Raymond Williams was determinate for the development of this field, and his contributions are broadly acknowledged. Currently, both his definitions of culture and of popular culture are

taken into consideration by most prominent scholars that have conducted studies on this field. Soon after that first research on Cultural and Popular Culture Studies, the interest in both areas was followed by American scholars, who have conducted interesting analysis from these perspectives since then.

The field of study of Popular Culture, as such, has been gaining importance since those early years and it can be said that, at present, ‘research on popular culture is extremely diverse and challenging.’, as scholars Harrington and Bielby assert (2001, p. 1). Academic Laura Grindstaff notes that new approaches take into account ‘the rise of new media technologies and the increasing interdependence between popular culture and other arenas of social life’ (Grindstaff, 2008, p. 206).

It can be said that the interest in this area of study in the academic field has grown noticeably over the last decades, as can be seen in the increase on the offer to study on this topic, which has been adapted to new needs and interests of research within this field, as some scholars assert : ‘The past 50 years have witnessed a steady growth of academic interest in popular culture as reflected in both increased scholarship and gradual transformation of formal curricula’ (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 3). However, we can observe that although popular culture is acknowledged as important in everyday life, the acceptance of Popular Studies as a proper academic field of research has not been easy, and it is still treated as suspicious and not adequate for analysis by the academia in many cases. Harrington and Bielby write on that (2001, p. 2):

Despite its embeddedness in everyday life (or perhaps because of it), popular culture’s location in the academy has long been problematic. For example, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that popular culture was first legitimized as a focus of study in the US, and widespread legitimation has been a very gradual process (see Mukerji and Schudson, 1991, p. 3). Scholars of, and courses on, popular culture remain suspect in many departments and universities worldwide,

reflecting the persistent disbelief that academics theories and methodologies can shed new light on phenomena whose meanings seem transparent obvious.

1.6.4.3.1. Popular culture: definition.

First of all I would like to focus on the definition of popular culture, because as Harrington and Bielby comment: ‘Despite the fact that we all seem to know what we are talking about when we talk about pop culture, its exact meaning has been debated for decades’ (2001, p. 2). These scholars refer to Raymond Williams’ explanations in this respect and to the four different definitions that he distinguishes when referring to popular culture (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 2). According to Williams’ arguments, the word ‘popular’ has at least four current meanings (Williams, 1983, p. 237):

- i) First, it can refer simply to those objects or practices that are well-liked by a lot of people.
- ii) Or it can be used to refer to objects or practices deemed inferior and unworthy. In this view, popular culture is everything left over after we have identified what constitutes elite or “high” culture—that is, the paintings and sculptures and symphonies typically associated with the wealthy and well-educated (see below).
- iii) The term can also refer to “work deliberately setting out to win favour with the people”. In this usage, popular culture is explicitly commercial: it is work that is produced *to be* consumed.
- iv) Finally, the term can refer to the objects and practices “actually made by the people for themselves”

The introductory article ‘Constructing the Popular: Cultural Production and Consumption’ of the book *Popular Culture: Production and Consumption*, by C. Lee Harrington and Denise D. Bielby presents interesting information regarding this topic. Due to that I will summarise some of the main points from those they sketch out, which, from my point of view, offer interesting information in relation to the study and approaches to the analysis of popular culture, and more precisely regarding the media,

including television. These are, in fact, the main expressions of popular culture they write about in their compilation of articles. It is also interesting that, as they assert, they take into account that other practices of everyday life can also be considered as part of popular culture, according to Raymond Williams' definitions:

While the readings collected here focus primarily on the various forms of mass entertainment that usually come to mind when one hears the term, we recognize that popular culture also includes other beliefs and practices that comprise our everyday lived experience: the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the people we spend time with, the gossip we share, the roadway we travel, and so forth. (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 1)

These authors explain that although they believe that all the meanings that Raymond Williams identified are useful and accurate, depending on context and the particular cultural objects and practices in question, the definition that guided them in their compilation of articles is that offered by Mukerji and Schudson. I would like to highlight this definition because it includes what I believe are the core ideas regarding the study of entertainment media and its importance when taken a popular culture studies approach. Actually, their explanation not only refers to the belief and practices broadly shared by a population, but it also takes into account the objects through which they are arranged:

We will sidestep a great many terminological disputes with the inclusive claim that popular culture refers to the belief and practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population. (Mukerji and Schudson, 1991, p. 3)

In fact, Harrington and Bielby explain that the articles compiled in their book emphasise various forms of mass entertainment, reflect a mostly Western perspective, and are situated in contemporary cultural arenas (2001, p. 12). This approach is in line

with the objectives of my work and, as said, there are many reflections and much information both in this book as well as in the introductory article written by the authors, that I would like to highlight. They are indeed relevant to settle some of the basis about the study of popular culture, which also apply to the study of television and television entertainment. In fact, as we can observe, regarding the various descriptions of the term popular culture they refer to, and in relation to the different perspectives for the study of popular culture products and practices that they explain, we can say that this scholarship permits an approach to the study of television and its programmes in new ways. Furthermore, it can be affirmed that these perspectives allow a more positive view of television entertainment and its contributions and, at the same time, they help to understand the origin of some of the negative perceptions over this medium and this genre.

1.6.4.3.2. Studying popular culture: perspectives.

With regard to the study of popular culture, these scholars affirm that today it takes place within a wide variety of disciplinary and theoretical frameworks. They admit that it is difficult to categorise all approaches, but they distinguish at least three predominant schools of thought: the growing field of Cultural Studies, the Production of Culture perspective, and the Popular Culture Studies tradition (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 3).

In relation to these three approaches, I would highlight the importance of the Production of Culture perspective, because as these authors mention (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 13) when quoting Mukerji and Schudson words: ‘They study the

production of cultural objects, and these objects become part of and contribute to culture' (Mukerji and Schudson 1991, pp. 32-33).

Consequently, the study of cultural objects, among which television and television programmes can be included, conducted within this perspective admits that these objects, these texts, are not only part of culture but that they also contribute to it. This approach is indeed fundamental for the study of television from a positive perspective because, on the one hand it considers television and television programmes as cultural products, and, in addition it helps to identify the contributions of this medium and its products to culture.

1.6.4.3.3. Studying popular culture: controversy.

The study of popular culture is controversial, though, and there are still many areas of discussion. In spite of that there are various topics about which most researchers on this field agree, as Harrington and Bielby assert (2001, p. 6): 'While there are considerably more areas of debate than consensus, most scholars - despite their differences in disciplinary location, theoretical stance, methodological approach and/or overall mission - can agree on a few key issues'. I would like to highlight those topics about which there seem to be a general agreement, as well as the statements related to them explained by Harrington and Bielby (2001, p. 6), because they put forward interesting reflections and conclusions regarding the study of popular culture. Thus, the bidirectional influence between popular culture and society, the understanding of the study of this topic as a multidisciplinary task and the fact that different approaches and research methods entail different enquiries and different results, all of them equally

valid, are accepted by most scholars studying popular culture. Harrington and Bielby sketch out and define those three areas just mentioned (2001, p. 6):

First, scholars agree that popular culture both reflects *and* shapes broader social forces; it is a reciprocal process rather than a unidirectional one.

Second, although scholars tend to draw upon their own disciplinary traditions to guide their work, they agree that popular culture research is, and should be, a multidisciplinary endeavor. Indeed, the range of perspectives brought to bear on the topic is astounding; as noted before, scholars throughout the Humanities, the Social Sciences, Schools of Leisure Studies, and Schools of Education are actively involved in pop culture research.

Third, as a result, scholars support a diversity of methodological approaches to the study of popular culture. While disciplinary preferences or constraints shape how all scholars conduct research, there is a general agreement that different modes of inquiry into popular culture generate meaningfully different questions, and thus meaningfully different results.

This having been said, these authors also identify the main areas of debate: The origins of popular culture and, therefore, what can be considered as such; the issue of active or passive consumers, and questions about evaluation of popular culture and its products:

While there is considerable agreement about the questions addressed by the field of popular culture, there are at least three areas of ongoing debate: the origins of popular culture; the questions of whether cultural consumers are active or passive; and as noted above, the question of whether it is appropriate for scholars to take an explicitly evaluative approach in conducting pop culture research. (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 7)

Concerning the first topic, namely the origins of popular culture, these scholars try to respond to when, where and under what conditions it emerged, and they state that ‘Most scholars, particularly those in the Cultural Studies and Production of Culture traditions, believe that mass production (and thus mass distribution and mass

consumption) was a necessary precursor to the emergence of a truly “popular” culture’ (2001, p. 8), although they affirm that not all academics agree about this. Actually, Popular Culture Studies scholars question this position, because researchers who work from this perspective take into account other objects and practices that they also describe as “popular”, besides the various forms of mass entertainment (such as television, music and film) which are generally agreed as part of popular culture products and practices.

Anyhow, and in relation to this work, I want to mention that television, and television entertainment in particular, television viewing and television programmes, are acknowledged as popular culture products and practices, which, consequently, can be analysed within the frameworks of the three scholarships identified above in the study of popular culture (Cultural Studies, Production of Culture and Popular Culture Studies). Hence, it can be said that these three approaches can be taken into consideration for the study of television and television entertainment, and that the reflections and conclusions from scholars who conduct analysis from these perspectives are valid for the study of this medium and its products.

The second area of debate that Harrington and Bielby mention concerns the question of whether popular culture is imposed from above by social elites for purposes of social control, or is truly created ‘by the people, for the people’. In relation to these two confronting positions they explain the negative perspective of the Frankfurt School and note more positive approaches from scholars that have studied this issue in recent years. We can observe that, regarding television, the discussion between passive and active audiences underpins these perspectives, as we have explained in the chapter devoted to these issues throughout this work, when referring to reception studies and the different approaches to the study of audiences. As we can see in these paragraphs below

the same discussion and arguments presented in the analysis of that topic from the audience and reception studies approach are also expressed here, when tackling this issue within the study of popular culture. The authors that defend both positions that we have referred to in those previous sections, such as Adorno and Horkheimer on one side, and Fiske on the other are also mentioned here.

Most scholars writing in the mid-twentieth century believed that pop culture wholly reflected the interests and motivations of the dominant classes. In the most pessimistic reading of this perspective, usually termed the mass culture critique and associated with members of the Frankfurt school (including Adorno and Horkheimer, mentioned earlier), cultural consumers are completely pacified and homogenized in the process of consumption. As unquestioning recipients, consumers contribute nothing to the meaning of popular culture –and thus nothing to society at large- but instead are repetitively victimized and immobilized by it. (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 8)

The position of scholars of the Frankfurt School about this matter was indeed negative, as they affirmed that popular culture consumers and, consequently television viewers, didn't contribute at all to the construction of meanings, to popular culture and to society, on the contrary, they were passive audiences that were dominated and anesthetized by it. As we can observe these are the same conclusions that we have expressed when referring to the study of audiences and the passive audience approach within that field of study.

However, new perspectives were developed in the study of popular culture, which confronted this initial negative approach by those scholars who, as we have seen, highlighted the passivity of consumers of popular culture products, such as television viewers. In contrast with that point of view, these new perspectives focus on the importance of the people, the consumers, the viewers, in the construction of meanings. Harrington and Bielby (2001, pp. 8-9) reflect on that and, referring to the previous

paragraph, they indicate that such positions, as those of scholars of the Frankfurt School, are not broadly accepted nowadays. Nevertheless, they note that the discussion about the real role of people exists, while they admit that various factors do influence in the processes of production and reception, consumption, of media messages and products.

Scholars writing today generally reject this perspective, but they disagree on the extent to which popular culture is instead and “authentic expression of the interests of the people” (Ross, 1989, p. 4). Cultural Studies asserts that popular culture is neither imposed from above, nor something that emerges spontaneously from below, but rather is the outcome of an ongoing interplay between the processes of production and consumption (see Storey, 1993, p. 13). As noted earlier, however, Cultural Studies tends to focus heavily on consumers.

These new perspectives for the study of popular cultural products within Cultural Studies permit a more positive view of their consumers, as this approach tends to focus heavily on them. John Fiske is one of the most relevant academics who developed this point of view. We have already written about his reflections on this matter and we have underscored the importance of this academic when defending this position. Harrington and Bielby also highlight his arguments when writing about this issue:

John Fiske, for example, acknowledges that while the larger social system provides cultural resources to consumers (and benefits economically from the process of consumption), it is only consumers who can popularize objects or practices. (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 9)

Therefore, according to Fiske’s arguments, the role of the people, of consumers of popular culture products, is indeed essential for the construction of meanings. ‘In his view, the power, ultimately, is with the people.’ (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 9)

Popular texts ... are completed only when taken up by people and inserted into their everyday culture. The people make popular culture at the interface between everyday life and the consumption of the products of the cultural industries ... Relevance can be produced only by the people, for only they can know which texts enable them to make the meanings that will function in their everyday lives. (Fiske, 1989, p. 6)

However, the controversy about the real power of the people, about the degree of 'activity' and influence of consumers of popular products is still an issue that has not been solved, and there are different opinions on that. These topic, which we have also written about when approaching it from the audience studies perspective, is also discussed when analysing popular culture, as Harrington and Bielby point out (2001, p. 9): 'Others argue that we need to be cautious in applauding the apparent power of active audiences to generate their own cultural meanings, because this power is actually quite limited'. In this sense, they quote a reflection by scholar Ien Ang over this issue, in reference to media consumption (Harrington and Bielby, p. 9):

Audiences may be active in myriad ways using and interpreting media, but it would be utterly out of perspective to cheerfully equate "active" with "powerful", in the sense of "taking control" at an enduring, structural, or institutional level. It is a perfectly reasonable starting point to consider people's active negotiations with media texts and technologies as empowering in the context of their everyday lives ... but we must not lose sight of the marginality on this power. (Ang, 1990, p. 247)

We can observe that all these positions do, in fact, coexist because, as Harrington and Bielby affirm 'the extent to which "people make the popular" has yet to be resolved' (2001, p. 9).

Finally, the third area of debate that Harrington and Bielby identify 'speaks back to the aesthetics of pop cultural objects and practice and centres on the question of whether academic scholars should approach issues of aesthetics in an evaluative or

none-evaluative way' (2001, p. 9). According to this explanation, it is interesting that they point out the definition of aesthetics described by sociologist Herbert Gans, who defines it as follows:

I use the term "aesthetic" broadly, referring not only to standards of beauty and taste but also to a variety of other emotional and intellectual values which people express or satisfy when they choose content from a culture. (Gans, 1974, p. 14)

The definitions of 'aesthetic' and the various meanings it takes depending on the different approaches to the analysis and study of the issues related to it are also matters of discussion. These different meanings and approaches do indeed influence the aesthetic assessment and the value given in this respect to the different media products. We can observe that Gans' definition of the term is wide indeed, and that includes other concepts beside those traditionally taken into account, associated to standards of beauty and taste. However, beyond that, latest discussions focus on whether academics should be involved at all in aesthetic assessments when analysing popular culture. According to Harrington and Bielby's research on this matter (2001, pp. 9-10), they are different positions about this issue depending on the various perspectives taken, as they comment in this text, where they also refer to Browne's words:

... only Cultural Studies seems explicitly involved in evaluative research, while Popular Culture Studies, in contrast, espouses a non-evaluative approach, arguing that researchers should be neutral or objective in examining cultural texts and the people who produce and consume them'. From this position, since popular culture is defined as everyday culture, "liked or disliked, approved or disapproved ... the questions of aesthetics plays only a tangential and relatively unimportant role" (Browne, 1996, pp. 25, 33).

The third academic perspective, that is to say, the Production of Culture, originated within the discipline of sociology and it can be said that nowadays

sociologists are still attempting to articulate their position regarding the aesthetic evaluation of popular culture products. Harrington and Bielby (2001, p. 10) explain that:

In the early twentieth century, sociologists were centrally involved in aesthetic evaluation as part of their wide-spread critique of the “evils” of mass culture (see, for example, Blumler, 1933). Newer sociological approaches, in contrast, have avoided evaluative issues, and the Production of Culture perspective essentially ignores the issues of meaning-making and aesthetics altogether. (...) In the realm of elite culture, professional gatekeepers or mediators play a central role in deciphering and articulating a cultural object’s value to social members. In pop culture, in contrast, the accessibility of the cultural object pre-empts the traditional gatekeeping role.

In this regard I think it is interesting to include here the reflections expressed by sociologist Herbert Gans who, writing in the mid-1970s suggests there are four major themes in most mass culture critiques. Gans’ conclusions are explained by Harrington and Bielby (2001, p. 13). I quote their text below as it shows the main areas of criticism regarding popular culture that sociologists have focused on and, as said, Gans summarises (1974, p. 19):

The first concerns the “negative character of popular culture creation” (i.e. pop culture is mass produced and is purely for-profit).

The second addresses the “negative effects on high culture” (i.e. popular culture “steals” from high culture and thus debases it).

The third theme focuses on the “negative effects on the popular culture audience” (as noted, mass culture critics believe popular culture is narcotizing and harmful to its consumers”).

A final theme is the potentially “negative effects on the society” (i.e. pop culture consumption reduces the level of civilization, and since it encourages consumer passivity, also encourages totalitarianism).

We can observe that Gans’ conclusions highlighted above are in line with the main negative approaches to television and television entertainment that we have

identified throughout this work when researching that issue from other perspectives. Criticism about the creative value of popular media products as well as their negative effects on high culture, on the audience and, finally, on the society are underscored in that text. Hence, we can state that the main negative criticisms of popular culture and its products pointed out here can be applied to television and television entertainment. Furthermore, they help to explain the negativity towards this medium and this genre among many sectors of academia and society for many years.

However, we can also see that new approaches to the study of popular culture from a sociological perspective avoid traditional aesthetical assessments over popular culture products. In fact, this field of research argues that those traditional aesthetic evaluations were based on hierarchies of taste.

1.6.4.3.4. Cultural production and consumption.

Finally, with respect to the book edited by Harrington and Bielby and the comprehensive introductory article written by these scholars I would like to focus on the importance of the connection between cultural production and consumption and their reflections on that. In fact this issue is central in their text and compilation of articles, as they explain (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 11):

This collection of readings is organized around the principle of connecting the worlds of cultural production and consumption. Common sense tells us that the popularity of any given cultural text, whether it be music or television or sport, is dependent upon an integral relationship between producers and consumers.

When analysing this connection, they refer to the term *circuit of culture* to explain that they visualize that relationship between producers and consumers as a bi-

directional process in which several and diverse factors are involved which do, indeed, influence the production of cultural meanings (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 11):

To connect production and consumption we borrow the conceptual image of a *circuit of culture*, which suggests that cultural meaning-making functions less in terms of “transmission flow” model from producer to consumer “and more like the model of a dialogue. It is an ongoing process” (du Gay, 1977, p. 10); see also du Gay et al., 1997). Cultural meanings are produced at a number of different sites and are circulated through a complex set of reciprocal processes and practices.

1.6.4.3.5. Cultural processes: production of meaning.

According to Gay’s analysis, as well as to the work of scholars in line with his reflections, it can be said that they distinguish five major cultural processes, which Harrington and Bielby understand should be emphasised in the study of the circuit of culture, that is to say, in the analysis of the processes and practices that are involved in the production of cultural meaning and that connect the fields of production and reception. They identify as such the cultural processes of representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. As a consequence, when studying the cultural aspects of a product, a text, these five areas should be taken into account according to these scholars’ conclusions. They also point out that these processes, despite being different, can be related to each other (Harrington and Bielby, 2001, p. 11):

According to du Gay and his colleagues (1977), there are at least five major cultural processes that should be emphasized in studying the circuit of culture, including representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. To study an object or text culturally, “one should at least explore how it is represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed, and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 3). In analysing the circuit one can begin with any moment or site that one chooses; while they might appear to be distinct categories, they overlap and articulate with one another in myriad ways.

Taking all this into consideration, we can say that the field of studies of Popular Culture and the three different perspectives that Harrington and Bielby identify within it (the area of Cultural Studies, the Production of Culture perspective, and the Popular Culture Studies tradition), present an interesting approach for the analysis of television, television entertainment and television programmes, which, according to the definitions of popular culture explained in this section can be considered as popular culture products, texts, and practices. The five areas involved in the production and consumption of cultural products which influence in the creation of cultural meanings mentioned here (representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation) are also worth taking into consideration when conducting studies in television and television entertainment in particular. In fact, they are identified as core areas of research for the analysis of this medium by scholars of Television Studies, as we have noted in previous sections. I would say that these perspectives and the analysis conducted within them help to explain the negative perception of television and television entertainment. At the same time, they present interesting opportunities to identify the positive contributions of television and television entertainment to the production and dissemination of culture, as well as to reflect on the role of this communication medium in the production of cultural meanings.

Prestigious academic Toby Miller, whose contribution to television studies we have often mentioned throughout this work, has also conducted research on popular culture and on entertainment media, specifically, from this perspective. The book *Popular Culture and Everyday Life* that he edited together with Alec W. McHoul (1998) includes interesting information and reflections on this topic from various perspectives, because as they explain: ‘The intention is to give readers a broad background in approaches to popular culture and the everyday, using tools derived from

anthropological, historical, literary, linguistic, screen, and sociological studies' (Miller & McHoul, 1998, p. 1). I have drawn some information they include which I think is relevant for the study of television and television entertainment from this perspective.

In the introduction they tackle the issue of the definition of popular culture. Referring to the term 'popular', they go beyond its initial denotations ('of', 'by' and 'for' the people) to indicate the relationship between 'the popular' and the markets, which implies additional definitions of the term.

What is the popular? The word denotes 'of the people', 'by the people', and 'for the people'. But if we think this through, it becomes clear that, in an era when most cultural products are subject to mass distribution, there must be a more complicated story. The demotic appeal indicated by the adjective 'popular' is only partly adequate. For popular culture is also related to markets. Markets tell us what people will buy, but not what they will tolerate (such as broadcast television and radio), what they make of what they buy (...), or what happens when markets fail or are irrelevant (...). (Miller and McHoul, 1998, p. 3)

These scholars identify three different approaches to the analysis of the popular, according to the different ways the popular is understood, that is to say, as a form of art, as reflections of ways of life or as expressions of fun and cultural pleasure. Furthermore, they state that these three perspectives are interconnected (Miller and McHoul, 1998, p.3):

There are three intersecting discourses or ways of knowing the popular. A discourse about art expects culture to elevate us above the diurnal, transcending body, time, and place. Conversely, a discourse about folk-life expects culture to settle us into a sedimented collectivity through the wellsprings of community. This second discourse situates culture as part of daily existence. Finally, a discourse about pop idealizes fun as the summit of cultural pleasure (Frith 1991: 106-7). The pop discourse brings together the exhilarating loss of self engendered by entertainment and its paradoxical everydayness; ...

It is also interesting their explanation about the centrality of the assessment on the artistic value of the popular, which highly influence the perspective of the various expressions of 'the popular', including television and television entertainment. As we have also observed in previous texts, they notice that this assessment is related to the hierarchies of artistic value, according to which elitist and popular entertainment forms are confronted. Discourses of high and low culture, elite and popular cultural expressions and their value underpin this controversy (Miller and McHoul, 1998, p. 3):

The popular is marked by hierarchies of artistic value, with European high art and the philosophical aesthetics of Western ruling classes set against the entertainment that people purchase from the commercial world. Any attempt to transcend this high-low divide must deal with a definition legacy from neoclassical economics. It assumes that expressions of the desire and capacity to pay for services stimulate the provision of entertainment and hence –when the product is publicly accepted- determine what is 'popular'. This is a processual and quantitative measure, as opposed to the directional and qualitative definitions that seek out originary, organic sites of the popular in the people themselves through 'folk' culture (Frow, 1993).

As far as the term culture is concerned, these authors focus on two main definitions, that is to say, culture as an artistic expression, and therefore related to creativity and valued regarding aesthetic criteria, and culture as a way of life, according to which the various factors that define us as humans are relevant (Miller and McHoul, 1998, pp. 5-6).

There are two common definitions of culture. The first refers to artistic output, defined and valued by aesthetic criteria and emerging from a community of creative people. The second meaning takes culture to be an all-encompassing concept about how we live our lives, the senses of place and person that make us human. These two definitions intertwine: the cultural human subject is both practical/sensual/active and theoretical/spiritual/judging. This opens up the possibility of culture as ethical and aesthetic self-improvement: a civic programme directed at the spiritual development of the individual. From this point one can speak, for example, of the arts as a civilizing pursuit, as something

good in itself. Seemingly disconnected from utility, the body, and facticity, the arts are in fact geared towards quite civic-utilitarian ends: the production and management of a specific kind of human being.

Taking into account these definitions about ‘the popular’ and ‘culture’ these scholars reflect on the relationship of popular culture and the markets, the commercial world. In this respect, I would like to note that they mention, among others, the work of ‘the foremost theorist of popular culture in the cultural studies literature’ as they describe Antonio Gramsci. They explain that according to Gramsci, popular culture generates an ideology of legitimacy to a socio-political arrangement by eliciting public acceptance of it. We have previously referred in various sections to the prominent work of this Italian academic, as we can also observe in Miller and McHoul’s text (1998).

With regard to the study of popular culture, Gramsci’s reflections on this matter offer a perspective that goes beyond aesthetic assessment of popular culture, as he focuses on its social aspects. The role that people play in the process of consuming various popular culture products and the power of the people, the audiences, for their legitimization is analysed by Gramsci. His theories put forward interesting points of view for the analysis of popular culture that have guided the work of many scholars researching on this field. His reflections posit political issues but they go beyond that. We have also referred to his theories in previous sections when dealing with this matter within other disciplines and areas of research.

1.6.4.3.6. Popular culture and leisure.

When studying about popular culture John Clarke’s research and findings are also interesting. I want to highlight here his reflections about popular culture and leisure

because when doing so he presents a definition of culture which, although it is in line with the various meanings of the term presented previously, in addition to them he includes new parameters for the understanding of this concept and what it involves. Clarke argues that the term 'culture' refers to the social area of the production of meaning and that the analysis of leisure has to be included in that framework. He explains that the issues related to the commercialisation of leisure are essential when studying popular culture, and we can observe that these arguments are closely related to the study of television. In fact, a clear relationship can be established between television viewing, and more precisely television entertainment consuming, and commercialisation of leisure. Due to that, we can say that Clarke's explanations help to achieve a thorough analysis of television and television entertainment in particular. I will below include some information, explanations and definitions that he presents (Clarke, 1990, pp. 28-40) which can be helpful in this regard.

John Clarke approaches the analysis of leisure from a popular culture perspective, including it within the umbrella of the study of culture. This broad term entails various definitions, as we have seen in previous sections. In this paragraph below this author presents culture as the social area where meanings are produced, for which, as he asserts, it is essential for the formation of collective identities. (Clarke, 1990, p. 28):

"Culture" represents a wider framework within which the analysis of leisure can be situated. "Culture" designates the social field of meaning production (sometimes called ideological struggle, signifying practice or processes of representation). It refers to the processes through which people make sense of themselves and their lives within the frame of possibilities offered by the society of which they are members. It is within culture that individual and collective identities and projects are formed.

As Clarke indicates the issue of the definition of culture is core when researching this matter and the perspective he presents about the study of leisure is closely related to that point of view too. He remarks that the study of this topic from a cultural approach involves analysis of both the meaning of leisure as well as about the significance of the activities and practices that can be considered as such, among which television and television entertainment are included.

The view of culture as the site of struggle over meaning illuminates many issues concerning the historical and cultural specificity of “leisure” itself, not least the historical development of the spatial, temporal, and cultural separation of “work” (defined as wage labor) and “leisure” (defined as “free time”). A cultural history of leisure, for example, casts light not only on the struggles to “win” free time which accompanied the development of industrial capitalism but also the struggles to control the uses to which such free time could be put. Cultural analysis, then, enables us to think about both the meaning of leisure and the meaning of activities or social practices within leisure. (Clarke, 1990, p. 29)

Investigations of contemporary culture take into account the issues of commercialisation of leisure, which have also been central to the study of popular culture. The role of the ‘cultural industries’ in this process has to be taken into account when analysing the commercialisation of leisure and the ways in which the processes of production and distribution of culture, and therefore, the creation of meanings, take place.

Investigation of contemporary culture have had to take account of the ways in which the means of cultural production and distribution have been both commercialized and centralized over the last century. By itself, this does not mean that social groups have become the passive recipients of centrally produced meanings, any more than the commercialization of leisure necessarily implies that groups do not choose how to “spend” their free time. But it does mean that the conditions under which social groups choose and create meanings are overshadowed by the concentrations of economic, cultural, and political power that the “cultural industries” represent. (Clarke, 1990, p. 29)

1.6.4.3.7. Popular culture: positive and negative positions.

The economic and political developments that have happened during recent decades do have consequences for popular culture. We have previously referred to its various definitions, Clarke highlights that one of the effects of these changes is ‘the ambiguity embedded in the very idea of what popular culture is’, and he notes that two main definitions are given about what popular is. These words drawn from his text explain both of them and show the contrast between these two approaches. In those explanations we can observe that positive and negative positions towards popular culture, its production and consumption underpin them:

In one definition, “popular” refers to cultures that arise from and “belong to” the people (the popular masses, the subordinate classes, or subordinated social groups). This is a historically derived reference, drawing on the distinction between “high” and “low”, “elite” and “folk” cultures. This concept of the popular carries an implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) positive political affirmation of the validity of popular culture, relative to the dominant views and standards expressed in “high” or “official” culture. (Clarke, 1990, p. 29)

In a contrasting definition, “popular” describes a culture provided for the people but not produced or distributed by them. The first view sees popular culture as produced by the people; the second sees it as consumed by them. The first carries a positive validation of the “popular”; the second stresses the more passive implications of consumption as opposed to production. It opens up suspicion of the motives and intentions of the producers of popular culture and questions the political effects of cultures that do not arise from and belong to “the people”. (Clarke, 1990, p. 30)

These opposite and confronted perspectives that started since the early years of cultural and popular culture studies coexist in the study of contemporary popular culture too. Clarke explains the reasons for that:

Clearly, the tension between these two views is intensified in the study of contemporary popular culture, precisely because of the domination of culture by the institutions of mass cultural production and distribution, of which the mass

media are the most striking example. The rise of mass cultural institutions means that the task of the political assessment of popular culture has moved away from the rescue and celebration of “popular” forms into the much more ambiguous issue of the “popular” in an era of mass cultural production. Political evaluation now has to confront the consequences of a culture whose dominant forms are mass produced and distributed and in which “popular” participation is primarily defined by the act of consumption rather than of production. (Clarke, 1990, p. 30)

In fact, it can be observed that the analysis of contemporary popular culture has become increasingly polarized between two opposite positions, which Clarke defines as ‘cultural pessimists’ and the ‘cultural populists’ (Clarke, 1990, p. 30). Arguments of both perspectives are summarised by Clarke, who notes that initial negative positions over the various expressions, practices and products of popular culture were confronted by more positive approaches developed within the cultural and popular culture studies: ‘In effect, then, the cultural populists have turned many of the central propositions of the pessimists on their heads’ (Clarke, 1990, p. 36). He sketches out four main areas where these changes take place, within the original arguments defended by traditional theories, and it can be said that at present both perspectives, positive and negative, coexist (Clarke, 1990, p. 36):

Rather than regarding the creation of meaning as limited to the moment of cultural production, they insist that the practice of consumption is also a process of signification.

Where cultural pessimism identifies consumption as a passive position of structured secondariness, populism finds it an autonomous moment of active cultural creativity.

Where pessimism tends to see the “consumer” as the dominant social role, populism sees “consumers” as differentially socially located, “reading” from their distinctive experiences.

And where pessimism stresses the reproduction of dominant social relationships and ideology, populism celebrates the existence of difference, critical distance, and knowing creativity.

Finally, I would like to focus on various aspects that Clarke puts forward regarding the view of popular culture that he offers in his analysis, such as: i) the increasing interest in the form of popular culture in addition to the content; ii) the consideration of culture as polysemic; iii) the view of audiences as capable of drawing their own meanings out of popular culture products, texts; iv) the importance of the codes and conventions of the various cultural forms, that those audiences do know and comprehend and which enable them to read, understand and engage with those cultural forms in an active, critical and distant manner. I would add that these facts, these arguments, these approaches, can be applied to the study of television and television entertainment, due to the reasons that we have already referred to, and explained in detail, throughout this work. Furthermore, when doing so, positive perspectives of the study of this medium and this genre can be found, and some of their contributions to culture and society can be identified.

Two things are worth emphasizing about the view of popular culture offered here. One is a growing concern with the form as much as the content of popular culture, which has led to analyses of the “spaces” left open in its texts for readers to create their own meanings. Such arguments give further emphasis to the polysemic character of culture (suggesting that the reproduction of dominant ideologies is far from unproblematic), paralleled by a view of the audience as “knowing”, understanding the codes and conventions of the cultural forms it consumes and able to engage with them in a distanced and critical way. (Clarke, 1990, pp. 35-36)

1.6.4.4. Studying popular programmes.

In these previous sections we have referred to the studies on television conducted within the cultural studies and popular culture studies perspectives, and we

have seen that the popular has different meanings in academic approaches to television. The importance of these perspectives within the variety of studies of this medium has also been highlighted, in fact, as academic Jonathan Bignell remarks: ‘The academic discipline of television studies has been constituted by the claim that television is worth studying because it is popular’. He also adds that: ‘Yet this claim has also entailed a need to defend the subject against the triviality that is associated with the television medium because of its very popularity’. (Bignell, 2010, Abstract)

These statements that Bignell makes bring to the fore two topics that are central in my research work, that is to say, the importance of studying and analysing television, among other reasons due to its popularity, and the negative criticisms of this medium and the entertainment genre in particular, because, in general terms, most popular television programmes are considered banal and irrelevant. Hence, we have posed these questions throughout this work and have written extensively about the position that television has in society, the role it plays and the great amount of time that is dedicated to watching this medium all over the world. The negative perspective of it, mainly of television entertainment programmes, which are considered banal, low culture products, has also been argued in this dissertation.

These two issues are closely related to the different definitions of the popular. Jonathan Bignell writes on this in his article ‘Television and the popular: viewing from the British perspective’ (2010), where he discusses the variant meanings of this term in academic approaches to television. Furthermore, as Bignell explains this essay ‘analyses the many attempts in the latter twentieth and twenty-first centuries to constitute critical discourses as a popular medium’ (Bignell, 2010, Abstract)

Therefore, Bignell researches critical writing on television by academia, and although his focus is mainly on British television fiction, he mentions that he takes into account a broad, international context. Anyhow, this perspective is interesting as such because we have seen the relevance of the British approach to television analysis, among other reasons due to the importance of cultural studies in Great Britain, where this school of thought in fact, started. Likewise, Bignell refers to other entertainment programmes, not fictional, due to their relevance in the present television scenario. Actually, this scholar points out the cultural importance of factual entertainment programming in this regard:

The article focuses mainly of British programmes and critical writing, but places British television culture in a broader international context. It focuses mainly on television fiction, but also includes some discussion of factual entertainment programming since this has been culturally prominent in recent times. (Bignell 2010, p. 181)

I can say that the approach and content of this article are certainly interesting for my research work, as the information and reflections that Bignell presents are in line with the main issues that I have posed throughout this dissertation. I would like to highlight his observations in relation to the various approaches to television within critical academic writing, as well as about the various meanings that popular has in contemporary television research.

Bignell refers to the various methods of analysis within Television Studies in Great Britain, which include several points of view for the study of this medium and he concludes that due to the great changes that are taking place in recent times, new methods and perspectives are needed for the analysis of television at present (Bignell, 2010, p. 181):

The organization of this article reflects the range of dominant methodologies in the field of Television Studies in the UK, which encompass the analytical study of television programmes as texts, the television industry as an institution along with its production practices and organization, the role of television in contemporary culture, the study of audiences, and histories of television that emphasise one or more of those aspects of the medium's development. It is a recurrent motif in the theory and criticism of television that the medium is in a state of change so significant that previous critical paradigms need to be revised and new ones introduced (Brunsdon, 2008).

In this context, Bignell comments on the importance of the initial studies from a popular culture approach conducted by Raymond Williams, which we have also mentioned in previous sections. 'Eschewing technological determinism, moral pathologization and sterile debates about television's supposed effects, UK writers such as Raymond Williams addressed television as an aspect of culture' (Bignell, 2010, Abstract). However, I want to remark that, likewise, Bignell points out two aspects that I have also underscored when tackling this issue. Hence, this scholar mentions that, from this approach, television is understood as part of the popular culture of modernity. Furthermore, he also highlights the fact that Raymond Williams' perspective considers television as part of cultural formation (Bignell, 2010, p. 181).

Historically, the study of television emerged out of the changing forms taken by the larger field of media education. The premise that underpins media education is that academic studies should engage with everyday media experiences that are understood as an aspect of the popular culture of modernity. Foundational discourses in television and media studies encouraged the questioning of media use by means of the analysis of media products, media institutions and media technologies. The work of the literary and cultural critic Raymond Williams (1974) was crucial in establishing this breadth in the field, as a result of his interest in evaluative and discriminating critical discourse that would address television as an aspect of a dynamic cultural formation.

In line with the information we have provided throughout this work, Bignell also states that the initial criticism of television as part of mass media focused on its negative effects on viewers and society, and that the final objective of the academic study on this field was to protect media consumers, and consequently society, from their deleterious effects. Bignell adds that further, in the 1970s and 1980s, theoretical developments in academic media studies, such as semiotics, led media education to focus on deconstructing media representations. Likewise, he comments on the importance of the audience studies that have been developed lately and the relevance of this type of research within the analysis of modernity (Bignell, 2010, p. 182):

Most recently, scholars in the field have become interested in audiences, conducting studies of individual media users or audience groups, to provide a more finely-textured understanding of how and why television and other media are used in the context of ordinary life. So the key conceptual move to identify here is the placing of television among a larger media ensemble whose critique is recognized as part of the project of understanding modernity.

The shift that took place from a concept of passive viewers to the consideration of television consumers as active audiences is also commented by Bignell. Nonetheless, in this respect I want to underline the references he makes to the importance of scheduling, besides the production of programmes, for the analysis of television from a contemporary popular culture perspective. From this approach, the way people watch television is taking into consideration but, in addition, the programmes they watch and the way they are placed in television schedules are also born in mind. Hence, the flow of programmes is also studied as part of the viewing experience (Bignell, 2010, pp. 182-183):

In response to a crisis of its own agency as an intervention into television culture, academic work paid increasing attention to the agency of viewers as active and resistant users of television, rather than as passive receivers. The

crucial role of scheduling, and the transmission of programmes on one channel rather than another, contributed to the insight that the schedule produces interactions between programmes that are not determined by the expectations that a form or genre sets up for an individual programme. Formative work on this by Raymond Williams (1974) and John Ellis (1982) addressed the flow of programme in the television schedule, and “flow” quickly took on the status of a key term for subsequent theorization. The analysis of flow refers both to the concatenation of programmes in a temporal sequence but also to the viewer’s experience of composing his or her own television text from the segments that are viewed. Thus, thinking about popular television came to mean considering popular modes of viewing, as well as the programmes included in that viewing experience (Gripsrud, 1997).

Bignell presents the various ways of understanding and defining the popular regarding television in the actual context, both in relation to commercial and public television, because different discourses are being developed. I want to call attention to them because they present interesting ways of analysing popular television, and consequently popular television entertainment programmes, adapted to contemporary approaches of research.

As explained above, Bignell focuses mainly on a British perspective, but we have already noted that this perspective is indeed relevant due to its importance internationally for the study of television and the analysis of this communication and entertainment medium from cultural and popular culture perspectives. Both scholarships were, and still are, very significant among the studies conducted about the media and regarding television in particular. The British cultural studies and popular culture studies perspectives present interesting parameters for the analysis of television entertainment as a whole as well as of different programmes, and among them those that can be included within the entertainment genre.

1.6.4.4.1. The popular: cultural influence.

Bignell reflects on the different concepts of popular television that can be found, depending either on the analysis of the television industry or within the academic perspective. Both approaches, though, refer to the importance of the amount of audience when considering programmes as popular. This need for the different television companies to be popular, that is to say, to attract a considerable number of viewers and to keep a good position compared with the performance of other channels, of their competitors, is acknowledged by both academics and the industry. The rating and share figures are, indeed, essential in the television business, and these are also a way to define and measure what is popular in television.

In focusing on semiotics, narrative structures and viewers' decoding of programmes, British academics discourses about popular television were very distinct from the discourses of the television industry. Television institutions measure what is popular by means of ratings or audience share. (...). Television channels need to sustain substantial audiences in order to generate advertising revenue, since audience size and composition determine broadcasters' level of charges to advertisers. (Bignell, 2010, p. 183)

The number of viewers watching a certain programme and their proportion regarding the total number of television viewers at that specific time, that is to say the rating and share figures, are essential for commercial television channels, but they are relevant too for those channels and companies which are not strictly commercially funded, such as most public televisions. These entities also need a good performance regarding audiences to respond to the public institutions that support and finance them, as Bignell (2010, p. 183) notes: 'In the case of broadcasters funded by the state or by some other non-commercial means (such as the BBC's licence fee in the UK), healthy ratings and audience shares are required to justify the institution's claim for its funding.'

From this perspective popularity depends on the audience ‘rating’ and ‘share’ figures, and on the capability of each programme to be appealing to either a considerable amount of viewers or to a certain kind of consumers. As Bignell concludes, ‘Popularity therefore, in this commercial sense, can refer either to sheer viewer numbers, or to a broadcaster’s performance relative to its competitors’. Furthermore, as this author comments, programmes’ popularity determines their position in channels’ schedules. ‘Individual television programmes occupy their schedule position by virtue of their success in attracting either an audience of significant size or an audience composed of valuable consumers.’ (Bignell, 2010, p. 183)

Therefore, it can be said that this definition of popular television and popular programmes is equally valid for both commercial and public funded companies. Nevertheless, with respect to public television, the concept of popular has additional meanings and as Bignell remarks ‘In the UK and in most West European nations, a concept of Public Service Broadcasting had enormous impact on how the popular was conceived’. He explains that ‘In the early institutionalisation of broadcasting in Britain in the 1920s, the requirement for radio (and later television) to be “popular” referred to a notion of reflecting society to itself, constituting a public sphere of debate and engagement, and supplying a diverse range of freely-available cultural goods’ (Bignell, 2010, pp. 183,184). Bignell notes that popular television, in the above mentioned conception is ‘most-watched programmes’ but he adds that additional conditions are needed when referring to the concept of popular in public television, as these entities and their programmes should also represent society (Bignell, 2010, p. 184):

Commercial broadcasters argued that the purpose of television is to offer whatever programmes the market wants, and thus primarily to offer entertainment. Popular television, in this conception, is most-watched programmes. But the alternative and still powerful discourse regards television

as a public service, which should reflect the whole of society and enhance its quality of citizenship. The BBC's guidelines for producers, for example, still state that: "The BBC has a responsibility to serve all sections of society in the United Kingdom. Its domestic services should aim to reflect and represent the composition of the nation" (BBC, 2003, p. 89).

According to this concept of the popular other aspects besides those related to the amount and proportions of viewers are also relevant when referring to public broadcasting services. Bignell states that the diversity of television popular entertainment formats contributes to fulfilling the objectives of public television, in line with what he understands as a 'progressive television policy' (Bignell, 2010, p. 184):

Popular television, in this dominant conception, may still be the most-watched entertainment programmes but these must meet a threshold of quality and be part of a broader mix of provision. Public Service is thus an attitude and not a genre of programme, so it includes high-budget and aesthetically demanding work, but it also refers to the range of popular formats and genres, such as sitcoms, sport and soap opera, that contribute to offering diverse kinds of form, topic, and mode of audience engagement.

Bignell hence defends the value of different popular entertainment programmes as a relevant part of public broadcasting's schedules, and refers to the critical approaches to them. When analysing these type of programmes and among them some of the most popular ones such as *Strictly Come Dancing* (known outside the UK as *Dancing with the Stars*) or *Pop Idol*, Bignell indicates that they present a border zone between the public world of celebrity and the private sphere of television viewership. Bignell brings to the front Richard Dyer's (1973) arguments about this type of format, who argues that they are mediating formats between earlier forms of popular entertainment, such as vaudeville or music hall, and a broadcast designed for bourgeois domestic and private consumption. Furthermore, he explains the ways public culture and domesticity are represented in them (Bignell, 2010, p. 184).

Public culture is signified by real or apparent liveness, an auditorium setting and a mix of types of content such as musical performance, interview, quiz or contest segments. On the other hand, domesticity is signified by the placement of the programme within the routines of a schedule designed to match the rhythms of domestic life (mealtimes, work versus leisure time, etc), modes of address that assume a home audience, and the use of multi-camera shooting techniques to edit the material into an event for television rather than a relayed performance.

In this respect, however, I want to highlight Bignell's comments about the regional, national and transnational aspects of popularity and the importance of the cultural identity factor in the production and dissemination of television programmes. He reflects on that, taking as a starting point the example of the very popular and globally produced British format *Strictly Come Dancing* (*Dancing with the Stars*).

The example of *Dancing with the Stars* draws attention to the fact that popularity has regional, national and transnational aspects, and is thus implicated in the concept of globalization (Barker 1999). Critical discourse has recognized that television is transnational but takes nationally specific forms, and while British television draws primarily on programmes by British programme-makers, consciousness of national identity in and through television is also constituted against imported programmes and imported formats. (Bignell, 2010, p. 185)

Worries about the cultural influence of international popular television programmes can be observed in Bignell's reflection. Furthermore, the consequences of the globalisation of formats, and the issues related to the features of the entities which produce and disseminate television programmes are matters of concern when analysing television. It has to be noted that it is due to their popularity that those formats are internationally consumed and that in most cases they are entertainment genres.

Television has always been regarded with suspicion, as a medium that might be replacing one version of "the popular", namely a valued national popular culture, with another. While the trading of programme ideas and formal components (the ingredients of a television format) is not limited by language, any conception of national domestic broadcasting has to deal with the belief that television is

doomed to eventual colonization and subservience to US programme formats, imports and funding models. What is at issue is the degree of determinism assigned in analytical discourse to the kinds of institutions which make and broadcast programmes, and the conclusions which can be drawn from television ownership, organization and geographical distribution. (Bignell, 2010, p. 185)

The importance of the international distribution and production of popular formats is increasing in the current television landscape. Initially only fictional products were distributed internationally but in recent years the amount, variety and importance of the entertainment formats produced and distributed globally has increased considerably. Globalisation, though, entails concerns about cultural imperialism, as Bignell comments (Bignell, 2010, p. 185):

Globalization theses proposed by Herbert Schiller (1969; 1976), for example, argued that the globalization of communication in the second half of the twentieth century was determined by the commercial interests of US corporations, working in parallel with political and military interests. This discourse connects cultural imperialism with the dynamics of colonialism, arguing that the colonial empires of Britain or France have been replaced by commercial empires. Traditional local cultures are said to be eroded by dependencies on media products and their attendant ideologies deriving from the United States, with the effect of globalizing popular culture across regions and populations which become constrained to adapt to its logics and desires.

Actually, these specific ideas about American cultural imperialism were mainly developed during the second half of last century. However, further research on that issue takes into account the role of the regional, national and transnational institutions when studying the concepts of 'the popular' and the cultural influence of 'global' popular television programmes. Hence, the existence and work of these institutions respond to the concerns over the impact of popular American television, as Bignell remarks (2010, pp. 185,186):

This cultural imperialism thesis, developed in the 1950s and 1960s, pays scant regard to local and national specificities in media organization and consumption, nor to regional flows of media products. Academic analysis has therefore assessed the significance of regional structures and institutions to transnational conceptions of “the popular” (Bignell/Fickers 2008), such as The European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the Eurovision and Euronews networks, and the EU’s trade facilitation body the European Audiovisual Observatory. The reason that such institutions are perceived to be required is primarily the influence of US popular television in Europe.

The importance of the transnational aspect of television entertainment and the influence this fact has in the cultural identities of different nations and regions is, indeed, a matter of concern and analysis. There are different perspectives when approaching this issue within the academic field but, in general terms, it is presented as big powerful cultures confronting the smaller national and regional ones. However, the need to analyse this cultural influence within other geographical and cultural contexts is posed by some scholars at present.

Television theory has been largely based on studying the texts, institutions and audiences of television in the Anglophone world, and thus in specific geographical contexts. The transnational contexts of popular television have been addressed as spaces of contestation, for example between Americanisation and national and regional identities. Commentators have been ambivalent about whether to do so within a national, regional or global context. (Bignell, 2010, Abstract)

1.6.4.4.2. The popular: a question of representation.

When referring to the various concepts of the popular in previous sections we have noted that popular is understood as made ‘by’ the people and ‘for’ the people. As far as television is concerned, Bignell indicates that, due to the special features of television and television production, ‘television cannot be made by the people’ (2010, Abstract). Consequently, studies of this medium from a popular culture approach have

not analysed products which are ‘made by the people’, these analyses, instead, have focused on the representation of the people on television programmes, on their presence on the screen. As Bignell states this is a conception of the popular as a question of representation (Bignell, 2010, p. 188):

The popular also carries the meaning of production by “the people” themselves, but this notion of and organic culture conflicts with the industrial, institutional and technological facts of television. There has never been a significant amateur television culture, though the presence of web-based video exchange services (such as You Tube) is currently developing such opportunities in another medium. Instead of productions by “the people”, television has been interested in representations of “the people”, and academic discourses about British television have addressed this in relation to the criteria of Public Service Broadcasting. (Bignell, 2010, p. 187)

As said, many British scholars have focused on the way public television proceeds regarding the representation of the people in its programmes. It can be said that as soon as television became the most popular of the mass media, they started analysing the ways British society was reflected on the programmes of their public television.

What is at stake are questions of equality (specially in gender, race and class) and the resonance between representations and perceived shifts in cultural politics. Each of these research problems contains an assumption that television could or should achieve a judicious and appropriate relationship with British society. While it would be naïve to expect television to accurately mirror society, concern about representation followed from similar preoccupations in radio and documentary cinema of the 1920s and 1930s, and when television increasingly took on the role of the primary mass broadcasting medium in the 1950s, those documentary assumptions moved into television. (Bignell 2010, p. 187)

This analysis is gaining importance in contemporary research, among other facts due to the increasing participation of normal, ordinary people in factual and mainly in factual entertainment genres, as Bignell comments (2010, p. 187):

The speech of ordinary people reflecting on their own experience and attitudes became an increasing feature of television factual programming. This notion of the access of ordinary people to the representations of their own lives has become progressively more significant in television documentary and in factual entertainment genres.

The increasing amount and importance of these so called factual entertainment programmes have brought new discussions about the representation of ‘the people’ in television, on the screen. Furthermore, the relationship that can be established between this type of entertainment programmes that have often been eschewed, and considered low culture, low quality products, and other formats that have been regarded as high quality, prestigious programmes and genres, is a matter of analytical interest at present.

Recent developments in factual entertainment television (in Britain and elsewhere) have greatly increased the visibility of “the people” in programmes, notably in docusoaps, game shows and other participative formats. This has led to renewed debates about whether such “popular” programmes appropriately represent “the people” and how factual entertainment that is often despised relates to genres hitherto considered to be of high quality, such as scripted drama and socially-engaged documentary television. (Bignell, 2010, Abstract)

1.6.4.4.3. Valuation of the popular.

Finally, I would like to stress the fact that when studying popular television entertainment, concepts of quality and aesthetics are fundamental, because, in this respect, negative assessments concerning television popular programmes have been made for many years. This has, in fact, been a controversial matter within critical studies in television. Cultural and popular cultural studies bring a new perspective that

introduces new parameters when analysing concepts of quality and aesthetics in television popular entertainment programmes. Bignell writes about it in his article's summary.

Strands of work in television studies have at different times attempted to diagnose what it is at stake in the most popular programmes types, such as reality TV, situation comedy and drama series. This has centred on questions of how aesthetic quality relates to popularity. The interaction of the designations "popular" and "quality" is exemplified in the ways that critical discourse has addressed US drama series that have been widely exported around the world, and the article shows how the two critical terms are both distinct and interrelated. (Bignell 2010, Abstract)

These two concepts, quality and aesthetics, are indeed crucial when studying popular entertainment television either fictional or non-fictional, and we can say that they are closely related to the negative perception about this genre. Nonetheless, as Bignell indicates, new perspectives, and among them those that take into account television fans and enthusiasts, have been developed in the analysis of popular programmes. This has helped to change that initial perception of popular television as low quality, aesthetically poor products of little value. In this respect, he mentions books by Toby Miller (1977), Chris Gregory (1997), James Chapman (2002) and his collaboration with Andrew O'Day (2004).

Some academic work has historicised the conception of the popular as a relational construct developing alongside shifting conception of quality (Bignell/Lacey 2005), but studies of popular television drama that address the histories of aesthetic forms have been restricted to analyses of programmes in genres and forms that allow for the rediscovery of unconventional expressive techniques rather than the historicisation of relatively conventional ones. But this problem for the field has been readdressed to some extent by the phenomenon of academic publications addressing mixed readerships that include television fans and general readers. (Bignell, 2010, p. 191)

Bignell also reflects on that classic distinction between what is considered ‘serious’, good quality television, and other popular television programmes. He argues that this opposition is not natural because it, in fact, responds to the categorisation of readers, of television viewers. Nonetheless, as Bignell notes too, new perspectives tend now to break up that historical differentiation.

The distinction between “serious” drama and generic popular forms are artificially created by the processes of historiography and canonization, and parallel the deconstruction of that opposition in the deconstruction of the opposition between categories of reader. Opportunities for new scholarship have emerged as a result of this happy conjunction between different readerships and the different agendas of television historians and television enthusiasts. (Bignell, 2010, pp. 191-192)

Within the television entertainment genre we can say that, for many years canonical status has been attributed only to certain television programmes, mainly to specific fictional, high-profile prime-time ‘serious’ drama. Adaptations of ‘classic’ literature and theatre, or programmes considered high quality due to their authorship, were valued in opposition to other programmes which were more popular but valued as of less quality, among them popular fantasy or comedy series (Bignell 2010, p. 189, 190). That dichotomy and confronting position regarding the value of television programmes is starting to disappear according to most recent research on this matter, because these new approaches show that, as Bignell asserts: ‘The mutual definition of the canonical and the popular against each other produces and illusory boundary’ (Bignell, 2010, p. 190).

Besides that, as we have mentioned in previous sections, recent academic studies on television avoid value assessments, as Bignell (2010, p. 196) comments ‘the discrimination of what is of high quality has been elided’ and he notes the reluctance in

academic studies of television to make judgments that value one programme or genre over another. Instead, he affirms, recent analyses about popular entertainment programmes show interest in describing how cultural meaning is produced in programmes that have numerically large audiences. In line with other comments that we have included in previous sections, Bignell also asserts that it can be demonstrated that ‘the binary opposition between “quality” and “the popular” is an illusory one, which confuses an aesthetic discourse with a political discourse’ (Bignell, 2010, p. 196).

Although, as said, at present most media academics and researchers avoid quality and aesthetic evaluations of television entertainment programmes, and tend to focus mainly on the role those programmes play in the construction of meaning instead, informal voices do tend to evaluate them. This is the case of those popular programmes which are marketed with such designation as ‘appointment television’ or ‘must-see TV’ and which, in fact, in many cases place themselves beyond television, as the slogan of the cable channel HBO indicates: ‘it’s not TV, it’s HBO’ (Bignell 2010, p. 195).

While academic work has largely eschewed the making of distinctions that value one programme or genre over another, informal discourse about television and television drama in particular very often consists in identifying a “good” programme (or channel, or viewing experience). Methodologies deriving from literary and film studies have historically been adapted for the study of television programmes, and their focus on the construction of meaning and the aesthetic resources of the channels of communication in image and sound produce dominant expectations of what the study of popular television will prioritise. Studies of television are often concerned to identify features that make a programme aesthetically significant, such as visual textures, performers, or its legacy as the inspiration for subsequent programmes. (Bignell, 2010, p. 193)

In summary, Bignell comments that, beyond aesthetic and quality evaluation, when assessing popular entertainment programmes contemporary research focuses on the ways of production of cultural meaning. Audience studies about the response of

viewers assume the definition of the popular according to the choices they make. Both the definition and the valuation of the popular are still issues where different positions can be found due to the implications that they have, as Bignell summarises in his final paragraph (Bignell, 2010, p. 196):

Studies of audience responses to programmes, conducted by adopting ethnographic, anthropological methodologies, implicitly accept that the popular is defined by the consumer choices that viewers make, and attempt to describe and affirm popular experience rather than deconstructing it. The valuation of the popular, as both a category of programmes and a relative measure of audience size and composition, has diminished the confidence to adopt a discourse of ideology critique that values some programmes while dismissing others. Just as the meaning of “the popular” are multiple and contested in the television culture and in academic discourses, the evaluative significance of the term has divergent and sometimes problematic implications.

Beyond that, Bignell also comments on the changes that have taken place in British society regarding television consumption, as well as in relation to those considerations that establish a difference between high culture and low culture audiences, which have been dominant for many years. According to this academic’s reflections, that dichotomy is no longer valid as it doesn’t respond to the image of British society at present, nor to the way audiences are visualised nowadays. (Bignell, 2013, p. 25):

When the arrival of ITV introduced commercial television to Britain in 1955, the high ratings for the new channel forced the BBC to compete against popular formats (...) From the 1950s onwards the conception of the audience as consumers able to exercise a free choice has become increasingly dominant in British broadcasting, and this both reflects and supports the view of society which has come to be familiar and natural today. Rather than thinking of British society as if it were a pyramid with a small cultural elite at the top, with sophisticated tastes, and a broad base of ordinary viewers underneath preferring undemanding entertainment, the image of society has changed to one of overlapping and scattered sets of viewers, or niche audiences, who have changing and diverse preferences across many genres, forms and levels of

complexity. Broadcasters no longer attempt to lead the nation to the top of the cultural pyramid, but instead reflect what they believe to be the demands of contemporary society. The audience is conceived as a collection of diverse and autonomous individuals whose viewing habits and interests are hard to discover and predict, and who can be as fickle as any other kind of consumer.

1.6.4.4.4. Summary and conclusions.

Taking all this into consideration, we can say that the study of television entertainment programmes has for many years been centred mainly in the analysis of fictional products. Initial analysis of these programmes would value them according to criteria that in further studies were regarded as discriminative for being considered to be based in hierarchies of taste and viewers. From an academic popular studies perspective, though, aesthetic evaluations are avoided and other aspects such as the amount and diversity of people who watch television programmes and the representation of ‘the people’ and society on the screen have become paramount to assess the value of popular television entertainment programmes, especially with regard to public television. Equally, their importance in the production of cultural meaning is valued. Most recently other formats, non-fictional, have started to be analysed within this perspective and valued according to these parameters, among them those of the factual-entertainment genre, which also include formats that can also be considered as ‘light entertainment’ shows. In fact, these analyses are quite recent because we can observe that it is only in recent years that the value of these programmes has been researched within academia, due to the increasing importance of them in the current television landscape. I would say that the critical analysis of different popular entertainment programmes from these perspectives opens new possibilities to value these type of television formats and, therefore, television entertainment as such.

Reflections and conclusions of Spanish academic Enrique Guerrero that can be read in many of his texts are also in this line. In this paragraph below he mentions that fiction and information kept from the beginning the prestige of related arts and media such as cinema, theatre and radio, whereas those referred to purely entertainment didn't awaken enough cultural interest, regardless of their increasing popularity. As a consequence, Guerrero affirms, most of the studies conducted within academia refer to either fiction or information genres leaving aside and somehow dismissing those considered as merely entertainment (Guerrero, 2010, p. 23).

Así como los contenidos de ficción e información conservaron desde el principio el prestigio de artes y medios afines como el cine, el teatro o la radio, aquellos referidos al puro entretenimiento, a pesar de gozar de una creciente popularidad, no despertaron el suficiente interés cultural. (...) Como consecuencia, la inmensa mayoría de la bibliografía existente sobre la producción televisiva se ha centrado preferentemente en géneros catalogados como de ficción o información, marginándose en cierto modo aquellos considerados como simple entretenimiento.

1.7. Television entertainment: claiming recognition.

We can see that the study of television has evolved considerably since the first years of research about this medium, as part of mass media, carried out mainly within critical sociology. For many years most studies focused on the audience, the influence of television on people's behaviour and attitudes was the main matter of interest and the negative effects of this medium were emphasised.

Since then a great amount of research has been conducted, and many different topics have been analysed from various perspectives. New theories and approaches have

put forward the controversy about television being good or bad. That dichotomy is still a matter of interest and discussion.

However, despite the theories and approaches that take into account the positive side of this communication medium, negativity towards it, and mainly about the entertainment genre, can still be perceived among many sectors of society and amongst intellectuals and academics from various disciplines.

In recent years, though, we can see some interest from scholars to study television entertainment, taking new approaches, which is why the functions of television as an entertainment media is being analysed from new perspectives. Studies that show a more positive view of television entertainment can be observed. In fact, in most cases the entertainment function of television has been posed in contrast to other objectives of this medium such as informing and educating; objectives that, very often are considered as more 'noble' and important, and therefore 'superior' goals. Moreover, these arguments are reinforced when it comes to public television.

Therefore, we can say that voices which ask for recognition of the positive values of television entertainment are arising. Among other arguments, they defend that the above mentioned three main goals of television are not mutually exclusive, and propose a combination of them. They also focus on the fact that most studies tend to concentrate on specific genres and specific topics and, therefore, these analyses are likely to diminish the value that television entertainment has. In fact, most of them assert that, when referring to television entertainment and its value, a programme's assessment should be done individually, because there are obviously good and bad entertainment programmes, as in any other genre and field. Nevertheless, there seems to be a tendency to focus on and stress those considered as bad and poor and, furthermore,

to extend that assessment to the whole of television entertainment as such. The interest for mixed and multidisciplinary approaches is also outlined by some of them. In summary, we can say that these scholars show interest in highlighting the contributions of television entertainment to various areas of society and claim for further and broader research by academia on this issue.

In this sense, the work developed within The Norman Lear Center since the beginning of this century is worth mentioning. The research projects that the academics from this Center - located at the USC (University of Southern California) Annenberg School for Communication – promote focus on the study of entertainment and its impact in society from various perspectives. A positive approach to television entertainment can be observed in many of the essays, academic papers and various activities arranged by this entity to analyse and discuss the various topics related to this matter. This can be observed in the work developed as part of the so called Entertainment Goes Global project and the document entitled *The Norman Lear Center Manifesto – The Entertainment Initiative*. I would also like to highlight the main topics the Norman Lear Center deals with, that is to say, entertainment, media and culture. In addition, I want to mention another fact that I consider indeed very interesting and find equally important; I am referring to their objective of linking the industry, academia and the public in their work, as they explain in this text that is included in many of their publications (e.g. Blakley, 2001, p. 2):

Founded in January 2000, the Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center exploring implications of the convergence of entertainment, commerce and society. On campus, from its base in the USC Annenberg School for Communications, the Lear Center builds bridges between schools and disciplines whose faculty study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. Through scholarship and research; through its fellows, conferences, public events and publications; and in

its attempts to illuminate and repair the world, the Lear Center works to be at the forefront of discussion and practice in the field.

1.7.1. Academia.

According to these new perspectives, I would like now to call attention to some reflections of different scholars who comment on that negativity about television entertainment and claim both for recognition of the value of this genre, as well as for further study and research by academia regarding this issue. The controversy about the different points of view of television entertainment and the role and influence of this genre is posed in their work but, instead of focusing on the negative effects, as has happened for many years, their reflections go beyond, to offer new and more positive approaches when analysing this medium, and this genre in particular. The selection outlined below compiles some comments by scholars of different countries which I think reflect and summarise well these statements.

In this sense, I consider interesting the reflections and claims expressed by Johanna Blakley in his research work developed in the US as part of the Lear Center Entertainment Goes Global project in 2001: 'Entertainment Goes Global: Mass Culture in a Transforming World', some of which I quote below:

Entertainment brings pleasure to billions around the world, but it has been accused of harming our children, shortening our attention spans, trivializing culture, vulgarizing taste, sanctioning violence, polarizing audiences, and undermining communities. Entertainment has been attacked for making mockery of art, for promoting cheap thrills before thoughtful reflection, for appealing to the lowest common denominator. Many have bemoaned the fact that popular culture has been taken seriously at all. [...] Despite the obvious cultural and economic impacts of entertainment, it has not been embraced by academia as a useful entry-point into the analysis of world culture. Entertainment has not been used as an intellectual framework, a point of view, a lens, a perspective for better understanding culture, society, and else human in the world's industrial economies. (Blakley, 2001, p. 3)

The project developed by a research group of the Nordicom, The Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research, in Denmark (2006-2009), also poses this issue, when referring both to the controversy as well as to the claims that involve the different approaches to television entertainment, its consideration and its study. In fact, I would say that their reflections and explanations of the object, aims and objectives of that research work, explained by the director of the project, Professor Kirsten Frandsen, summarise, and are indeed in line with, some of my own reflections, explanations and intentions when developing this PhD research work. I have selected some paragraphs that encompass some of the main points I want to bring to the fore:

Entertainment in the media has often been described in negative terms as phenomenon which are not serious or not informative or it has become a sort of black box in reception studies containing a wide variety of pleasure oriented or, emotional experiences with the audience. [...] Recent Danish and international research in the role of the media as providers of entertainment is characterized primarily by its scarcity and lack of overall focus. Existing studies are characterized by a tendency to concentrate on specific genres, typically sitcom and fiction, and the object of interest is rarely the entertainment dimension per se. (Frandsen, 2007, p. 133)

They comment about the importance of scholars that placed media entertainment on the research agenda at an early stage (Mortensen et al., 1981; Holzer, 1973), highlighting the fact that these authors offered a new perspective beyond those considerations of television entertainment as an irrelevant leisure activity. The importance of other social contributions of this genre was also taken into account by these academics.

The great merit of such early research contributions lies in their insistence on viewing the entertainment media as offering not just trivial pastime activities,

but as a phenomenon that by virtue of their form and popularity hold great societal and social importance. (Frandsen, 2007, p. 134)

I want to highlight the line of argument that fostered this research work conducted by this group of Danish scholars, i.e. the idea that television entertainment offers more than a pass time, leisure activity to its viewers. Taking that argument as a starting point, they reflect on other contributions of this genre to society that I want to underline:

...the thesis that media entertainment does more than just entertain its audience; that in some of the more recent forms it contributes to the creation, maintenance, and interpretation of essential forms of social and cultural knowledge. In the latter sense, contemporary TV entertainment is seen to offer important contributions to the active reproduction and development of society by involving viewers and addressing them on their own terms. TV entertainment programmes presuppose and communicate insight into various social strata and lifemodes, everyday knowledge about the handling of domestic chores and social norms for behaviour, as well as insight into contemporary trends and tastes. (Frandsen, 2007, p. 134)

These academics mention their intention when they note their ‘wish to qualify the treatment of TV entertainment as a knowledge form and practice’ (p. 134). They show their interest in approaching the analysis of television bearing in mind both goals, information and entertainment, which are often presented as in confrontation. They acknowledge that this issue is still a matter of discussion.

In bringing the hypothesis to bear on broadcasting with an ambition to entertain as well as inform, our project will be able indirectly to contribute to a critical exploration of a concept of knowledge which is unresolved or, to say the least, strongly contested. (Frandsen, 2007, p. 134)

Scholar Janet Wasko (2005) also reflects on this issue, and outlines similar points in her comprehensive compilation of articles on television topics *A Companion to Television* (Wasko, 2005b). In this paragraph below she mentions the importance of television as an entertainment medium, in addition to its informative function. Wasko comments on the issue over the value of television, presents the different perspectives and notes the main points in both approaches, positive and negative (Wasko, 2005, pp. 3, 4):

We know that television is a fundamental part of everyday life for many people (...) It might also be argued that television is central to the way that people learn about news and public events (...) In addition to news and public affairs, television provides endless varieties of entertainment and diversion. (...) Nevertheless, there are differing opinions about television's fundamental value. Television has been praised as a wondrous looking glass on the world, a valuable source of information, education, and entertainment. (...) On the other hand, many commentators have also disparaged television as being valueless, vulgar, and vacuous. Indeed, the discussions of television as a negative force in society are so widespread and varied that they are difficult to summarize. Television is blamed for everything from passivity and obesity to stimulating aggressive and violent behavior. It has been singled out as leading an attack on literate culture, as well as shriveling public discourse (see Postman, 1986).

Finally, she concludes that despite of some cultural differences, which may influence the value conferred on television, it can be said that in most societies this medium is indeed important, and globally relevant, for which its analysis deserves attention.

It might also be noted that there may be different values and importance associated with television in different cultures. Nevertheless, television's key role in many societies, as well as its global prevalence and importance, is undeniable and makes it a significant issue for research and reflection. (Wasko, 2005, p. 5)

More recently, Raymond Boyle and Lisa W. Kelly (2013), also sketch out this approach in their article of the scientific journal *Television and New Media*: ‘Television, Business Entertainment and Civic Culture’ when writing on ‘Television and Popular Culture’:

There has always been tension within television culture between the role of television as an entertainment medium and its functionality as means to educate and inform the public. Indeed, the latter aspects of this are often viewed as central to television’s position within a broader civic or political culture that, at its core, view the informed citizens as being an integral component of society. We would argue, as recent research by Klein (2011) suggests, that often these terms are not mutually exclusive. (Boyle and Kelly, 2013, p. 64)

These scholars refer to the influence of television entertainment in society and in the way viewers see and understand the world. They underline the concept of active audience, according to which it is admitted that various meanings can be drawn from the same television programme, and that different intentions move the audience to choose and view each one. (Boyle and Kelly, 2013, pp. 64, 65)

In other words, television entertainment vehicles often play an important part in the construction of a broader range of representations of society that help shape how people think about the world around them. This isn’t of course new and was one of the driving principles behind the early evolution of media and communications studies in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the late 1960’s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s that recognized that popular media culture is saturated with politics, both in a formal sense and in terms of how it represents differing groups and ideas in society (Dahlgren 2005; van Zoonen 2005)’ [...] ... there is often an “active audience” watching the same program on differing levels, some purely for enjoyment and others for information and entertainment.

Finally I want to highlight this statement that focuses on the importance of entertainment in television, and brings to the fore the argument that defends that this function doesn’t exclude the other two, namely information and education. This

assertion is especially important when referring to public television. Boyle and Kelly speak for the importance of programmes that fulfil those three objectives, and even more in this new scenario that the digital era implies. I want to mention these arguments that I indeed share and agree with:

.....We would argue that television remains a compelling medium for constructing emotional identification with its audience through the template of the “journey”, and to this end it is simply mistaken to suggest that entertainment and knowledge are mutually exclusive. Television (with a growing social media dimension) remains to us central in debates about the creation and dissemination of public knowledge and the functioning of a broader civic culture. Yet while these programmes, mixing entertainment, information, and even at times education, appear to have become part of the public service portfolio of content in the digital age of television (...) the core mantra for television producers remains the need to first and foremost entertain the audience. (Boyle and Kelly, 2013, pp. 66-67):

In this regard I would also like to call attention to the perspective that Spanish academic Enrique Guerrero presents in most of his texts, where he reflects the results of interesting and prolific research he has conducted in relation to television entertainment. Guerrero writes on the importance of television entertainment and concludes that this genre shouldn't be considered less relevant than informational and educational content, commenting that those three main functions of television can be combined with no need to exclude any of them. From his perspective, the entertainment function of television shouldn't be considered less important than the informative and education objectives of this medium (Guerrero, 2007, pp. 1, 2):

Tradicionalmente, se ha considerado que la televisión debía cumplir tres funciones básicas: informar, educar y entretener. A priori, podríamos afirmar que, lejos de presentarse como tres objetivos excluyentes, permiten ser perfectamente combinados. (...) entretener con un contenido de calidad no constituye una función menos importante que la educar u ofrecer una información objetiva, veraz y plural.

1.7.2. Professionals: the case of the BBC.

This defence of television entertainment, this claim for recognition, can also be observed among other sectors outside the academic field. The controversy about the value of television entertainment is even more pronounced when it comes to public television, and this is in fact the area I want to focus on. That is why I want to bring here the analysis and opinions of various professionals of different fields which show a positive view towards television entertainment programmes. I have selected some regarding the British Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC.

Professionals of this medium related to this specific area within the BBC often express the importance of the entertainment programmes for this public broadcasting company, and most of the BBC Charters refer to this. I have chosen these comments of the Acting Controller of Entertainment, Alan Tyler (2015) because I would say that his words compile the opinions that many professional share in this respect. Tyler, in fact, starts by mentioning the controversy about this genre, the negative feeling towards it, before going on to underscore the key role it plays. It is also important the two formats, the specific programmes of this genre he highlights and refers to in the last part of the paragraph I have selected. These words quoted here are part of Tyler's speech, delivered when looking for new formats to commission for Saturday nights on December 2015:

There is often negativity about Entertainment. There is definitely an intellectual queasiness and cultural snobbery around Entertainment programmes; whether they succeed or fail. But in fact entertainment is a crucial genre for broadcasters. It has had a glorious period in the UK where competition has fostered creativity and clarity of editorial vision has, in my opinion, brought audiences closer to broadcasters. [...] For many of our audience Entertainment shows have defined viewing for the weekend and shaped the conversation in the week. That is a crucial ingredient for us because of the nature of our relationship with our audience. [...] Presently we have two big beasts in our schedule that really deliver for our Saturday night audiences on BBC One: *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The Voice*. They are the 'high bar' that has set a level of audience

expectation, which, along with shows at other broadcasters, have transformed Entertainment. (BBC Commissioning, 2015, December 10).

1.7.2.1. Distinctiveness *versus* popularity.

I will gather below some information that presents interesting arguments in relation to this matter. I would say that the various opinions from different professionals, as well as politicians, compiled here respond not only to a positive view about television entertainment but also to a claim to give value to popular entertainment programmes. They indeed give interesting arguments defending the contribution of this genre to this specific public television. Those comments are part of an interesting debate that took place in various areas of British society during the last months of 2015 and at the beginning of 2016. These discussions responded to the intentions shown by the minister of culture regarding the new charter of the BBC.

Actually, at that time Mr Whittingdale's proposed various changes, some of which directly affected the programming schedule of this British media entity. One of the most contested proposals was that related to entertainment programmes, as the minister of culture intended to take some of the most popular entertainment shows off the BBC's schedule. I have taken them from British online media, and this selection is due to various reasons:

- i) They bring to the fore the controversy about the value and contributions of television entertainment to a public television, as is the case of the BBC.
- ii) It poses issues that have already been commented on and analysed in this work with regard to this controversy. Issues related to the real functions of television, and public television specifically; arguments over its influence, as well as about the dichotomy between high and low, popular, culture, can be seen on both sides.

- iii) They underscore the value of popular entertainment shows for the BBC.
- iv) They offer specific examples and arguments that back up their statements.
- v) They mainly refer to non-scripted entertainment programmes.
- vi) They show that, at present, this matter is a hot topic of interest amid various sectors of society.

The Royal Charter forms the constitutional basis of the BBC and it is renewed every 10 years. The current one at the time of this issue, this discussion, was due to expire, at the end of 2016. The Government's proposals for its renewal were presented to Parliament and published in a white paper on 12 May 2016: *A BBC for the future: a broadcaster of distinction*. While preparing that document, the culture secretary, Mr. John Whittingdale, expressed in public some of his intentions, which happened to be very controversial. In fact, they opened a debate during which many different voices arose, expressing their points of view on this matter, opinions that confronted this politician's initial proposals.

When the secretary of state for culture, media and sport, showed his intention about the changes he wanted to make to the BBC, the minister focused on his proposal that 'distinctiveness' had to be a key goal for this company, a main feature of this public channel. Together with that, he brought up the issue about whether popular entertainment programmes such as *The Voice*, *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The British Bake Off* should be removed from the BBC TV schedules, because, according to Mr Whittingdale's initial arguments, these shows wouldn't fulfil the requirement of being 'distinctive'. The other argument brought about by the minister of culture in relation to the changes in the programming of the BBC was the intention to rest competition on the prime time slot for the commercial channels, and therefore, for the productions and

business outcomes of the private sector, keeping this part of the BBC's schedule for more 'proper', appropriate public television programmes, although not so popular.

These ideas were quite controversial and caused a great debate and a conflicting response by different people. The discussion wasn't so much over the wish for the BBC to be 'distinctive', as about what each one understood by that. In fact, in general terms most of the criticisms to Mr Whittingdale's proposal did agree with that goal. It was the understanding of what that term implied for the minister, and the consequences of implementing the measures that according to him would be needed for approaching the 'distinctiveness' of the BBC (as understood by him), the source of the disapproval by different sectors. His plans included big changes in programming and more specifically in relation to the most popular entertainment programmes that take the prime time slot. His intention to remove these television shows from the BBC's programming portfolio was indeed very much contested.

I will below present some information, statements, and various paragraphs taken from several articles of online media in relation to the issues just mentioned. The intentions of the secretary of culture were highlighted in many of them, as we can see in the headlines and texts quoted here:

Vanessa Thorpe (*The Guardian*, 7 May 2016):

Under John Whittingdale's plans, popular shows such as *Strictly Come Dancing* would be taken off prime time to let commercial stations compete. Whittingdale's plans include (...) imposing a bar on scheduling the most popular BBC shows, such as *The Great British Bake Off*, at prime time to create a more level playing field.

Jasper Jackson and Jane Martinson (*The Guardian*, 2 March 2016):

At the Oxford Media Convention on Wednesday morning, the culture secretary, John Whittingdale, called for the BBC to be more distinctive in its output, and

questioned “whether or not Strictly or Bake Off or other programmes are too removed or absolutely distinctive”.

Phil Harding (*The Guardian*, 25 April 2016):

This white paper threatens the BBC’s independence. It must be opposed. Scrapping the BBC Trust and handing regulation to Ofcom would put the corporation on the slippery slope to becoming a state broadcaster. The most important issue of all arises from the recent set of proposals to reform the governance of the corporation. (...) After that lightning raid, the secretary of state for culture, media and sport, John Whittingdale, came belatedly into the picture to promise an open and transparent consultation process. He opened by questioning whether the BBC should try to be all things to all people, and whether it should be broadcasting programmes such as *The Voice*.

Journalist Archie Blands also comments on that in his article: ‘Watch out John Whittingdale, the Strictly army is marching to save the BBC’ (9 May 2016). He refers to the criticism of the minister of culture’s proposals and the response by many famous people. Among them, he mentions the opinion of various relevant professionals of different kind, expressed during the BAFTAs event. The headlines refer to the point of view of prestigious British media professionals, as this journalist highlights the facts that ‘Lots of celebs have criticised the BBC white paper, but when Craig Revel Horwood starts having a go it’s a sign that it’s an ideological push too far’ and that ‘Wolf Hall director defends ‘threatened’ BBC at Baftas’.

These words, extracted from Blands’ article are quite significant, as they show and summarise the hostility of a great part of the media sector towards the minister of culture’s previously mentioned proposals:

If John Whittingdale has been trying to work out exactly how worried to be about the public response to his imminent BBC white paper, he might have started by following the broadening appeal of last night’s critics at the Baftas. [...] Since last weekend’s absurd provocation in friendly newspapers, wherein we learned that serious consideration was being given to the prospect of forcing

shows like *Strictly* to vacate the most popular broadcasting slots so that we might all watch more toilet paper adverts, the extent and implacability of the culture secretary's hostility to culture has become clear. (Blands, 9 May 2016)

These worries and the opposition to the early proposals made by Mr. Whittingdale are reflected in various articles that report the responses both by politicians as well as by relevant members of the British Broadcasting Corporation. This text, written by Vanessa Thorpe (7 May, 2016) reports the opposition of some Tory Members of both Houses of Parliament to some of the changes that the minister of culture Mr. Whittingdale wanted to include in the new BBC's Charter, as we can read in its headlines and text:

Senior Conservative MPs and peers in fight to halt radical BBC reform. Group of at least 20 Tories from both Houses to oppose planned changes to licence fee and programming. Under John Whittingdale's plans, popular shows such as *Strictly Come Dancing* would be taken off prime time to let commercial stations compete. [...] On Thursday, culture secretary John Whittingdale will publish long-awaited proposals that could lead to the most far-reaching changes to BBC governance in its history. The *Observer* has learned, however, that at least 20 Tories in both houses of parliament are ready to oppose the recommendations, which they see as an assault on the BBC's editorial independence, creative freedoms and ability to run its own affairs. Peers including former Conservative chairman Lord Fowler will launch a draft bill challenging key tenets of the Whittingdale plans.

Important members of the BBC such as the BBC Trust Chairwoman, Rona Fairhead and BBC's head of policy, James Heath, also expressed their opinions over this issue. In the article we mention further on we can observe that these professionals and policy makers firmly defend the 'distinctiveness' of the BBC and its programmes as they are, including the entertainment ones, with no needs for the changes that the minister of culture suggests. They certainly present clear arguments in favour of the

presence of those shows which are most popular. Likewise, their contribution to the fulfilment of the needs and demands of the public, as well as for achieving the missions of the BBC as a public television company are underlined.

In this regard it is also worth mentioning that comments by BBC professionals over this issue have gone on, as it can be observed in the words of the BBC entertainment controller, Kate Phillips, during her keynote conference in the MipFormats international event in 8th April, 2018, in Cannes, France (see: MipTV-YouTube, 2018). Hence, this BBC executive mentioned the opinions and intentions of the minister of culture and sport that we are referring to here to, further on, show her opinion against his position and defend the importance of entertainment television for the BBC. Some of Phillips comments in this regard were highlighted in the MipTV News magazine (2018, p. 24), where the interest of this BBC executive in factual entertainment was also mentioned.

Phillips also said she felt entertainment as a genre gets a raw deal at a time when it should be cherished for the number of viewers it brings to TV screens. “I understand how important entertainment is for the health of the business,” she said. Entertainment is the lifeblood of our channels.” She is currently keen on factual entertainment. “It’s like having a big sporting event, when everyone comes together to watch but no one knows what will happen next. That is the same with big talent shows.”

The headlines of the article written by Jasper Jackson and Jane Martinson (*The Guardian*, 2 March 2016) summarise its content: ‘BBC defends “distinctive” programmes against government criticism. Trust chairwoman Rona Fairhead responds to report that said competitors would benefit if BBC changed its content’. In the paragraphs copied here these journalists pose the issue and quote some of the words of both the BBC Trust chairwoman, Rona Fairhead and the BBC’s head of policy, James

Heath regarding the intentions of the secretary of culture, Mr. Whittingdale over the BBC.

The BBC and the government have traded blows over what makes programmes distinctive as the corporation attacked an independent report on the issue. [...] The debate followed the publication on Tuesday of the government-commissioned report that claimed the rest of the broadcasting industry could gain up to £115m a year in additional revenue if the BBC changed the way it commissioned and scheduled content. [...]

The BBC Trust chairwoman, Rona Fairhead, said shows such as *The Great British Bake Off* (...) showed the BBC was already producing distinctive popular programming. “If ever there was proof that public service can be popular yet distinctive, you see it in these shows.” [...] Asked about Whittingdale’s comments, Fairhead said: “I know you want to make this a big war but it’s not. We both think distinctiveness matters.” [...] Asked whether government evidence on distinctiveness was wrong she said: “I don’t know what his evidence is.” [...]

The opinions of the BBC’s head of policy at the time are also reflected in this article. He argues against the lack of distinctiveness that the culture secretary mentions and about the changes in programming that this politician suggests.

The BBC’s head of policy, James Heath, disputed the claims, saying the corporation’s most popular channel, BBC1, had become more distinctive. [...] He also said that arguments the BBC should put greater focus on new shows and formats could mean cutting popular series such as *Silent Witness*, *Countryfile*, *Casualty*, *Masterchef* and *Have I Got News For You*, and replacing them would be impossible given the budget cuts the BBC is facing over the next five years.

His conclusions are most significant as they reflect the problems that the strategy of reducing popular entertainment programmes broadcasting on the BBC proposed by the secretary of state for culture, media and sport, John Whittingdale, would bring. The BBC’s heads of policy, James Heath, highlights the importance of producing and

broadcasting programmes that respond to the needs of the public and that the audience enjoy; programmes which, as a consequence, become popular:

We don't believe in reconfiguring the BBC to maximise commercial profits rather than asking how can the BBC be improved to best meet audience needs. This report proposes a BBC designed for the convenience of its competitors, not the enjoyment of audiences, to the long-term detriment of both.

Likewise, I want to mention here the opinion about this matter expressed by the BBC's head of documentaries at the time and, therefore, the person in charge of the above mentioned *British Bake Off* programme, as this popular show was included in that department. By the time this article was published it was known that the initial proposals about the changes to programming presented by the minister of culture for the new BBC Charter had not gone ahead. Patrick Holland reflects on that and expresses interesting arguments that I quote below as they appeared in Tara Conlan's article (*The Guardian*, 15 May 2016). The headline is in fact quite illuminating and indeed interesting, as it poses a dichotomy we have often referred to in this work: 'The BBC boss in charge of Bake Off: "Distinctiveness v popularity is absurd"'. This journalist poses the issue at the beginning of his article:

As the man who oversees the most popular show on television, The Great British Bake Off, BBC head of documentaries Patrick Holland can breathe a sigh of relief that the white paper did not allow the government to meddle with scheduling. But the corporation now has to focus on the ubiquitous watchword "distinctive" when it chooses what shows to make, and that brings its own challenges as Holland says.

These two paragraphs summarise Holland's main opinions over this matter. Indeed, he expresses his idea about the discussion between distinctiveness and

popularity as conflictive terms. Likewise he defends that maintaining successful, popular good entertainment programmes in the BBC's offer is also good for the private television sector as a means to achieving quality. Finally, he declares that he also watches and enjoys popular television entertainment programmes such as *Gogglebox* in his spare time.

The debate that goes on about distinctiveness versus popularity is a completely false dichotomy; it's absurd. A documentary like *Behind Closed Doors* offered unprecedented access to domestic violence victims yet was watched by over three million people, *The Real Marigold Hotel* was watched by close to five million. These programmes were, in very different ways, distinctive and engaged very large audiences." [...] He adds: "Competition is essential to the quality of programming for the audience. The BBC and Channel 4 are at the heart of that competitive ecology; look at the Baftas. I think all but four of the programme gongs went to those two organisations [Bake Off took home one]. The private sector needs the public broadcasters to drive quality." [...] Despite the serious nature of much of his job, cricket fan Holland retains his sense of humour and admits, like many, to enjoying *Gogglebox* on a Friday night at home in Brighton. (Conlan, 15 May 2016)

Finally, I will refer to the two specific programmes that are often mentioned in that debate, namely *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The Great British Bake Off*, as both were taken as the most important and popular entertainment programmes on the BBC at that time. Likewise, together with *The Voice* they are considered the most popular shows of this television channel in recent years. The analysis and comments of these two programmes present interesting arguments that defend the value and importance of these television shows and also analyse the reasons for their popularity and success. I have selected them because, in my opinion, these reflections and arguments can equally be valid for other similar entertainment programmes and can be extended to broader areas too.

Likewise, the type of formats and the mix of genres they include are important reasons for my selection. They are indeed entertainment programmes, but when it comes to classifying them we can define them as non-scripted, factual-entertainment formats where a mixture of different subgenres can be observed. Both are in fact also talent-shows and, furthermore, in the case of *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The Voice* they include clear elements of the so called light-entertainment genre. Anyhow, they are not fictional, according to the main classification of television entertainment programmes that is broadly admitted at present, and that I shall comment about in further sections of this work.

1.7.2.2. *The Great British Bake Off*.

The thorough and detailed article written by Charlotte Higgins, the chief culture writer of *The Guardian*, includes interesting reflections about *The Great British Bake Off*. This analysis was published on the 6th of October, 2015, the day before the last episode of that season was broadcast. The headlines: ‘The genius of The Great British Bake Off. How it became something much larger than television-a global cultural phenomenon and the perfect show for Britain now’, summarise the main information, assessment and aim of the article, information that is completed in the next paragraph:

The season finale of *The Great British Bake Off* was the third most popular programme on television last year – outflanked only by two World Cup football matches. The final episode of this season, airing tomorrow, will in all likelihood be the most-watched show of 2015. Over the last five years, in fact, Bake Off has so thoroughly entangled itself with the consciousness of the nation that it has become easy to forget how very, very strange it is that 10 million Britons switch on their TV sets each Wednesday evening to watch a baking contest filmed in a tent in the countryside. (Higgins, 6 October 2015)

I would like to highlight some statements, paragraph and sentences of Higgins analysis which refer to the keys for success of this programme, who underlines the fact that: ‘None of this has come about by chance. The Bake Off formula has developed and matured since its debut in 2010’. Among many other factors she refers to the importance of the atmosphere of the show and the role of the presenters on that: ‘Much of the tone of the show – as light and sweet as a sponge – is carried by its presenters, the impish Sue Perkins and Mel Giedroyc, and their end-of-pier, Carry On-style humour.’

The author also comments on other aspects related to the show which must also be taken into account, such as its presence in the press and social media. The importance of this television show as a cultural phenomenon and its contributions to British Television is underscored in this text:

Bake Off is, in fact, as much about a secondary discourse played out in the press and social media as it is about the show itself. This conversation has been harnessed by the BBC itself, with its cheery spinoff show *An Extra Slice*, presented by comedian Jo Brand, in which “celebrity fans” gather to discuss the preceding week’s events in a studio carefully styled to resemble the Bake Off tent. At the time of writing, the Daily Telegraph had published 73 articles about the programme since 1 August; supermarket aisles groan with muffin tins and piping bags and cake stands come Bake Off season. The show has shrugged off the bonds of mere TV, and garnered a cultural presence rarely seen since the shows of the 1970s – the so-called “golden age” of television. The Great British Bake Off is a fully fledged cultural phenomenon – and it may be the perfect show for Britain, now. We exist in a world where the difficult words “Great” and “British” cannot safely be applied to much. But they can be applied to a baking contest. (Higgins, 6 October 2015)

The commercial importance of this popular television show is also mentioned and outlined in this article. The fact that one product that can be considered very ‘British’, for it includes so many elements that can be considered as such, can at the same time have a great international appeal and succeed globally is, indeed, a matter of

interest. In fact, this format has been easily and successfully adapted internationally, it has been sold into many countries, and both the BBC and the company that produces it (Love) get benefits from that. The main reasons behind that international success are outlined by Kate Phillis, from the BBC Worldwide:

Quintessentially British though it may appear, Bake Off is also a successful export. Kate Phillips, whose team at BBC Worldwide has sold Bake Off into 21 territories, told me that she calls it a “sweet-spot” format: its essentials are extremely simple – a tent, a presenter or two, a couple of judges, some amateur bakers – which means local versions can be made very cheaply by “broadcasters desperate to fill their schedules”. Those who buy rights to the programme abroad also get the secrets of the recipe – the “format bible”. So it is that the planet is sprinkled with Bake Off’s international cousins, each with its recognisable elements and local variants. (The BBC makes a modest fee from each sale, but it is Love, as the programme-maker, that reaps most of the cash). (Higgins, 6 October 2015)

The audience figures and the target this programme reaches are also relevant. *The Great British bake off* is watched by a lot of most varied people of different ages. A proof of that are also the comments by ‘one of gen-YouTube’s biggest pairings’, Dan Howell and Phil Lester who are very well known by youngsters worldwide, as they have over 1.7 billion views. In fact this ‘two of YouTube’s most loved creators’ commented that they had watched and certainly enjoyed the final episode of the Great British Bake Off, in their talk about ‘their recipe for success’ during the Edinburgh International Television Festival, on the 24th August, 2017. (EDTVFEST, p. 27; Edinburgh Television Festival, 2017: YouTube). The amount of male viewers is worth taking into consideration, too. These aspects are commented by Higgins referring to Phillips comments in this regard.

Phillips also called Bake Off a “three-G show”, meaning that it appeals across the generations – “gold dust to a broadcaster”. Importantly, men watch it – and

the fact that only football matches were more watched than Bake Off last year is significant. (Higgins, 6 October 2015)

Finally, I have quoted this paragraph from Charlotte Higgins' article because it summarises the main points of her text as well as her assessment about this popular television show. This well-known journalist outlines the keys to success, the reasons why it has become such a popular programme and cultural phenomenon and highlights its commercial value too:

Seen in the light of its TV antecedents, *The Great British Bake Off* seems less about cake (since the formula works for dancing, extreme fitness, singing and business skills alike) and more about the human desire to enjoy the bloody, gladiatorial spectacle of battle. The Bake Off appeals because of its gentleness, its home-baked charm, its delight in the slightly wonky – but nonetheless admirable – efforts of its participants. But at the same time, it is a polished, slick, and highly-effective product in a billion-pound global business. (Higgins, 6 October, 2015)

Concerning *The Great British Bake Off* I would also like to highlight the opinion of journalist and writer Christina Patterson. The article she published in *The Guardian* on 19th of May, 2016 posits an interesting point of view about this programme and its value for a public television, such as the BBC:

I love the BBC. I will happily stump up my £145.50 a year, just for Radio 4 and the odd Wolf Hall. When I finally forced myself to watch the final of *The Great British Bake Off*, I was furious that I'd never watched it before. I don't think I've baked a cake since I was at school, but Bake Off isn't about cakes. It's about hope, and graft, and grit, and joy. It's about how you pick yourself up when your Victoria sponge sinks. Bake Off works because it's great TV. It works because it is, to take the word Whittingdale used in his white paper, "distinctive". It is, in other words, different to, and better than, other programmes you might think were like it. This is what the BBC is for.

1.7.2.3. *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Together with *The Great British Bake Off*, *Strictly Come Dancing* is with no doubt one of the most popular programmes of the BBC and of British Television. Prestigious journalist and media commentator Jonathan Freedland wrote an interesting article about this programme that was published in *The Guardian*, on the 18th of December, 2015, the day before of the final: ‘*Strictly Come Dancing* is a success story that could only work at the BBC’. Freedland mentions that the show ‘is public service broadcasting at its very best’, and highlights the phenomenon that is *Strictly* which, as he indicates:

It competes with the Great British Bake Off and Britain’s Got Talent to be the highest rated show on British television. (...) *Strictly* is in a league of its own, versions proliferating across the globe, already anointed the world’s most successful TV show of its kind by the Guinness Book of Records. Which is odd, because ballroom dancing was not exactly a mass pursuit before 2004 when the show debuted. (...) Yet today *Strictly* has become an embedded part of the British autumn, beginning when the evenings are still long in September and culminating just before Christmas

In his analysis, this journalist offers plenty of information about this television show. He also outlines some of the keys for the success and popularity of this programme where famous people compete in a dancing contest. Among others, he identifies as such the selection of the contestants, the kind atmosphere, the cosiness and continuity and the fact that the viewers look for, and get, entertainment, which allows them to escape from everyday problems. The entertainment function of this show is emphasised by Freedland (18 December 2015):

What explains the appeal? Part of it is glamour: the casting formula. (...). Some identify the show’s strength with its niceness and civility – such a contrast to the Hunger Games-style cruelties of the X Factor: no one is ever intentionally humiliated on *Strictly*, no dance halted by a klaxon. The overall vibe is cosiness

and continuity: three of the four judges have been there from the start. (...). The show's advocates would have you believe that *Strictly* reveals a collective love of dance as an art form, a passion we didn't know we had. I'm not so sure. I suspect the heart of its appeal is that *Strictly* delivers on that most basic promise of entertainment: escape. Tellingly, the contestants are allowed no brand names, or even proper nouns, on the clothes they wear when filmed training. For 90 minutes, the viewer is invited into a gaudy, sparkling bubble where there is no recession, no migration crisis, no Isis.

Jonathan Freedland refers in his article to the visit of the culture secretary John Whittingdale to the BBC studios where the show is produced, and mentions the reasons for it, reasons that we have already commented in this work. This journalist also notes the arguments of this politician and expresses his own opinion in that respect, which I want to highlight.

The culture secretary made a discreet inspection last month of the BBC's flagship Saturday-night show. Whittingdale was there because, before taking the job, he had questioned whether the BBC should be making *Strictly* at all, especially if that meant going into a head-to-head ratings battle against ITV. It's a familiar argument. It says that a public service broadcaster should confine itself to filling the gaps left by the market. Given that commercial networks are already providing Saturday-night light entertainment, why use the licence fee to provide more of it? (...) I hope seeing *Strictly* up close that night cured Whittingdale of such thinking. It should be obvious that if the BBC is funded by the entire public, then it has to be used and valued by the entire public. (Freedland, 18 December 2015)

Other aspects of this popular show are also mentioned as important contributions to the BBC. These facts offer arguments to defend the value of this programme and its permanence as part of the BBC's schedule, confronting the ideas of the secretary of culture. The final sentences of Freedland's article summarise his opinion in this respect.

The BBC – not some Simon Cowell-like TV impresario – has made piles of cash through the global success of the *Strictly* format. (...) The sheer professionalism, the craft skill, on display is something to behold. (...) The entire operation –

delivering a long, flawless show and doing it live – is a weekly advertisement for the BBC and for the peculiarly British model of public service broadcasting. You know that if commercial TV did *Strictly*, it wouldn't be the same. (...) I hope Whittingdale realised that in the BBC Britain has been blessed with something that, for all its anomalies and illogicalities, really works. Maybe it doesn't fit into a neat, ideological rubric of where the market ends and the state should begin, but it is one of this country's few truly world-class assets. Whatever else Whittingdale does, I hope he allows the BBC to keep dancing. (Freedland, 18 December 2015)

When the minister of culture visited the BBC Studios, Jeremy Vine, journalist and presenter of Radio 2, was about to get ready and into costume for his appearance in the dancing show. Freedland mentions this fact, that is to say, that a prestigious BBC journalist can also take part in an entertainment show of this kind, and presents this duality, this range, as a positive feature of the BBC. In addition to that, Freedland expresses other conclusions both of Jeremy Vine's and of his own that I really would like to highlight. I am referring to the function of entertainment programmes as 'portals' and about the importance of this kind of shows, the role and relevance of the entertainment genre, for the fulfilment of the main missions of public television.

When they barged in on Vine, one BBC executive told the cabinet minister that if they'd come to Elstree in May, they'd have seen the broadcaster preparing not to dance a tango dressed as a cowboy but to cover the general election: "And that range is what the BBC is all about." As Vine himself puts it, programmes such as *Strictly* are a "portal": "You might come through the portal of *Strictly* and end up watching David Attenborough or listening to Melvyn Bragg." Lord Reith wanted the BBC to inform, educate and entertain – but he surely understood that you earn the chance to do the first two only if you also do the third. (Freedland, 18 December 2015)

Taking everything into consideration, I would say that the controversy posited above and the comments about these popular entertainment programmes, which appear in the centre of that discussion, present interesting points and conclusions closely

related to my field of interest. In fact, these arguments offer some insight about the contributions of television entertainment programmes to a public television, as they focus on the most popular television shows of the BBC at that time. It is also relevant that these formats have been adapted all over the world and consequently, they are also popular in many other countries, not only in the U.K., the country where they were created and initially just produced.

The fact that non-scripted, factual entertainment, popular formats are core in this discussion and that its takes place within a prestigious public television of a western country (if not THE most prestigious), a country that is well known for the quality of its television industry and its output, are interesting points of interest too.

It has to be said that, after the debate over the initial proposals of the minister of culture regarding the changes to BBC's programming, which directly affected these popular entertainment programmes, those changes didn't go ahead. They, indeed, were not finally included either in the white paper of proposals for the new Charter, published in May 2016, nor in the final 2016's BBC Charter (December, 2016). This document, which sets out the public purposes of this company and will apply for the next 10 years, puts into value the importance of the entertainment programmes for the fulfilment of the missions of this public television, as happened in previous BBC documents of this type. The annual reports published by the BBC also highlight the relevance of entertainment programmes for the achievement of the objectives of this public entity. (cf. *Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation*, December, 2016; *BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2014/2015; 2015/2016; 2016/2017; 2017/2018*. (BBC 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018)

1.8. The value of television entertainment: other approaches and topics.

In the preceding sections we have gathered the opinions of both academics and professionals who show interest in a positive approach to television entertainment. In addition, throughout this work we have presented various perspectives in academic research that enable new and positive positions regarding both the value and the effects of this medium and this genre in particular. The evolution of television studies, the great diversity of fields, topics and perspectives that this scholarship includes at present permit us to go beyond those initial analyses that focused mainly on the negative effects of television on society. In addition, the traditional dichotomy between elite, high culture, and the popular, low culture, when classifying and evaluating cultural products is shifting, and other parameters are taken into account when it comes to valuing popular television entertainment programmes. We have, therefore, presented various paths of research within the academic field that can be followed to identify the value and contributions of television entertainment to various areas of society and in different fields.

Nevertheless, we can observe that numerous and relevant analyses either outside academia or within it but in association with professional companies or with different entities, either public or private, are carried out in relation to television entertainment. We can say that they are also valid to show the impact, the importance and the value of this medium and this genre.

As a consequence, we can assert that in recent years the influence and the impact of television, and television entertainment, are measured in new ways. We have written on the new paths of research developed by scholars from different academic disciplines, although, we cannot leave aside either those approaches that mix the academic and

industrial fields or the great amount of research and analysis that is conducted within the industry due to its relevance as a business sector. Many of this academic research, as well as the professional reports and whitepapers reflect the effects and impact of television entertainment in various areas of society, either economic or cultural. These results present new approaches and conclusions to evaluate television entertainment, as well as to identify its contributions to various fields of society and, consequently, to be aware of its value.

I would therefore remark that it is essential to take into account these various studies to have a comprehensive knowledge of the influence of television entertainment in society. When doing so, we can be aware of the various contributions of this genre, beyond those analyses that mainly, or even only, emphasise the negative effects of this medium and this genre. Due to that I will mention some of these perspectives.

1.8.1. The university and the industry.

Among the initiatives that within academia show an interest in linking university research and the industry for the study of the value of television entertainment, is the project developed by the *The Norman Lear Center*, at the *Annenberg School for Communication* of the *University of Southern California (USC)*, which we have mentioned in the previous section. In fact this faculty, this department, has become a reference worldwide in this area, and I would like to highlight their work, whose objectives are in line with my research interests. Studies conducted by academics as part of this project examine the impact of television entertainment in society. Using entertainment as an intellectual framework, their aim is to contribute to the understanding of the influence of the entertainment industry in culture and society.

Actually, from their point of view, academic analysis of this impact will help the industry to be aware of the influence of the entertainment business in society. They focus on questions of value and try to integrate both the analytical scholarship and the professional side of the entertainment business, the cultural and the professional aspects of entertainment are analysed within the so called 'Entertainment Initiative', which, according to their explanations is:

A university-wide collaboration to analyze the entertainment dimension of all contemporary culture. An attempt at fresh thinking about entertainment's appeal, its content, and its consequences. A point of view, a lens, a perspective for better understanding culture and society and just about everything human in the world's industrial economies. -Our approach saturates the study of entertainment with questions of value. In that sense, we argue for an integration of cultural studies with professional education. We teach *whether* and *why* along with *what* and *how*. The entertainment industry could profit from more leaders who grasp its impact on society. The society could benefit from more conscience, and more critical self-consciousness, in the creative process. (USC Annenberg NLC, 2016)

Since this project started, a considerable amount of research has been conducted as part of it, various activities have been arranged and many articles have been published. A great part of this work reflects the study carried out in various fields in relation to the influence of television entertainment in society, including the analysis of various formats and subgenres. It can be noticed that many positive reflections and conclusions are drawn in this regard, which put into value the contributions of this medium and this genre to society. (cf. Blakley, 2001; Gluck & Roca, 2008; The Norman Lear Center, 2016; Gabler & Kaplan, 2004 ; Kaplan, 2001, 2006, 2013; Napoli, 2014; Princeton Survey Research, 2004; Rich, 2001)

I would also like to underline the intention these scholars show to build up links between academia and the industry when approaching the study of television entertainment. We could say that this is an initiative that starts from academia and is

extended to the business field, because, as they indicate, the final goal is to build up bridges between these two areas.

1.8.2. Research outside academia: social impact, social value.

When studying the impact of television entertainment, however, we cannot ignore the great amount of research conducted outside academia. A great deal of analysis on television, and on television entertainment in particular, is conducted by different entities, non academic, and by very diverse companies within, or related to, the television industry, either public or private. Among these studies are those that focus on the social impact of this medium, and when doing so often both cultural and economic factors are brought to the fore. The influence of television and television entertainment in both areas are analysed regarding the impact and social value of television. It can be observed that these studies and reports enquire into the positive effects of this medium, since they focus on identifying and assessing the ways in which media in general, as well as television specifically, benefit society. The positive impact and the social value of television companies, of their activity and programming are taken into consideration when conducting research from these perspectives.

In this regard, the Media Impact Project (MIP), set up by the Norman Lear Center, is worth mentioning. This initiative, which is supported by grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the John S. James L. Knight Foundation, aims to develop best practices, innovation and thought leadership in media metrics, hence, they explain that:

The collaboration will help media organizations, journalists, and social change-makers build on the power of storytelling through data and impact measurement.

The Media Impact Project brings together a unique team of researchers including social and behavioral scientists, journalists, analytics experts and other specialists to collaborate to test and create new ways to measure the impact of media. Content creators, distributors and media funders can ultimately apply these techniques to improve their work and strengthen engagement. (Napoli, 2014, p. 2)

Consequently, as they note, they intend to provide methods and metrics to assess the impact of public interest media initiatives, among which they mention the following: non-profit and non-commercial journalism operations, social issued-based film and television programming, and public service media campaigns. They understand that in this period of rapid innovation and change, new approaches to defining and measuring media impact must be adopted. Moreover, they indicate that they will mainly focus and what they define as *social value* perspective. Their explanation about this term can be read in this text below:

Social value in this context refers to analytical approaches that extend beyond financial measures of success to take into account criteria such as improving well-being of individuals and communities across a wide range of dimensions that are central goals of most public interest media initiatives. (Napoli, 2014, p. 4)

Therefore, they go beyond the initial financial and economic fields when assessing the positive impact of television, although they indicate that positive social impact and financial performance can be positively related. I find also illuminating the explanation provided about the difference between *media effects* and *media impact* from these researchers' perspective. They do in fact comment on the great amount of studies conducted on media effects to, further on, propose a new approach that goes beyond that discipline that focuses mainly on the effect on people's behaviour and attitude, in order to analyse the impact of media on society at other levels. Thus, Napoli comments that

the Media Impact Project takes a new perspective when assessing the effects of the media, and he explains the difference between those two terms and, consequently, the different approaches. (Napoli, 2014, p. 8):

Given that there is an extensive body of research on media effects, an important starting point for this review is to differentiate the concept of *media impact* that is the focus here from the more traditional notion of *media effects*. First, while there is certainly a substantial amount of overlap (see, e.g., Leiserowitz, 2004), the field of media effects can be characterized as having a strong micro orientation, in that the unit of analysis is typically the individual media user, and the focus is on the relatively narrow question of whether exposure to a particular media message impacted that user's attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, or behaviors. When we talk about media impact, on the other hand, the orientation can be characterized as a bit more macro, in that the concerns extend beyond whether individual media users had their attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, or behaviors affected, to also include broader systemic changes at the levels of organizations and institutions (see, e.g., Inagaki, 2007). Also, it seems reasonable to contend that media effects studies tend to examine effects of a short-term nature. This has often been due primarily to the methodological challenges associated with conducting long-term media effects research. Inherent in the notion of media impact, however, is the idea of more lasting change (see Harmony Institute, 2013b).

In this regard, they also refer to the concept of engagement, and they explain that the interaction between audience and media represents important criteria for assessment of the influence of media. Therefore, the engagement of the audience due to both media content and the initiatives promoted are measured when assessing their impact (Napoli, 2014, p. 8).

In the report written by Professor Philip M. Napoli (2014) within this initiative they present an overview of the field, and they provide a method to analyse and measure that impact so as to help researchers who want to enquire into this topic. They stress the importance of this type of assessment and they comment that a high degree of

methodological flexibility and diversity is essential. The centrality of audience engagement in this regard is also pointed out.

Actually, the significance of deepening engagement for achieving a lasting impact is studied and highlighted in the report prepared by the Learning for Action (LFA) initiative for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, in October 2013. In this document, as they note, a framework for measuring media performance and results is proposed in order to demonstrate value and to measure impact. They refer to this concept in similar terms as explained by Napoli:

We define impact as a change that happens to individuals, groups, organizations, systems, and social or physical conditions. Typically long-term and affected by many variables, impact represents the ultimate purpose of community-focused media efforts- it's how the world is different as a result of our work. (Learning for Action, 2013, p. 1)

They explain that although the specific impacts vary, they focus on those media efforts that affect people and which are not specifically undertaken with the aim of driving profits. However, as they remark, there is an awareness that revenue generation may be also essential in many cases (LFA, 2013 p. 1). They also mention the complexity of the term, and the difficulties in defining it objectively, quoting Greg Linch's words, from The Washington Post. (LFA, 2013, p. 1):

This concept of impact –as currently defined- is very subjective and complex... It is not easy, nor is it perfect or precise, but it deserves experimentation and effort in trying. And it won't improve if no one starts somewhere.

Finally, these researchers acknowledge that this type of analysis is a relatively new priority in the media field and state that the companies engaged in producing and disseminating public interest media typically do not have a tradition of conducting these

kinds of self-evaluations. Nevertheless, paraphrasing their words, they also note that the opportunities for public interest media organisations to better understand and demonstrate their impact are clearly expanding dramatically (Napoli, 2014 pp. 27, 28). The analysis undertaken by the LFA institution also comments on this aspect when referring to public companies, as they indicate that: ‘The public and investors increasingly expect accountability, and wants to see proof that organizations are run effectively and produce meaningful results –especially if they receive grant and public money’ (LFA, 2013, p. 1).

In fact, we can observe that in recent years pubcasters are also focusing on the social value of their companies and, in many cases when measuring it social, cultural and economic factors are taken into account, too. The British Public Broadcasting Corporation has often analysed this aspect from the various perspectives mentioned, and the details and conclusions have been published in various white papers (e.g. *Measuring the Value of the BBC*, 2004). We can notice in these texts the importance that the entertainment genre has when measuring the social value of this company. The value of the entertainment programmes for the fulfillment of the objectives of this prestigious public television is also expressed in the different BBC Charters that are published every ten years, which define the parameters within which this public entity works, as well as in its annual reports. The entertainment function of television is, in fact, generally acknowledged by broadcasting public entities, and this objective is in most cases included among their goals, in addition to the missions of informing and educating, according to the so called Reithian principles, which are central in public broadcasting companies.

Thus, we can observe that most research on the social impact and the social value of television is conducted in the PBS field, within specific public companies

mainly. Moreover, in those cases, the conclusions about the social impact and social value of public television companies are closely related to the fulfilment of their mission as such and, consequently, with their essence as public service.

In this regard, besides specific comments on this topic in their annual reports and whitepapers, which is quite a common practice at present, the specific documents produced in relation to social responsibility issues must be mentioned. Actually, both policies and assessments on social responsibility are implemented in many public broadcasting companies at present, which periodically unveil reports of this type. These documents both deliver and analyse the strategies carried out in this regard (cf. Campos Freire et al, 2018, pp. 133-151).

Among them, we would like to mention those produced following the parameters established by the so called Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). This independent international organisation's mission is 'to empower decisions that create social, environmental and economic benefits for everyone', as explained in their official web site, and their reporting standards are followed worldwide. (cf. <https://www.globalreporting.org/information/about-gri/Pages/default.aspx>)

The information these reports provide are certainly relevant to assess the social impact and the social value of these companies, either with respect to the various and varied agreements, activities, and schemes they arrange and develop in this regard, as well as in relation to their programming. This is also the case of the Basque Public Broadcasting Company (EITB), which was, in fact, the first public media body in Spain disclosing a report on social responsibility within the GRI standards, a report that was properly validated by an external company within the maximum level, i.e. GRI A+

(EITB, 2009). Since then, EITB regularly produces GRI Social Responsibility Reports, every two years.

Therefore, regarding the last part of this work, and in relation to the topics mentioned here, the various documents produced within Euskal Telebista, the Basque public television company, must be indeed taken into account, among them, the numerous white papers and annual reports (cf. *ETB. Txostenak. Balances. 1995-2018*), as well as those referring to its social responsibility just mentioned. (cf. *EITBren Gizarte-Erantzukizuna. La responsabilidad Social de EITB. Memoria-Txostena 2007-2008; 2009-2010; 2011-2012; 2013-2014; 2015-2016*).

I want to underline the fact that these initiatives and reports commented in this section help to analyse the positive impact of television, its activity and its programming, on society. Research fostered within the Media Impact Project and others of similar type, initiatives and reports on social responsibility within public broadcasting companies, as well as diverse whitepapers produced by them permit analysis of their activity and output from a positive perspective, when referring to their social impact, positive influence and contribution to society.

1.8.3. Globalisation and glocalisation of television entertainment.

The effect that the television business and television entertainment in particular have in the economic sector has been extensively analysed both in the academic and in the business field. There is a great amount of literature in media economics (e.g. Doyle, 2012; Heinrich & Kopper 2006; Sánchez Tabernero, 2006 ...) and it can be observed that a great deal of it refers to the influence of television in this area. Furthermore,

besides the academic articles and books, an enormous quantity of media and business reports and whitepapers on this topic are published almost continuously.

With respect to the analysis of the business side of television entertainment, we can observe that the globalisation of this economic sector is studied both by academia and the industry, as this issue is central in the present television activity's landscape (cf. Bielby and Harrington, 2008). Within the topics which are relevant in relation to this issue is the globalisation of television formats, a factor that entails both economic and cultural consequences, as can be observed in the various books and texts written by prestigious scholars who have researched on this matter, such as Albert Moran, Jean K. Chalaby, Andrea Esser, Joseph D. Straubhaar, Denise D. Bielby and C. Lee Harrington as well as Paolo Sigismondi among others.

Concerning the cultural aspects, in addition to the worries about the domination of major cultures, the importance of local cultures and the need to adapt these global formats to their features and demands is highlighted by scholars who study this phenomenon. The fact that television formats can be adapted to local cultures is central for their success. It has to be said that these global formats are mainly entertainment programmes. These academics analyse the characteristics and the consequences of the changes that have taken place in these past years regarding the production, distribution and dissemination of television formats. I would like to remark that when doing so, they focus on the different types of formats and also provide interesting and complete information about specific ones, which are known worldwide, due to their success. It has to be said that most of them are what are considered as unscripted formats, that is to say, not strictly fictional. This fact makes a difference from previous studies about television and television programmes, which for many years were mainly centred in fictional television products, namely, scripted programmes.

Albert Moran is one of the first academics who started researching and writing about this matter, it can be said that his book *Copycat TV: Globalisation, Program Formats and Cultural Identity*, first edited in 1998 and reedited in 2005, is a reference in this regard. In the same line, a few years later he wrote *Understanding The Global TV Format* (2006) which added interesting information and reflections to his previous work. Further on, in 2009, he edited *TV Formats Worldwide: Localizing Global Programs*, written with the collaboration of various researchers whose work is compiled in 17 different chapters. More recently, he has also co-edited the compilation of articles entitled *New Patterns in Global Television Formats* (Aveyard, Moran & Majbritt Jensen, 2016), with 20 chapters written by different authors about various topics related to this matter. In addition, Moran himself has collaborated in other compilation books (i.e. Wasko, 2005b; Alvarado *et al*, 2014) and has written several academic articles regarding this issue, too (i.e. Moran, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009b, 2013; Moran & Kane, 2006; Keane & Moran, 2009; Moran & Aveyard, 2014).

Besides Albert Moran, I would also mention the research conducted by Jean K. Chalaby in this regard, and his comprehensive book *The Format Age. Television's Entertainment Revolution* (2016), as well as other books and numerous articles that reflect his prolific work about this topic, and others related (i.e. Chalaby 2002, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2009, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d). The contribution of scholar Andrea Esser in this field is worth mentioning too (cf. Esser, 2007, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2015).

According to the information presented in the above mentioned books and texts we can observe that these aspects, that is to say the globalisation and glocalisation of programme formats, are core in the current television scenario. Their influence both in the economic and cultural fields is broadly acknowledged and therefore, from my point

of view, they should undoubtedly be taken into account when studying the influence, the contributions and the value of television entertainment.

As said, all the authors just mentioned comment on the economic impact of the TV format industry. In this regard, Chalaby remarks that the format trade has become a global business worth billions of euros per year. This academic underscores the success of this business indicating (2016, p. 1) that it reaches: ‘a cumulative value (in terms of distribution and production fees) of several billion dollars per year’, and noting that ‘in Europe alone, the income that broadcasters have generated from the top 100 formats reached US\$2.9 billion in 2013 (*TBI Formats*, 2014a: 23)’. In the same line are this academic’s comments expressed in other texts, as can be observed in the following paragraph (Chalaby, 2012, p. 37):

In an age of fierce competition, they [formats] enable broadcasters to offer local programming – always the audience favourite – while managing risk (with the knowledge that the same concept has a proven track record in other markets) and driving down costs (through the progressive refinement of the production model). No wonder that the format trade is today a thriving global industry worth an estimated €3.1 billion per year (FRAPA, 2009: 17). Between 2006 and 2008, 445 formats led to 1262 adaptations in 57 territories (2009: 11). Most popular shows these days are formatted and they cover all TV genres from daytime cookery and decorating shows to prime-time talent competition blockbusters.

Chalaby also refers to the influence of the television format business in media globalisation, and comments that: ‘IP trading is a complex business that requires economic capital, knowledge and infrastructure, features that have been accumulated by leading trading nations and enable them to dominate emergent value chains.’ (2016, p. 187). In this regard, this scholar states that:

The TV format business is deepening media globalization on several counts. It has added volume and complexity to international TV flows. Finished programming still travels well but the format business has spawned a new market for the intellectual property (IP) that lies within TV shows. (Chalaby, 2016, p. 1)

In addition to the impact that the television formats trade has in the economic field, these scholars also reflect on the cultural influence that this business has, an aspect that I would like to focus on. In this paragraph, Chalaby (2016, p. 187) comments on the need to assess this impact too:

The cultural impact of the format trade needs to be assessed. It would be impossible for TV formats developed in the Western world not to convey values. Formats are not created in a social vacuum and always begin life as local shows enjoyed by a local audience.

In this respect, Chalaby mentions Silvio Waisbord's words, along with the reflections by prestigious scholars who have researched this issue such as Moran, Sinclair and Straubhaar. Chalaby comments on the relationship between the economic and cultural aspects of the globalisation of television formats as well as about the connection between global and local aspects in television programming. (2016, p. 187)

Silvio Waisbord, noting the contrast between 'globalized economics' and 'localized cultures', rightly states that 'the contemporary trade of formats puts in evidence that the globalization of media economics and culture are intertwined but are not identical' (Waisbord, 2004: 378-9). The format business may allow TV majors to cross borders with ease but it developed on the back of demand for local programming: local broadcasters, knowing their audience's preferences, always replace imports with local programming as soon as financially possible (e.g. Moran, 1985; Sinclair et al., 1996; Straubhaar 2007).

The importance of local cultural factors is also noted by Chalaby in this text below, where he also mentions the worries about the cultural globalisation that the

global trade of television formats entails, expressing his perspective on this issue (2016, p. 187):

The TV format chain may be global, the adaptation process and transfer of expertise may be transnational, but TV formats begin and end their lives as local shows. In fact, they need to become local to stay international, as the only formats that cross borders are those that resonate in each and every territory in which they air. In addition, a format's transnational rules are there to weave narratives and disappear behind the stories they generate. A good format is a platform that vanishes behind the drama it creates. Even though some format rules may convey values that are heterogeneous to some cultures, TV formats are unlikely to be the Trojan horses of global culture that some critics fear.

In fact it can be said that the globalisation of television formats is closely related to the local specificities of those programmes. Moreover, in the case of global formats their adaptation to local needs and demands is essential for their survival and success. Global and local aspects are closely interrelated in television and even more pronouncedly with respect to television entertainment.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the so called glocalisation of entertainment, as a phenomenon that refers to the adaptation of global formats to local cultural identities, the centrality of which is broadly acknowledged by academics researching on this issue. In relation to this phenomenon, and in addition to the authors and texts previously indicated, it is worth mentioning two other books that also present interesting reflections and information. I am referring to Straubhaar's *World Television. From Global to Local* (2007), and Sigismondi's *Digital Glocalization of Entertainment* (2012). I will further on quote various paragraphs extracted from them, as they are illuminating in this field. Concerning Sigismondi's book, I must say that I consider that the information and reflections gathered in this comprehensive text are indeed relevant,

due to the topics included and the approaches presented, as explained by the author in this text (2012, p. 3):

This book analyzes the evolutions, collisions, challenges, and opportunities in global entertainment at the turn of the twenty-first century as the ICT revolution unfolds. The thesis is that the landscape's paradigms are shifting, introducing what can be defined as the "digital glocalization of entertainment": Successful media texts crossing national and cultural borders incorporate global, glocal, and local elements, enriched by customized elements made possible by the digital media environment. (...) Within this complex and multifaceted landscape, this book specifically analyzes two institutional trajectories (technological and genre changes) within and industrial economic framework. These two trajectories have the potential to modify the existing structures and paradigms of the global mediascape at the turn of the twenty-first century. These are significant because they represent a change in the existing political economy of global entertainment and they introduce more effectively different logics, as local adaptation of global formats.

I will also mention the definition of the term 'glocalisation' that this scholar presents (Sigismondi, 2012, p. 4) which, as he explains, responds to Straubhaar's approach to the topic:

For the purpose of this book, the concept of glocalization is utilized following Straubhaar's framework, who points out that "many national programs are based on global or regional models, so national television itself must be problematized and understood in new hybrid or glocal (local adaptations of global) forms" (2007, p. 3). As Straubhaar pointed out (p. 149), the term glocalization stems from a Japanese marketing strategy of "global-localization" or glocalization (Robertson 1995), the business practice to adapt cultural products to other cultures, "instead of pressing for a global standardization": As a result, "glocalization is a blending of foreign and local" (p. 149), trying to cater to the entertainment needs of what Iwabuchi calls "glocal me" worldwide (2007, p. 70).

Moreover, I want to stress the fact that Sigismondi's work focuses on the so called non-scripted/unscripted formats, and that it brings to the fore the importance of

this type of television entertainment programmes in the current media landscape, as scholar Jungmin Kwon highlights in his review of this book (2013, p. 1150):

Nonscripted entertainment, the term the author deliberately prefers “as it is deemed more extensive and therefore more able to capture the evolving nature of the phenomenon” (p. 48), started in Europe and diffused globally because of its cost-effective aspect. In the process of spreading over various locales, a format of nonscripted entertainment founded on the European model was modified and contextualized according to regional needs. Sigismondi posits, “the superior local adaptability of non-scripted entertainment makes them more appealing in foreign TV markets than regular Hollywood productions which cannot practice ‘glocalization’ of entertainment as effectively” (pp. 75–76).

1.8.3.1. Globalisation.

Kwon also underlines the importance of globalisation, as a concept and phenomenon studied previously to glocalisation. This author refers to the latest points of view on this topic which, as he indicates, although it has been extensively studied it still lacks a clear definition (2013, p. 1149):

More than 10 years have passed since the new millennium started. However, we still witness many political, economic, and cultural issues lingering from the previous millennium. Globalization must be among the most-discussed topics; however, we do not have a clear definition for it. Since the appearance of the modern version of the term, it has been conceptualized and reconceptualized in numerous ways by theorists, thinkers, politicians, activists, and such. Although the idea of globalization is still ambiguous and elusive, a clear tendency indicates that it is moving from a unilateral and linear influence or movement to one of mutually reinforcing and multilayered flows among nation-states and cultures. The view of globalization as a one-way force from “the West to the Rest” predominated for most of the 20th century, but as the 21st century approached and non-Western nation states and blocs appeared on the global stage, such discourse began to change (Featherstone, 1993).

Academic Jonathan Bignell (2013, p. 68, p. 73) comments on this topic too, and mentions one of the meanings of globalisation, when presenting the issue about the

different perspectives over globalisation and the controversy concerning this dichotomy that still exists. Hence, he states that:

One of the most significant theories for explaining how television is organised today is that of globalisation. Globalisation can refer to the phenomenon whereby some programmes or genres of television have spread across different nations and cultures, so that television schedules of different countries can seem surprisingly familiar. (...) Theorists of television have debated whether globally distributed programmes and global television corporations have brought new opportunities and freedom, or whether they have imposed a deadening sameness on the diverse cultures of the world. (Bignell, 2013, p. 68)

This author reflects on the various possible meanings of globalisation in relation to television (Bignell, 2013, p. 73), and points out three different perspectives. Hence he comments that the term 'globalisation' can be used to refer to:

- products of global corporations, whether these are concrete products like shoes or textual products like television programmes
- the distribution system which circulates these products, like the global network of transmission satellites used by television broadcasters
- the consumers of products distributed in this way, the global audiences

In this regard, Bignell comments that the importance of globalisation may vary, due to production, distribution and consumption aspects, and presents several arguments that back up this statement. In terms of production he refers to the laws and regulations as well as to those entities created to protect local, regional and national productions, as is the case of The European Broadcasting Union (EBU). (Bignell, 2013, p. 74)

Theorists of television have emphasised that at the levels of production, distribution and consumption it is possible for the significance of global television to change, and argue that globalisation is not a natural and unstoppable process. In production, global television corporations can be restrained by national or local laws and regulations which make them operate differently in different places. Regional organisations have been developed in Europe to foster and protect its television culture (Bignell and Fickers 2008).

When referring to distribution and consumption, this academic comments on the importance of the context, and therefore of cultural aspects, which are closely associated to television consumption. They do indeed highly influence the choice of television programmes by different audiences and communities. He cites Sinclair's statements, along with other authors', when mentioning this fact. Bignell, finally, comments on the approaches to globalisation within Television Studies, according to which both perspectives, namely homogenisation and differentiation, are analysed, along with the implications that this phenomenon has in various fields (Bignell, 2013, p. 74):

Global distribution networks may transmit the same television programme over a very wide area, but the ways in which the programme is received (by whom, how and the significance of receiving global television in a particular society) will be different in different contexts. John Sinclair, and his fellow authors (Sinclair *et al.* 1999: 176) explain that:

Although US programmes might lead the world in their transportability across cultural boundaries, and even manage to dominate schedules on some channels in particular countries, they are rarely the most popular programmes where viewers have a reasonable menu of locally produced programmes to choose from.

So the theory of globalisation in Television Studies is a way of addressing both processes which homogenise television and those which reduce differences, but also a way of addressing processes of differentiation. Furthermore, globalisation theory brings together approaches to television that concern economic, institutional, textual and reception practices.

In relation to this controversy I will quote below some of the reflections explained by academic J.K. Chalaby (2016). In these texts below this prolific researcher on television formats presents some arguments about their influence in local cultures and communities from a positive perspective. Hence, he stresses the benefits of this type of television content. When doing so he refers to other prestigious scholars who have

conducted a lot of research on this topic, such as Morán, Esser and Jensen. (Chalaby, 2016, p. 187)

So far, there is more evidence to show that TV formats benefit local cultures rather than tear them down. Several studies have confirmed Albert Moran's seminal observation that 'television format adaptations are only one small link in the chain that binds viewers in a national community but equally obviously it is an important link all the same' (Moran, 1998: 165). Esser and Jensen concur that 'the popularity of many formats should be seen as proof that they succeed in providing a common reference point for the majority of the population.

Chalaby presents specific examples of different formats to back up these arguments. In this paragraph below he mentions the case of *Idol*, the worldwide known format, and the analysis of its New Zealand version, conducted by Joost de Bruin. Various positive effects of this television entertainment programme which are highlighted by this scholar are pointed out in this paragraph of Chalaby's text (2016, p. 188)

Many localized adaptations successfully create feelings of belonging and often stimulate debate and reflection at the local/national level' (Esser and Jensen, 2015: 210). For instance, Joost de Bruin analysed how the New Zealand adaptation of *Idols* was geared to promote local culture, including 'ethnic and cultural diversity; positive representations of young people; and attention for New Zealand popular music' (de Bruin, 2012: 225). His conclusions, that 'the local adaptation of global formats can...create opportunities for audiences to recognize themselves as members of national communities', echo those of Moran (de Bruin, 2012: 226).

Likewise, he notes the case of another type of format, namely a game show, the Italian adaptation of a popular entertainment programme (*The \$64.000 Question*) in the 1950s. Chalaby (2016, p. 188) refers to the analysis conducted by Chiara Ferrari (2012) which stresses various aspects in which this game show influenced positively Italian society. Among them this scholar argues that '...the show acted as a platform for Italian

culture and resonated so strongly that it contributed to the country's linguistic and cultural unification' adding that the list of questions, which touched on Italian arts, literature, history, football and opera 'created among the Italian people the sense of sharing a common heritage and common passions' (Ferrari, 2012, p. 137)

1.8.3.2. Globalisation and glocalisation in television: evolution.

Different perspectives of globalisation and the evolution of this issue regarding television are presented by relevant scholars when approaching this topic, as can be observed in these texts that I will quote below. Actually, Paul S.N. Lee reflects on that matter in his article 'Television and Global Culture. Assessing the role of television in globalization' (2000/2002):

Global television has been assigned too important a role in the process of globalization and the formation of a global culture. From the above analysis, globalization can be conceived in three different ways – a process of internationalization with the state as the essential actor, a process of marketization with capitalism as the central force, and a process of inter-acculturation with the interactions among various cultures as the focal point for attention. The fear for homogenization of various cultures by a single form is grounded only if one holds the conception of marketization in globalization. Even with this perspective, global television's role has been over-stressed because the values portrayed are usually superficial and limited. The contents and values of global television will also be modified to suit the local contexts if they are to be consumed and absorbed. The formation of a global culture can only result from the process of inter-acculturation which is a process conducted on a basis of voluntary exchanges among cultures, with mutual influences and respects. Without this process of inter-acculturation, the emergence of a global culture is not likely. (Lee, 2000/2002, p. 196)

Academic Colin Sparks also writes in relation to globalisation and glocalisation, about the global and the local, and he comments on the different approaches to these

topics depending on the various theorists. Moreover, he reflects on the different connections with the media that each one entails (Sparks, 2000/2002, p. 77):

The terms global and local are often, although not invariably, conjoined in discussion, but the relative values of these terms differs widely from theorist to theorist, and there are very many theorists of globalization to choose from. Within this diversity, it is possible to identify three general classes of theorizing that assign different values to the local/global pair. We can consider each in turn, both with regard to their viewpoint on the general terms and their more precise implications for the mass media.

Sparks outlines and explains those three theories, and indicates that the first of them ‘consists of those theories of globalization that see it as a generalization of existing, and usually Western, trends’, noting that the most obvious representative of this current is Giddens (cf. 1991, p. 69). According to this author’s explanations ‘the second group of theories are those that propose a uniform and homogenous process spreading throughout the world.’ (Sparks, 2000/2002, p. 78). He mentions Ritzer’s reflections in this regard (1993) as well as Herman and MacChesney’s (1997), and he states that:

In this kind of theory, the process of globalization is one which destroys the local, at whatever level it is manifested, and replaces it by a single, standard, and usually US-inspired, society. Translated into media terms, this would suggest that the development of global media means the progressive erosion of local media and their incorporation into, or replacement by, their larger predators. (Sparks, 2000/2002, p. 78)

Finally, this author (Sparks, 2000/2002, p. 78) comments on the third kind of theory, referring to Raymond Williams’ early formulation (1993, pp. 197-198) and he notes that it ‘proposes a state system under siege’, because:

It is attacked by globalization “from above”, with abstract forces, notably the world market, acting at a level more general than that of the state, and imposing

solutions upon the state and its citizens. But it is also attacked “from below”, with other forces relating much more directly to the immediate experience of the population within a more limited scope.

Moreover, this scholar reflects on the implications of this theory regarding the media, and shows his preference for this approach, because as he indicates this third position ‘provides a much more fruitful starting point, in that it proposes a dual movement’. Sparks does indeed highlight the importance of both global and local perspectives:

If we attempt to operationalize this view in terms of the mass media, it would seem to suggest that we would observe a simultaneous process of the erosion of the power and influence of the state-based media on the one hand, and a parallel strengthening of both the local and the global media. We would expect to find media organizations, and regulatory structures, migrating “up” to global forms or “down” to local forms. We would expect the audience for state-oriented media to decline relative to those for local and global media. (Sparks, 2000/2002, p. 78)

In any case, we can also observe that the evolution of globalisation and the various arguments over it highlight the importance of concepts such as hybridation and glocalisation, which refer to global influences but also to the importance of local cultures and specificities. The study conducted in this regard by Joseph Straubhaar is worth mentioning. In this text he presents some of his reflections on globalisation and culture, and he states that instead of cultural homogenisation, as some analysts defend, theories of hybridisation or glocalisation are more consistent (2007, pp. 5-6):

Some fear that globalization implies a global culture homogenization. Appadurai (1996) thought extensive cultural homogenization was unlikely and cited as opposing evidence the anthropological record, what he called:

the archive of lived actualities, found in all sorts of ethnographies ... This archive, and the sensibility that it produces in the professional

anthropologist, predisposes me strongly toward the idea that globalization is not the story of cultural homogenization. (p. 11)

More likely is a varied kind of cultural globalization that is perhaps better theorized as *hybridization* or *glocalization*. In hybridization, global forces bring change, but that change is adapted into existing ways of doing things via a historical process in which existing local forces mix with new global ones, producing neither global homogenization nor authentic local culture, but a complex new hybrid with multiple layers of culture, where older, traditional forms may persist alongside new ones. This situation is neither a complete resistance to rejoice about nor a complete loss of identity to despair about, but a complex contradiction of both continuity and change.

The global and local interrelationship is also pointed up by Jonathan Bignell, who indicates that although ‘the global dominance of Western television can easily seem to cover over local and regional differences,’ globalisation of television does indeed help to stress the importance of local television and local cultures. He explains his arguments in this text that I have extracted and copied here (Bignell, 2013, p. 85).

The relationship between place and television culture is complex, and global television and global television corporations make local and regional differences more, not less, important. Local television cultures find their identities alongside or by resisting the globalisation of television, so that the dominance of global television becomes important to the production of local television. Local, in this connection, can also importantly mean regional, in that television cultures cross national boundaries to include speakers of the some language (like Spanish in much of Latin America, and in the states of the USA with large Spanish-speaking population) or audiences which share similar cultural assumptions and ideologies (like the audiences in many nations of the Middle East who have shared Islamic beliefs).

1.8.3.3. Globalisation, glocalisation and cultural identities.

Regarding television, the core role that different cultural identities play and the need to adapt to them appear as essential factors when studying globalisation of television programmes, and television entertainment in particular. Both the influence of

global cultural aspects and the importance of local factors are underscored by Straubhaar who states that: ‘The cultural impacts and uses of television can be understood in terms of a twin process of hybridization and formation of multiple layers of identity among audiences, which guides audience choices and structures impacts on them.’ (p. 4). In this text below, he comments on the importance of national television but, at the same time, he also remarks that most national television programmes nowadays take hybrid and glocal forms (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 3):

For many, if not most people around the world, television is still primarily broadcast television coming from national networks, supplemented in some places by regional networks at the provincial or local level. Many of the programs carried on satellite, Internet or DVD originated as nationally based broadcast or satellite/cable programs. However, many national programs are based on global or regional models, so national television itself must be problematized and understood in new hybrid or *glocal* (local adaptation of global) forms.

As this author indicates, the importance of global influences, the hybridity between global cultural aspects and local cultural identities explain also the increasing trade and success of licensed television formats, because they can be adapted to those local specificities, as demanded by those audiences. Canned programmes, instead, allow little adaptation, the only possibility of glocalisation of those television products is, indeed, language adaptation, either by dubbing them or by the use of subtitles.

Global and transnational satellite channels also cross borders but have to adapt to their audiences. Instead of canned programs, genres and licensed television formats increasingly flow across borders. They are adapted to local, national and regional cultures but still bring complex transnational influences with them. (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 4)

Straubhaar also comments that the types of programmes that are distributed and consumed globally are different depending on different countries. Some of them tend to

be produced locally, among which he mentions the news, talk shows, reality shows, game shows, variety shows and live music. It has to be said though, that, as this scholar notes, a lot of these national or local programmes are nowadays adaptations of global formats, that is to say, formats that are 'glocalised' to respond better to the needs and demands of local audiences. According to this author's explanations, glocalisation and hybridity are two aspects that are closely related to television and television entertainment in particular and, as we can observe, they highly influence the production, dissemination and consumption of television content:

Television flows between countries are very different, depending on which television genre is at issue. Some forms of genres of programming seem to be almost inherently national in focus and scope, such as national and local news, talk shows, reality shows, game shows, variety shows, and live music, although these national or local programs may increasingly be adaptations or licensed versions of imported formats (Moran, 2004). That raises a more subtle issue of what national production means. In essence, I argue here that it means hybrid production in which imported elements, genres and formats are adapted into national media systems and given national spins or interpretations. The outcome is neither national autonomy nor cultural imperialism. Perhaps it is what Nederveen Pieterse (1995, 2004) called the global *mélange* of global, geocultural, cultural linguistic, national, regional, and local, or, more simply, hybridity. (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 166)

The cultural aspects, the cultural features, identities and specificities of the different audiences are certainly relevant and, as mentioned previously, they influence the content of television programmes. The adaptation of those global formats to local cultures is indeed essential for their success and those facts influence the markets, the trade of television programmes and formats, which, according to Straubhaar comments is mostly noticeable in certain genres, such as talk shows and variety programmes (2007, p. 4).

Producers and networks have developed diverse production formats and genres that fit their understanding of the cultural nature of their audiences or markets, so that, in effect, culture defines markets, principally at local, national, regional, and cultural linguistic levels. Producers and audiences interact in the production and evolution of genres: globally, within nations, and across cultural-linguistic regions. Television production and flow has changed toward greater national and transnational cultural-linguistic or regional production consumption, particularly in certain specific genres such as variety and talk shows.

In addition to those cultural factors, it can be observed that when referring to the flow and consumption of global television, the importance of cultural proximity is also underscored by academics who have conducted research on this topic, as is the case of Straubhaar. Paul S. N. Lee also writes in that respect and, as we can see at the end of this paragraph below, he refers indeed to this scholar, who considers cultural proximity as a relevant factor that highly influences the production, distribution and consumption of television programmes (Lee, 2000/2002, p. 188):

Much has been said about the flow of global television in the world market (Ang, 1985; Antola and Rogers, 1984; Elasmár and Hunter, 1997; Goonasekera and Lee, 1998; Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974; Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1973; Katz and Liebes, 1985; Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996; Schiller, 1976, 1991; Schement and Rogers, 1984; Straubhaar, 1991; Straubhaar and Viscasillas, 1991; Varis, 1985). The general findings of nearly all empirical studies point to the fact that the viewing of global television has little impact of viewers, not to say changing their deeply entrenched values. It was found that global television was mostly shown in fringe hours in the non-English-speaking world and viewers usually preferred local to foreign programs. Straubhaar (1991) considered that cultural proximity was a major factor contributing to the flow of global television. He pointed out that there was a preference first for national material, and when that cannot be filled, the audience would look next to regional productions, which were more culturally proximate than were those from outside the region.

In the coming section I will focus on the importance of cultural identity and cultural proximity with regard to television, but, before that, I would like to mention

Professor Manuel Castells' work. In fact, his contributions regarding both globalisation and cultural identity issues are significant indeed. In his article 'Globalisation and identity. A comparative perspective' (2006) he reflects on these topics, and comments that 'communication strategies are global in business terms but are tailored to specific cultures and identities for marketing reasons' (p. 58). Castells emphasises the importance of cultural identity as an aspect which is reinforced as a consequence of globalisation (2006, p. 56), an aspect that I want to call attention to:

Globalisation and the strengthening of various cultural identities (religious, national, ethnic, geographic, and gender, among others) have occurred over the last fifteen years. In my view, this is no coincidence but rather the product of a systemic relationship between the two phenomena. It is not immediately because the idea has taken root that globalisation requires a global, cosmopolitan culture. There are several variations on this theme. Some talk of unification and cultural homogenisation of the world and criticise the process. Others consider that globalisation will overcome local and historical identities, supercede some ideologies, and produce an undifferentiated universal human culture. I believe that both the quest for a new universal cultural to sweep away historical cultures is misguided, while fear that "Americanisation" will wipe out historically-based cultural identities is unfounded(...). I believe this is an extremely important issue because it goes to the root of the problems of the modern world.

Finally, I will quote this paragraph of that text which explains Castell's point of view and the link between globalisation and cultural identities. This scholar also defines what identity is within the Social Sciences and the relationship between cultural aspects and identity. (Castells, 2006, p. 62)

Identity is way of constructing meaning in people's lives at a time when the *raison d'être* of modern States seems to be vanishing. In this respect, people crave much more than just market economics. Indeed, the State can be said to be an agent of globalisation rather than of the people. The reaction to this is an alternative construction of meaning based on identity. At this juncture, it is worth recalling what we mean by identity, given that it is a word that means different things to different people. In the Social Sciences, identity is the process whereby people draw on a cultural attribute to build meaning in their lives.

People create a cultural construct in referring to something that lies beyond them as individuals but which also defines them as such.

In this regard Castells' book *The Power of Identity* is well known, along with the thorough academic and research work carried out by Castells, where we can observe that the relevance of identities, culture and cultural identities in this globalised world is highlighted by this prestigious professor, a reflection that also includes the media.

1.8.4. Cultural identity and cultural proximity.

According to the texts and references presented in previous sections and to the comprehensive work developed in this regard by the scholars mentioned, we can observe the importance of both cultural identity and cultural proximity factors when studying television and its influence. Actually, both concepts are associated to the glocalisation of television formats as we have mentioned earlier, but, moreover, we can say that cultural identity and cultural proximity aspects do highly influence the production and consumption of national, regional and local television programmes. I have also conducted research on these topics for several years, as reflected in the papers presented at international conferences, such as those delivered at Oxford University, UK (Azpeitia, 2012) and at the University of the Basque Country UPV-EHU (Azpeitia, 2016).

Thus, we can state that both aspects are fundamental in television production and consumption and that they determine the preferences of audiences when watching television. It can be observed that viewers seem to prefer national products, due to cultural identity and cultural proximity factors (cf. Moran, 1998; Straubhaar, 1991; Lee, 2000; Trepte, 2008; Straubhaar, (2007); Sigismondi, 2011; Bignell 2013; Chalaby,

2016). Prestigious academic Albert Moran comments on this fact in many of his texts, he indeed notes that:

The fact is that most of the world's television programs are produced and broadcast in national television systems and do not receive international distribution. (...) While the international circulation of television programs is important, nevertheless nationally produced television programs are far more significant for both local producers and local audiences. (Moran, 1998, p. 5).

This scholar presents plenty of information and arguments in this regard, among them, he refers to the study conducted by various researchers in different countries of the world where, having a broad selection of national and international television programmes to watch, the audience shows a preference towards programmes which are produced nationally or, at least, in their national language (Moran, 1998, pp. 5 - 6):

Recently a series of national researchers working independently in countries such as Australia, Brazil, Germany and Quebec have shown that, where national audiences have a choice, they usually prefer television programs produced nationally or in the national language as against imported programs. (Becker and Shoenbeck 1989; de la Garde 1994; Ferguson 1993; Katz and Wedell 1977; Larsen 1990; Moran 1985; and Silj 1988, 1992).

In this respect, I want to underline the importance of the language when referring to cultural identity and cultural proximity aspects as factors that determine the preferences and choices of the audience when selecting the television programmes they watch. Authors who analyse this topic stress this fact, because as Moran comments, taking also into account other academics' reflections, (Moran, 1998, p. 134): 'Language is the most important and most powerful component of national culture' (cf. Heinderyckx, 1994). Moran also comments that audiences value the capacity of a programme to speak in a familiar way and consequently multi-accentual approaches are appreciated by them. As Moran highlights, these aspects are especially relevant as a

means to stress regional identity, and he presents various examples of this type (cf. Moran 1998, pp. 134, 135).

Scholar Sabine Trepte presents similar arguments and conclusions when researching on cultural proximity in TV entertainment. This author refers to European countries and she comments that in general terms national, cultural proximate programmes are preferred by the audiences against international television content (2008, p. 1):

The daily television schedule in European countries is dominated by international, particularly by U.S. fictional programming such as movies and series (Hoskins, McFayden and Finn, 1997). However, ratings of international programs hardly ever surpass those of domestic products (IP, 2004; Servaes and Lie, 2001). It will be argued here that international programs might lack some kind of cultural content the viewers can relate to.

Furthermore, as Trepte asserts (2008, p. 5): ‘cultural proximity has been used to explain the selection and enjoyment of television programs (Hoskins, McFayden and Finn, 1997; Straubhaar, 1991)’. And she adds that: ‘Local programs are more successful and it can be assumed that they possess what is defined as ‘cultural proximity’ (Trepte, 2008, p. 9). In this regard, Straubhaar (2007) highlights the importance of national production in Europe, where, he indicates, data confirmed expectations of increasing the production of national television programmes particularly in prime time, due to the relevance of cultural identity and cultural proximity factors. He notes that:

Theoretically, there seems to be clear evidence for the concept of cultural proximity. In nearly all of the countries that I examined, national production increased over time, and national production was most clearly reflected in each country’s prime-time programming. The placement of national programming in prime time was evidence for a tendency toward cultural proximity because the nationally produced programming was being aired in the times when most people were viewing and when concern over audience satisfaction, whether from institutional sponsors or from advertisers, was the highest. If the most popular

programming went to prime time, then it seems that the most popular programming was national. (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 165)

In the same line, Trepte remarks that: ‘For producers, networks and scholars, it is important to figure out how cultural proximity can be used to predict selective exposure.’(2008, p. 9). This scholar presents interesting information about cultural proximity and its importance regarding television, furthermore, she also reflects about what is understood by this term, and she indicates that (Trepte, 2008, pp. 1-2):

In previous work, the audience’s need for a cultural and historical reference as well as local tastes have been referred to as cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 1991). Although this term is widely used in communication (Adams, 1986; Servaes and Lie, 2001; Zaharopoulos, 1990) and a number of other scholarly fields (Hasty, Bellizi, and Diaz, 1997), we lack a precise definition and suggestions to measure it (Park and Hwang, 2002).

Nevertheless, further on Trepte (2008, p. 5) presents a definition of cultural proximity, which she explains in this paragraph quoted below, where she also refers to what Straubhaar understands by this concept. I would like to bring to the fore this definition, due to the importance of this scholar’s work regarding cultural proximity issues (cf. Straubhaar, 1991, 2007).

The term cultural proximity is basically understood as meaning “originating from the same country or region” (Lee, Yoon and Sohn, 2002; Zaharopoulos, 1990); or defined by phrases such as “the term cultural proximity indicates the way that people recognize themselves in local television” (Torossian, 2003: 1). One of the most cited authors in current articles dealing with cultural proximity is Straubhaar (1991). He brought the term to media effects after it had already been employed as a news factor and used with content analysis (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Following Straubhaar (1991) cultural proximity is a characteristic that is predominately reflected in “national or locally produced material that is closer to and more reinforcing of traditional identities, based in regional, ethnic, dialect/language, religious, and other elements” (Straubhaar, 1991: 51; Straubhaar, Campbell, and Cahoon, 2003).

Straubhaar's work on television and cultural proximity is well known, as is his research on cultural identity. In this following paragraph he refers to the work of professor Manuel Castells to indicate the aspects that define identity, which I would like to highlight. Actually, Castells' studies on this issue are well known and frequently cited (cf. *The Power Of Identity*, 1997/2004/2010). In this regard, I would also want to focus attention on the importance of national and regional, subnational and local cultural identities, as mentioned by Straubhaar in this text (2007, p. 6):

One of the main limits on globalization in media and culture is that relatively few people have a primarily global identity. (...) For most people, however, identity still tends to be based in language, religion, geography, history, ethnicity, collective memory, and political power apparatuses (Castells, 1997). Those elements of identity tend to correspond to smaller, more discrete levels of culture than the global. Many people increasingly have multiple levels of identity, but most are still local, metropolitan, subnational/provincial (like Quebec), or national.

When studying the importance of cultural identity and cultural proximity aspects for the selection and consumption of television programmes by viewers I would also like to mention the reference that Paul S. N. Lee (2000/2002) makes to the importance of the appeal of those products, as well as about its relation to cultural proximity. In fact, as this scholar notes 'On the whole, when local productions have better appeal, people prefer local to foreign. When local productions cannot meet their needs, and foreign productions have better quality and appeal, people will reverse their preference.' (p. 189). Lee explains what appeal means:

Program appeal refers to "the ability of a program to put together elements that satisfy the informational, entertainment and cultural needs of the audience, and to induce consumption." Consumption of cultural products involves cultural tastes which change with time, generations and cultures. As a result of the "changing" nature of cultural tastes, global television must adjust its appeal to

the changing tastes of different cultures at different times. An increase in investment alone is no guarantee for a cultural product's "appeal", "although it is likely to raise its "quality". A good quality product without appeal will fail in the global market. Only products with appeal can succeed –big investment helps but it is not a panacea. (Lee 2000/2002, p. 190)

This scholar also notes that quality plus local appeal is a successful formula for global television, and concludes that cultural proximity and local contents prescribe the relative success of certain channels and local products, compared with other global channels or programmes without local appeal or contents. Hence, Lee states that 'studies on the elements that make global television "appealing" to local audiences are needed to increase our understanding of the flow and consumption of global television in the world market.' (p. 190)

In this regard, and according to all this information, I want to emphasise the fact that cultural aspects as well as cultural identity and cultural proximity factors are indeed associated to the 'appeal' of television programmes. In addition, I find also interesting this academic's reflections about 'quality' and 'appeal', because as he indicates 'Consumers care about programs' "appeal" more than expert-rated "quality" (Lee 2000/2002, p. 189). Lee notes the difficulties to explain what defines the 'quality' of cultural products and indicates that the connection between 'quality' and success is not always straight forward:

The "quality" of cultural products is hard to define because the perception of it varies with cultures. In general, the quality of a television program can be assessed through three aspects, namely, the technical attractiveness of audio-visual images, appeal of story plots and performance of artists. Nevertheless, a good mix of these aspects need not assure audience viewing. There were cases when industry experts or critics rated a film or a program as high-quality, but the film or program failed disastrously. (Lee, 2000/2002, p. 189)

This author indicates that ‘In the discussion of “quality” in cultural products, a distinction should be made between “appeal” and “quality”. Lee remarks that it is true that good quality is likely to go with good appeal, but that it need not be always the case. Hence, this scholar concludes that ‘The common mass may not like high-quality products as defined by industry experts or an elite class. When common masses talk about quality, they refer more to the “appeal” than “quality” of the cultural product.’ (Lee, 2000/2002, p. 189)

In this respect, Lee mentions the case of public television, because, as he notes, although programmes of public broadcasters are often assessed as high quality cultural products, viewers often tend to watch other television programmes rather than those considered as high quality by experts. The audience seem to prefer them because these programmes are found to be more appealing. Due to that, the concept of programme quality seems to be different depending on whether programmes are evaluated by viewers or by experts, a fact that, from my point of view, should be taken into account when identifying and assessing the value of television entertainment.

The evaluation of public television is a case in point. In audience surveys, respondents usually rate public television high in quality, but seldom watch it. On the other hand, they may rate a commercial program average in quality, yet they watch it frequently. Therefore, when the general mass talk about program quality, they are referring to program “appeal” rather than the expert-rated “quality”. (Lee, 2000/2002, p. 190)

Taking all this into consideration, we can conclude that culture, cultural identity and more precisely cultural proximity factors are core elements that influence the production, dissemination and consumption of television programmes. The influence of global and local cultural aspects in this regard is generally acknowledged by academics researching on these issues, academics who also highlight the complexity of the

television scenario at present, as Straubhaar remarks in this paragraph drawn from his interesting book *World Television. From Global to Local* (2007), where he presents thorough information and reflections on these issues.

Television in our world is an increasingly complex system with global, transnational, translocal, national, regional, metropolitan, and local spaces, dynamics, players, and flows. The rapid global extension of economic and technological changes has reframed the possibilities of television around the world. However, the realization of those possibilities is a much more complex historical process, involving the hybridization of various global and local elements and influences over time. What emerges is multiple spaces or levels of television production, flow, and reception, corresponding to multiple levels of culture and identity. (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 1)

In this previous text Straubhaar highlights the complexity of television and the various cultural, global, and local factors that influence the creation of television formats and programmes, their production, distribution and consumption. Nonetheless, in addition, the importance of national cultures and public television in this regard is also noted by Joseph D. Straubhaar in his comments: ‘I argue that national cultures, national markets supported by national governments, and national television networks still dominate the television viewing reality of most audiences’ (2007, p. 7). Moreover, Straubhaar highlights the importance of public broadcasting services, mainly in Europe:

Television is changing, both globally and nationally. The dominance of national public or state broadcasters in most nations has eroded but not disappeared. In particular, Western Europe is making a real effort to hang on to what are often passionately felt to be the benefits of public television.

The importance of public television is generally acknowledged by most scholars who conduct studies on this field and by different sectors of society too, most strongly in Europe. A lot of research has been carried out on this topic, both by academia and by these public entities, pubcasters, because issues related to public television are still

matters of interest and discussion for various reasons. In this regard, the work developed by scholar Petros Iosifidis is most significant, his book *Public Television in the Digital Era. Technological Challenges and New Strategies for Europe* (2007/2012) presents complete and interesting information, including the different cases and types of PTV companies as well as the mission they have and the challenges and dilemmas they deal with. This paragraph quoted below refers to the importance of public television, mainly in Europe, in the same line that we have mentioned earlier:

Public television can play an essential role in safeguarding a pluralist society and meeting its cultural and social needs and it is therefore at centre of the democratic systems. Through its mass research and influence public broadcasting has the capacity both to enrich people's lives as individuals and improve the quality of life in society. In Europe public TV occupies an important part of the television sector. However, in the USA its role and influence is minimal. (Iosifidis, 2017/2012, p. 5)

1.8.5. Proximity and public television: regional, 'proximate', television.

With regard to public television though, and in relation to the last part of this work where I will analyse a specific case, I want to focus now on regional public television. Actually, the importance of these entities regarding the specific characteristics of different cultural communities, as well as in relation to the minority languages spoken in many of them, is essential when defining the framework that will permit the identification of the contributions of television entertainment to public television. This is the case of the television programme I have selected to study and the regional public television where it was produced and broadcast. I am referring to the Basque language, Euskara, which is a minority language, and the Basque Television public channel, Euskal Telebista. I have also worked on this issue in previous years, and

posed some reflections and conclusions in this regard in various academic papers (e.g. Azpeitia, 2012; Azpeitia 2016).

Concerning all these analyses, research developed within academia as well as the numerous reports and studies conducted within different public entities, including the different broadcasting companies, present plenty of information that helps to identify the contributions of television entertainment to public television from several and varied perspectives.

Having said that, and according to the information provided in these previous sections we can observe the importance of cultural, cultural identity and cultural proximity aspects in television. The relevance of public television companies, mainly in Europe, has also be noted, but, furthermore, as said, I would like to underscore the role of the *regional television companies*, or, *television in the regions*, as some academics and professionals prefer to name them. Moreover, prestigious scholars researching on this topic include them as part of a type of television companies that they label under a newly-coined term, namely *proximate television* (Moragas & López, 2000/2002). Academics Moragas and López refer to these different terms and to their meanings. As far as regional television is concerned, they explain that (p. 34):

Another important concept is *regional television* a term widely spread and used in English academic literature on the media, or the preferred term, *television in the regions*. It refers to the television activities of specific and deliberated regional coverage (lower than state-wide and higher than local), both in the geographical and journalistic (contents) sense. In the European recent tradition, “regional television” refers to the off-the-network and minoritarian broadcasts of the regional centers belonging to the national broadcasting corporations.

In addition, they indicate that this term was substituted by the concept of ‘television in the regions’ when referring to certain television companies. It happened

due to the change that took place during the last two decades of the last century, when a considerable amount of independent television channels were launched in different regions of Europe. The term ‘television in the regions’ would be more appropriate to name these entities, due to their specific features. Among them are those autonomic public television channels in Spain, including the public television of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, Euskal Telebista (ETB).

Nonetheless, in the 1980s and the 1990s there has been a proliferation of independent television stations with specific and exclusive regional coverage, which themselves reject the term “regional television” as a description of their activities, because they consider it derogatory. Therefore, the more descriptive “television in the regions” seems to fit better with the wide diversity of experiences in this field, ranging from the urban televisions with regional spill-overs (the case of Barcelona Televisió, Rete 7 in Bologna, Italy, Paris Première in Paris, TLT in Tolouse, France) and the regional centers of the nation-wide stations (France 3, BBC, TVE, RAI, RTP...), to the relatively huge broadcasting corporations of the Spanish regions of Catalonia or Andalusia (with a higher turnover than corporations of some small European countries). (Moragas & López, 2000/2002, pp. 34-35)

Moragas and López also explain the difference between local and regional channels, due to the area they cover but also with regard to the specific historical, cultural, administrative, linguistic and geographic features of those broadcasting companies that operate at a regional level (p. 35).

It is worth pointing out that we make a distinction between the local and the regional levels, according to the empirical situation in Europe. Local television is mainly urban, because it is aimed at and only covers the city in which it works. Television of regional scope covers a wider area, including several cities and its hinterlands, which constitute a “unit” in the administrative, historical, cultural, linguistic and geographic senses, in any combination.

These scholars include explanations about the term ‘proximate television’ in their text (Moragas & Lòpez, 2000/2002, p. 35):

These and other considerations have led us to coin the new (and problematic in its English version) term “proximate television” first used in France (“television de proximité”) in the late 1980s to name the new urban disconnection of the nation-wide public channel France 3. This is probably the main conceptual innovation we propose in our research, and it is aimed at overcoming the contradictions posed by the previous distinction between local and regional, so as to provide the communications policy makers with a new analytical tool.

Moragas and López clarify what is understood by ‘proximity’ regarding television, and highlight the importance of television channels of this kind. Furthermore, they note that these broadcasting companies include in their offer both informative and entertainment programmes and that they are highly demanded by the audiences of smaller communities beyond those of the main geo-political states. Finally, they put into value the cultural role of these television channels among small communities (Moragas & López, 2000/2002, p. 36):

The concept of “proximity” applied to television has to do with the idea that between the station and the recipients a “scene of shared experiences” can exist which, in the end, is reflected in the programming contents. (...) ... the demand for “proximate programs” is not limited to news, but, in a more complex way, spill over into other genres offering different interpretations and perspectives of reality: sports, talk shows, debates and, more recently, even fiction. With the multiplication of channels and the decentralization processes, television begins to be able to do what, until now, only other forms of media (the press, radio) were able to do: to interpret the reality from a set of cultural values shared by a small community.

Professor Carlos Garitaonandia, from the Basque public university, The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), is among the academics that developed early research about regional television in Europe (cf. Garitaonandía, 1993, ‘Regional television in Europe’). In fact this academic and Catalunian professor Miquel de Moragas are the authors of the comprehensive study conducted at the time on ‘Television and the regions in the European Union’ finished in 1994 and fully published

in the volume *Decentralization in the Global Era* (Moragas and Garitaonandía, 1995). A few years later they published the results of further research on this issue, that they entitled 'Proximate television and the information society in the European Union'. According to their explanations this study was carried out by a team of European researchers under the coordination of the Institute of Communications of the UAB (InCom). It was finished in July 1999 and published in late 1999 (*Television on Your Doorstep, Decentralization Experiences in the European Union*, Moragas, Garitaonandía and López, 1999). As Moragas and López explain, both studies were possible thanks to the participation of an extensive team of European experts (Moragas and López, 2000/2002, p. 33). Furthermore, the relevance of these texts is generally acknowledged and mentioned by academics studying this topic. I would indeed underscore the work developed by Garitaonandía, Moragas and López about these matters since then too.

Hence, I have already quoted above some paragraphs drawn from the chapter entitled 'Decentralization Processes and "Proximate Television" in Europe' written by Moragas and López (2000/2002), included in the book *The New Communications Landscape. Demystifying Media Globalization* (Wang, Servaes and Goonasekera (Eds), 2000/2002) a text that, according to the authors' explanations also incorporates some of the main conclusions of the previous studies above mentioned. Due to that, I will further on include more statements that can be found in that chapter.

Among the numerous and diverse cases that academics studying these issues present, I would like to focus on those companies which are public and, in addition, respond to the needs of the so called nations without states, that is to say, regions that have strong cultural identities and even their own language, as is the case of the Basque Public Television, Euskal Telebista, and the Basque Country. In fact, scholars who have

developed research on this topic highlight the importance of these public entities as a means to fulfil the specific cultural needs, and rights of these communities.

Colin Sparks is amongst those academics who mention the importance of these old regions, and mainly those with their own language, regarding regional broadcasting (2000/2002, p. 89). He notes that ‘The trend towards the regionalization of broadcasting was very marked in the 1970s and 1980s’, and comments on the fact that ‘the most successful attempts to construct local and regional broadcasting seem to have been those that rely on the most strongly marked of the old regions’. In this regard, Sparks also underlines the importance of specific differences, and mainly of those related to language, when he states that ‘The greater the degree of regional difference, particularly in language, the easier it seems to be to construct a viable broadcaster’. This scholar refers to Garitaonandia’s study of the regional dimensions of broadcasting in Europe and quotes this paragraph below which mentions the Spanish television autonomous channels that existed at the time, among which the Basque Public Television company, Euskal Telebista, was a pioneer, highlighting their importance:

It would appear, then, that the autonomous regional television stations (except for those in the German *Länder*, or those in multilingual countries) are really exceptional in Europe. Thus, the establishment of the six Spanish autonomous television networks since 1983 has been a landmark in the regionalization of European television ... It is likely that only regional television which is based on actual regional communities (which could either be within the bounds of a nation or a tranfrontier region) with either economic interests and particular cultures and traditions, will remain and will be able to compete with the growing number of TV channels in the future. (Garitaonandia, 1993, p. 290)

Academics Moragas and López (2000/2002) also mention these specific television channels and they refer to their particular features when they comment:

... the case of some European regions with a strong identity which claim the title of “historical nationalities” and promote new models of TV stations more relevant to the nation-states than to the old “regional television” model (these would be the Spanish cases, for instance, of Televisió de Catalunya in Catalonia and Euskal Telebista in the Basque Country). (p. 35)

Hence, these scholars underscore the importance of this type of ‘proximate’ public television channels, which due to their specificity have great support from their communities and governments, either national, regional or autonomous, as is the case of the Basque Public Television, Euskal Telebista (ETB), and the Catalanian TV3, which are mentioned in this paragraph below (Moragas and López, 2000/2002, p. 37):

In fact, the “proximate television” projects which are more competitive, those which reach a cultural and communicative presence that is more influential, even in terms of audience, have been produced in those regions which enjoy powerful supports –political and social- to their autonomy and specially in those communities that can be called, not without internal and external conflicts, “nation without states”, as Wales (2.8 million habitants), Scotland (5 million), Catalonia (6 million) or the Basque Country (2.5 million).

They also argue that ‘from the market point of view, the existence of a real demand (and a growing one) for “proximate television” is clearly documented in the majority of the researched countries’ and they note the good performance of the Spanish regional/autonomic channels, especially ‘taking into account that they don’t cover the entire Spanish territory and that this has happened in a period of consolidation of private and satellite television’ as they note (Moragas and López, 2000/2002, p. 43).

Colin Sparks also focuses on this idea and, in this regard, he presents the cases of the United Kingdom, that is to say the S4C television channel, in Wales, and the TV station that broadcast in Gaelic language in Scotland, as broadcasters that are supported by the state. Spark remarks that this public support responds to the need to fulfil the

cultural needs of those communities that have their own specific cultural identity, which includes a minority language (Sparks, 2000/2002, p. 89):

It is in the “old” kinds of regions that the development of a robust broadcasting system seems viable. As it happens, however, many of these old regions are also nations without states, which at least an identifiable body of opinion thinks should acquire states. In other words, it may be that the construction of these broadcasting systems is correlated not with an erosion of the state, but with a move to redefine and re-divide the existing state system into a new one that has greater legitimacy amongst the population. A number of these new broadcasters, notably S4C in Wales and the Gaelic Broadcasting Trust in Scotland, are not economically viable on their own. They only exist because they are supported by the state. (...) The production of news and current affairs, not to mention programs like the very popular soap-opera *Pobol I Cwm*, are possible because the high cost of sustaining broadcasting in a lesser-used language are borne, quite rightly since they should have equal cultural rights with other citizens, by the state of which speakers of that language are members (Sparks, 1996).

Authors researching on these topics also mention the importance of this type of channels in the new digital scenario, as Moragas and López, (2000/2002, p. 47) comment:

In this new “ecology” of communication, contrary to the first forecasts, the demand of “proximate” communication is manifested as an emergent demand, not marginal, and especially competitive with the offers and programs of the national and international channels each time moving further from the immediate experience of the viewers.

Consequently, we can say that the comprehensive studies conducted by the authors mentioned in this section about regional, ‘proximate’, television in Europe show the diversity of this type of television channels, as well as the different roles they play, depending on the specific features of each television station and of the particular region where they broadcast. It can also be observed the relevance of those pubcasters of this kind that belong to communities which are considered as ‘old regions’, with very strong

cultural differences and even their own language, which in most cases is indeed a non-hegemonic, minority language. Their cultural role and importance for those specific communities is hence acknowledged by scholars who have developed research on this topic. That is the case of the autonomous public television channels in Spain and, more precisely, of those autonomous communities with their own language, such as the Basque Autonomous Community and its public television company, namely, Euskal Telebista.

In this regard, it is also worth taking into account the information provided by various public entities, among which I would mention the studies conducted and the reports published by CIRCOM, the European Association of Regional Television. The report entitled *The importance of regional public service media. A strategic view of the role of regional public media in Europe*, published in November 2014, presents the results of broad analysis about this topic. Likewise, the work developed by The European Audiovisual Observatory, which was created at the end of last century (1992) ‘to collect and distribute information about the audiovisual industries in Europe’ is also relevant. <https://www.obs.coe.int/en/web/observatoire/about>

I will now quote some parts of the document of CIRCOM just mentioned as it presents interesting information regarding the significance of public regional media, which obviously includes television. The information and reflections shown in this text gather relevant ideas in this regard, some of which are summarised in this paragraph:

Indeed there is a need for strong independent public service media on both regional level. Regional public media is important, distinctive and increasingly relevant, because it provides for the many different regional socio-cultural and economic geographical areas in the members states of Europe. It connects people, informs them on issues in the regions, encourages discussion and participation, and is essential for the democratic functioning of local and regional communities. Regional public service media also celebrates, protects

and even reinforces regional identity and languages. In the ever-changing climate of media, the regional public service media are helping the audience find a way through the mass of information available to them. The programmes should be everywhere accessible to everyone on every device. (Circom, 2014, p. 9)

These core ideas are developed throughout this complete document from which I have selected some statements that I understand present interesting perspectives regarding the role of this type of public company. Among them are those that refer to the contributions of public regional media to culture (Circom, 2014, pp. 9-10). I point out here a few from the list they sketch out:

- Regional public service media support traditional cultural activities, and gives coverage and value to the aspects of local life that our audiences cherish.
- Regional public service media employ staff who know the region in detail, and their knowledge informs coverage.
- Regional and local public service media ensure that each part of a region feels represented because we have a commitment to portrayal and diversity. The audience knows that the programmes are about them and for them.
- Regional public service media helps develop a sense of identity, and often supports broadcasts in second and minority languages. We also support a wide range of cultural activity, including dance, music and sport.
- Other broadcasters don't usually have the same level of commitment to portrayal diversity, because it's often not part of their core remit.
- We give recognition and a degree of protection to marginalized communities as a result, which fosters local and regional identity, and community cohesion.

At the same time as highlighting the significance of public regional media services in Europe, this report by Circom also asks for recognition in different fields, aspects which are, indeed, closely associated to the fulfilment of the role and missions of these entities detailed above, and to the acknowledgment of the relevance of their

function as well as their contribution to society, and more specifically to those regional communities they work for and belong to. (Circom, 2014, p. 10)

- We want recognition for local and regional service media at the highest levels of European institutions, and in legislation. (...)
- We want to be recognised as an important, relevant part of all media across all platforms because in some cases we are under threat.
- We want public service regional media to be recognised in all legislation and agreements between public service media and governments where possible.
- We want to establish a true and accurate picture of the scale and relevance of our operation, which is often poorly reflected in all kinds of information and data bases.
- We want to demonstrate the importance of the service provided by local and regional media to our audiences

Finally, I would also like to point out that the authors of this report acknowledge the impact that the work of these public regional media entities has in the creative industries sector, as supporters of this activity and as a source of professional talent and skills in this field. In this regard they also comment that (Circom, 2014, p. 10):

- We create jobs and opportunities in the regions, develop talent and foster community activity.
- We work with colleges and universities to develop skills and media literacy, and foster intellectual debate by creating the environment for everyone to participate, learn and develop.

In addition to this document that I have just referred to, I would like to mention the report *Snapshot: Regional and local television in Spain*, published by this public organisation in 2015 (Deirdre K., 2015), because it presents comprehensive information about the various existing channels of this kind in Spain, among which is the Basque Television, Euskal Telebista. Furthermore, in relation to this topic and more precisely to the case of study of the last part of this work, the information that FORTA, the Federation of Autonomic Radio and Television Companies of Spain, provides should be

born in mind. Hence, Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB), the Basque radio and Television public company, belongs to this association (cf. <http://www.forta.es/>). EITB is also integrated in the earlier mentioned European entity Circom.

In this regard, the study conducted by the international consultant company Accenture reflected on the report written for FORTA, entitled *Informe sobre el papel de la Television Pública Autonómica en España* (Accenture, 2012), includes interesting information about the autonomic public television in Spain, the functions and mission these companies have, their role in society and their contributions in different fields. Among them, they comment that the origin of these public entities, of which the Basque Public Television, Euskal Telebista, was pioneer, in 1982, is associated with the objective to promote and disseminate the culture, traditions, language as well as the social and institutional reality of the community, offering a public service of proximity. The function of these public televisions as means to promote the audio-visual industry and innovation in that field is also pointed out in this report (Accenture, 2012, p. 13).

Las TPAs nacen y empiezan a emitir con el objetivo de difundir y promover la cultura, las tradiciones, la lengua propia y la realidad social e institucional de la comunidad, ofreciendo un servicio público de proximidad. Junto con ello, las TPAs asumen un papel fundamental como motores de la industria audiovisual de la autonomía y de la innovación audiovisual en el conjunto del país.

Hence, this document highlights the role of these public autonomic television companies in different areas, underscoring their objectives and achievements in this regard. Their function as a public service that fosters the Autonomous Communities and their social cohesion as well as their contribution to the development and innovation of the audio-visual industry are underlined (Accenture, 2012, p. 13): ‘Servicio Público - Dinamizador de las autonomías - Vertebrador Social - Motor de la industria audiovisual

- Innovación'. They stress the importance of the public service function and, as such, the need to respond to the demands of information, culture, education and entertainment of society as well as to disseminate their cultural identity, to promote pluralism, participation and other constitutional values, guaranteeing the access of all significant social groups to this media. Furthermore, the fact that public television should propose different manners, and not only one, to show social reality is also pointed out in this report (Accenture, 2012, p. 14).

La función de servicio público exige satisfacer las demandas de información, cultura, educación y entretenimiento de la sociedad; difundir su identidad cultural; promover el pluralismo, la participación y los demás valores constitucionales, garantizando el acceso al medio de todos los grupos sociales significativos. La Televisión Pública debe distinguirse por proponer diversas maneras, y no solo una, de mostrar la realidad social. ...

With respect to the role of public autonomic television companies in Spain, their position to boost and revitalise, whether inside or outside, the culture of a territory and consequently to promote and disseminate their own cultural reality, their cultural heritage and their own language, are put forward in this text, too. They highlight the fact that the final objective of autonomic television programming is to promote social cohesion and the feeling of territorial belonging (Accenture, 2012, p. 15).

La dinamización cultural del territorio se incluye dentro de las funciones de servicio público e incluye la difusión, tanto en el interior como en el exterior de la Comunidad, de tres elementos culturales básicos: La realidad cultural propia del territorio; El patrimonio cultural y social en el territorio; La lengua propia o el habla característica de la región. El objetivo último de la programación autonómica es el fomento de la cohesión social y la pertenencia territorial.

In addition, the opportunity that these companies provide to produce distinctive cultural content and to engage the audience is taken into account. Likewise, according

to this report, the fact that they act as a loudspeaker for local cultural and social events making them visible to many more people when they are covered, in different ways, by these public television companies, is also a significant characteristic of these audio-visual regional public media (Accenture, 2012, p. 16).

Las TPAs nos brindan la oportunidad de: Producir contenidos culturales distintivos de interés público y captar audiencia; Contribuir a su función de servicio público a través de la contribución a la conservación de la cultura territorial y el fomento de la identidad comunitaria; Promocionar la comunidad en el exterior (turismo). Las TPAs ejercen de altavoz de los acontecimientos culturales y sociales locales gracias a la cobertura mediática que les proporcionan.

The aspects related to the promotion and dissemination of the cultural specificities and the cultural identity of each territory are pointed out in various parts of this report, and among them the essential role that these public television companies play regarding the normalisation/standardisation, promotion and dissemination of the languages of those communities is particularly stressed. Likewise, the importance of the specificities of the way those languages are used in each community is noted, commenting that it fosters a sense of identification and proximity (Accenture, 2012, p. 17).

El uso de la lengua cooficial en las TPAs es esencial para la normalización lingüística, y representa una extensión necesaria y natural de su uso social más amplio. Las TPAs son uno de los instrumentos más potentes para potenciar el uso de las lenguas cooficiales. Todo ello, sin olvidar el habla característica de cada comunidad, que impulsa igualmente un sentimiento de identificación y mayor proximidad.

Along with all these aspects the contribution of these public autonomic television companies to the audio-visual sector and to innovation in this field are also pointed out among their functions. In fact, the final conclusions presented in this report, regarding the role these companies have and their contributions to different fields,

include and summarise the points outlined above, as well as the arguments presented earlier. Hence, they conclude that public regional television in Spain is an essential and unique, irreplaceable, public service, mirror and loudspeaker of social, cultural, linguistic and institutional reality of the Autonomous Communities, which provides the essential visibility required within the constitutional model of the country.

Furthermore, they indicate that public autonomic television fosters these communities and helps to bring closer the cultural and social reality of each Autonomous Community to their citizens, which helps foster social cohesion and a feeling of belonging, which contributes to achieve better coexistence within and among different communities. Likewise, the fact that these companies are the driving force of the audio-visual sector and of innovation is highlighted, and their significant contribution to the development of this industry is acknowledged too. These arguments are posited in this paragraph (Accenture, 2012, p. 33):

Un servicio público fundamental e insustituible..., espejo y altavoz de la realidad social, cultural, lingüística e institucional de las Comunidades Autónomas, que aporta la visibilidad esencial requerida en el modelo constitucional del país. (...) Un dinamizador autonómico y por ende del país..., que acerca la realidad cultural y social de cada Comunidad al ciudadano, y eso significa vertebración y sentimiento de pertenencia, y por tanto, incrementa el nivel y calidad de convivencia de nuestras comunidades. (...) Un motor de la industria audiovisual y de la innovación..., contribuyendo significativamente al crecimiento de la industria audiovisual ...

All these aspects were indeed brought to the fore by the president of the above mentioned public institution, FORTA, at that time, when presenting the commented report, who also stressed the fact that the origin and the existence of these regional public television companies in Spain respond to a social demand. (FORTA, NP, 2012)

Pablo Carrasco, subrayó que las televisiones públicas son “necesarias e insustituibles” porque son un servicio público originado en una demanda social, son esenciales para la dinamización de sus territorios de influencia, vertebradoras de la sociedad, grandes impulsoras de la industria audiovisual autonómica y nacional, y están a la vanguardia en innovación y talento. (FORTA, NP, 2012, p. 2)

These points are also underlined in the different information, reports and events unveiled and arranged within the so called ‘Lo Veo’ initiative that has been recently created by FORTA to promote and highlight the significant role that the audio-visual autonomic public services play in Spain. (cf. FORTA, NP, 2017; <http://www.lo-veo.com/>;))

Among them I would mention the conference event that was held in the headquarters of EITB – Euskal Irrati Telebista- the public broadcasting corporation of the Basque Country, in Bilbao, in April 2018, ‘La transformación digital en los servicios públicos autonómicos’, where the president of FORTA and the general managing directors of different Autonomous Public Television companies of Spain that are part of this organisation informed and reflected on the situation, the role, the objectives and the achievements, as well as on the threats and opportunities, of these companies in the current scenario. The main points that we have commented on in this section were also addressed by these executives during that conference. (www.eitb.tv/es/video/-/6102/145878/-/)

In addition, numerous academic articles that analyse different aspects of regional television in Spain have been published in recent years. The thorough report written recently by various scholars of the University of Santiago de Compostela, in association with FORTA, about the current landscape and trends of the public radio-television in Europe, in 2018, also refer to them (Campos Freire et al, 2018).

For the purpose of the second part of this work, I want to highlight those papers that refer to or focus on the case of the Basque Country and the Basque Public Television, Euskal Telebista. It has to be said that academics of the Basque Country have conducted and published interesting research in this regard, analysing various topics and from various perspectives. (e.g. Amézaga, 2006, 2007, 2011; Amézaga & Arana, 2012; Amezaga, Arana, Narbaiza and Azpillaga, 2013; Arana, Amezaga and Azpillaga (2006); Arana, Amézaga & Azpillaga, 2014; Arana, Azpillaga & Narbaiza, 2003; Arana, Azpillaga and Narvaiza, 2007; Artero, Orive & Latorre, 2015; Casado Del Río, Guimerà i Orts & Miguel De Bustos, 2016; Casado, Peñafiel, Fernández de Arroyabe & Gómez, 2008; Garitaonandia & Casado, 2007; López & Corominas, 1995; Pavón & Zuberogoitia, 2013; Zabaleta, Xamardo, Gutierrez, Urrutia and Fernández, 2010; Zallo, 2006).

Nevertheless, I want also note that hardly any studies that focus on entertainment programmes, and more specifically on those produced and broadcast in Basque language, have been carried out, let alone research about the contributions of Basque television entertainment to Basque public television. In addition, it has to be said that, although Euskal Telebista is one of the autonomic television channels of Spain, in general terms research on television or television entertainment in that country does not include the cases of television programmes broadcast in Basque language (cf. Sangro and Salgado, 2008; Guerrero, 2010, 2013; Toledo, 2012), probably due to the difficulty in understanding them. Actually, the Basque language, Euskara, is a minority language and completely different from other languages spoken in the different regions of Spain, and in the rest of the world. Consequently, we can say that the academic analysis of these programmes in particular is limited to that conducted by Basque scholars.

Furthermore, the scope of divulgation of that knowledge, if done, in this non hegemonic language is limited to the Basques (around one million people can understand this minority language all over the world), which entails difficulties in spreading the knowledge about Basque language television, and in including this information in broader research work. It has to be said, though, that many academics from the various universities of the Basque Country do publish their work in other languages. In this regard, and for the purpose of this work, I have mentioned earlier some of them which have been written in English and present interesting information about various issues that we have dealt with throughout this work but, as said, focusing on the case of the Basque Country and the Basque Television, Euskal Telebista. In this regard, those documents published by other public entities, such as the Basque Government, in which collaboration of some academics has taken place, are worth mentioning too (e.g. *Basque Plan For Culture*, 2005).

1.8.6. Creative cultural industries.

In these previous sections we have referred to the cultural aspects of television as well as to its industrial and economic side. In fact, television is part of the cultural industries, a field that despite having been often mentioned since the beginning of studies on mass communication, is now being approached from new perspectives in recent years. (cf. Davies & Sigthorsson, 2013; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Jones & Thornton, 2005; Oakley & O'Connor, 2015). Joseph D. Straubhaar highlights the centrality of cultural industries in the current society and notes the relevance of television among them.

Television continues to be the main source of news and entertainment for most people in the world. Hesmondalgh (in press) noted that cultural industries are still central to our lives because they create the media texts that influence our understanding of the world. And, for most people in most countries, television remains the central element in their consumption of the cultural industries. A television set (or a better television set) is the main consumer priority for most people in the developing world (and still a high priority elsewhere, as large recent spending on digital high-definition television sets in the richer countries also shows). (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 1)

Hence, at present, television is clearly part of the cultural industries but we can say that, more precisely, it is classified within the so called creative cultural industries (cf. UKTI, 2014; EY 2015; OMC 2018). I want to highlight that this classification acknowledges three main features of this medium, namely the creative, the cultural and the industrial aspects of television, three factors which are indeed associated to the entertainment genre. We could say that the analysis on these three areas is also essential for a comprehensive understanding of the value of television entertainment. These aspects are indeed analysed and valued by commercial television companies, and a great amount of professional analysis is constantly conducted in this regard. An enormous amount of industry reports are published periodically, which show the development of this business, its implications in the economy and its evolution.

In relation to public television we can observe that these three aspects are also regarded as essential, and are presented as such within their objectives in most cases. The role of public television as a means to disseminate culture, to boost creativity and to support and develop the industry is nowadays generally admitted by this type of entity. We have also mentioned that the entertainment function of these public service companies is also valued by them. The keynote address delivered at the Royal Television Society's (RTS) annual event in September 2017, by the Culture Secretary of the British Government, Karen Bradley, refers to some of these aspects, and it

highlights the importance of UK's PBS as part of the cultural industries. Furthermore, she stresses its cultural role and the need to represent different communities, as well as to bear in mind the various nations and regions of the United Kingdom.

I take a deep interest in the entire industry, of course, but I have a particular responsibility to make sure that public service television is serving the entire public. It is precisely because British TV is so important and so good – indeed peerless throughout the world – that I want it to reach everyone. The success of our television industry cannot only be measured by how widely it is watched. We know that we score extremely highly on that metric. This is indeed a world of opportunity for UK television. Television's success must also be measured by how well different communities are represented on and off screen, by differences in pay, and by whether the industry is flourishing in every part of our nations and regions. British television is strong because it is diverse – and will become stronger still the more diverse it becomes – which in turn will allow it to thrive internationally. TV provides role models and help drive change in society. (Bradley, 2017)

Alongside other interesting reports related to this topic (e.g. UKTI, 2014; EY 2015) the document entitled *The Role of Public Policies in Developing Entrepreneurial and Innovation Potential of The Cultural and Creative Sectors* recently published by the European Union (January, 2018), highlights the importance of the Cultural and Creative industries at present. This document is in fact a report of the OMC (Open Method of Coordination) Working Group of Member States' Experts, as part of the *European Agenda for Culture*, and more precisely of the *Work Plan for Culture* for the period 2015-2018. The very first paragraph of the Introduction section of this report encapsulates the significance of these sectors in various fields, some of which we have also underscored here.

Among them, the influence and importance of the cultural and creative industries in the evolution and changes of societies, their role as part of the creative

economy and their impact in the economic field in general, their contributions to cultural identities and values, as well as their effects in innovation and in the value chain of most products and services are mentioned in this text (OMC, 2018, p. 11).

The cultural and creative sectors have an important role to play in the continuous transition of our societies, and are at the heart of the creative economy. Knowledge-intensive and based on individual creativity and talent, they generate considerable economic wealth and form European identity, culture and values. They show above-average growth and create jobs - particularly for young people - while strengthening social cohesion. They are at the forefront of innovation and are also at the origin of spillovers to other sectors, as well as to society at large. With the emergence of more and more complex and intertwined values chains and business models, the cultural and creative sectors are increasingly becoming a decisive component in the value chain of almost every product and service.

1.8.7. The industry: professional research.

Having said that, I want finally to mention the great amount of research developed within the industry about television and television entertainment in particular. In fact, we have already referred to the importance of the television industry and the influence of this business sector in economics as well as in other fields of society. Due to that, a great amount of industry, professional, research is developed, and both quantitative and qualitative approaches are taken when analysing various aspects of this activity. Moreover, analyses and reports in the various areas identified by academics who study television are also conducted within the professional sector.

Therefore, we can observe that many of the areas of research academia focuses on are also the objective of analysis of many industry reports. In many cases they have more resources and bigger budgets to conduct those various analyses than universities do (cf. Vilches, 1996, p. 30). In addition, we could say that observatory, action and

experimental research are all part of the television industry's activity per se. The amount and the scope of this research, as well as their relevance for a complete analysis of television, and television entertainment in particular, lead us to conclude that these reports should also be taken into consideration for the understanding of the influence and the contributions of television entertainment in the different fields and areas of society. Among them I would mention the analyses conducted, and reports delivered by certain companies which in many cases work worldwide, such as Ampere, ACT (*Association of Commercial Television in Europe*), EAO (*European Audiovisual Observatory*), Ericsson, Informatv, HIS, Iris, Nielsen, Ooyala, Parrot, Pwc, Sony, etc. Likewise, the numerous and varied reports and whitepapers published by international TV markets such as MipCOM, MipTV in Europe and the NATPE in the United States provide interesting information in this regard. The great amount of news and articles regularly published in specialist magazines, most of which are also distributed online, should also be taken into account in this regard (e.g. *Broadcast.uk*, *C21*, *Variety*, *Promaxbda*, etc).

These professional, industry reports cover most various fields related to television activity and business. The impact and value of this medium in different areas is deeply analysed, as these studies comprise such diverse areas as technical developments, content, audiences, economics and social impact among others. Needless to say, the great amount of this type of documents includes an enormous quantity of interesting information and data. I have analysed a great deal of these reports as part of this research work, whose reference details are included in the list provided at the end of this PhD dissertation (i.e. ACT (2016); ACT (2016); Amdocs (2019); Best of Brief (June 2016); Bisson, Guy (2016); Bisson, Guy (2017); Bisson, Guy (2019); Bisson, Guy, Erica Stanford and Alan Wilson (2019); Blakley, Johanna, Erica Watson-Currie,

Hee-Sung Shin, Laurie Trotta Valenti, Camille Saucier and Heidi Boisvert (2019); Blockgraph (2019); Broadcast (2015); Broadcast (2019); Broadcast International (2017); Broadcast International (2019); BroadcastIntelligence (2018); Broughton, Jonathan (2018); Cassi, Amandine (2011); Deloitte (2013); Deloitte (2018); EIKEN Basque Audiovisual (2001); Ericsson (2016); EY (2013); EY (2015); Fontaine, Gilles (2016); Freewheel (2018a); Freewheel (2018b); Freewheel (2018c); Freewheel (2018d); Freewheel (2019a); Freewheel (2019b); FWCE (2018); FWCouncil (2017); Hegedus, Kayla (2016a); Hegedus, Kayla (2016b); IHS Markit (2018); IHS Markit (2019); Kalisch, Anne and Henner Herwig Jürgens (2016); Lee, Paul & Duncan Stewart (2014); Liberty Global (2016); Mip (2018); Miptv. Mipcom (2019a); Miptv.Mipcom (2019b); Neef, Andreas, Willi Schroll, & Sven Hirsch, (2016); Nielsen (2015); Ooyala (2016a); Ooyala (2016b); Ooyala (2016c); Ooyala (2018); Parrot Analytics (2019); Parrot Analytics (2018a); Parrot Analytics (2018b); Parrot Analytics (2018c); Parrot Analytics (2018d); Prensario (2019); PWC (2016); Siglin, Tim (2017); The wit (2014); Tran, Kevin and Andrew Wallenstein (2019); UKTI (2014); van Eeden, Ennèl and Wilson Chow (2018); Wagner, Michael (2016); Wang, Ying, Jeremy Scher, Kimberly Goughnour and Miruna Dogaru (2017); Westcott, Tim (2016); Westcott, Tim, Kia Ling Teoh, Matteo Marchello (2016).

Having said that, I would like to quote here some statements by media professional and consultant Dr. William Cooper, taken from a report he wrote reflecting the conclusions of the study he conducted to research on the reasons why we watch television, published by the companies Informatv and Sony (Cooper, 2015). In that text he presents some conclusions that I find indeed interesting, as a result of which I have mentioned some of them in different parts of this essay. Furthermore, a lot of them are in line with much of the information, reflections and conclusions presented in this my

research work regarding the positive perspectives of television and the analysis of its contributions, as can be observed in these statements that I quote here:

More recent industry research has attempted to understand why we watch television. One study offers six reasons based on different need states (Thinkbox, 2013). Thinkbox. *Screen Life: TV in demand*, Published in 2013 1) Unwind: defer life's chores or de-stress from the pressures of the day. 2) Comfort: shared family time; togetherness, rituals, familiarity and routine. 3) Connect: a sense of 'plugging in' –to feel a sense of connection to society, to time or to place. 4) Experience: a need for fun and sense of occasion to be shared. 5) Escape: the desire to be taken on an enjoyable journey to another time and place. 6) Indulge: satisfying your (typically guilty) pleasures with personal favourites, usually alone. The research suggests that when a particular need is satisfied viewers become relaxed. (Cooper, 2015, p. 21)

Television is sometimes portrayed as a passive experience, but viewing video is actually and active cognitive process that engages the mind at many levels. (Cooper, 2015, p. 31)

Television programming remains an important part of our lives, however much we watch. We shouldn't underestimate the social and emotional importance of television. Traditional television fulfils our basic need for company, social connection and participation in a shared experience. It talks to us, tells us stories, and gives us something to talk about. (Cooper, 2015, p. 41)

We all have different reasons to watch television. (...) We only have to look at the many types of programmes we watch to see that television addresses distinct emotional and social needs. (...) As individuals we value a sense of connection and community through our viewing experiences. We also want to feel valued as individual viewers, to feel that television is there for us. We want to be comforted by familiar faces and voices. We enjoy regular routines and anticipating variations on experiences that we previously enjoyed. (Cooper, 2015, p. 43)

Television does more than inform, educate and entertain. It contributes to our sense of self and social connection. (Cooper, 2015, p. 20)

Taking all this into consideration we can conclude that, at present, there are many different perspectives to analyse the value of television entertainment. In addition, it can be observed that there is an enormous amount of information both in the academic as well in the professional and industrial fields in this regard. We have also noted that

the need of mixed and multidisciplinary research is acknowledged by prestigious academics of television studies and, finally, I would also add that, in my opinion, a mixture of academic and professional research is fundamental for a complete analysis of this topic. From my point of view a mixed approach that enables the combination of both types of studies, that is to say academic and professional, industry research would be not just ideal but essential for a comprehensive analysis and assessment of television entertainment, its effects, impact, contributions and value.

As a consequence, we can affirm that the parameters which can be taken into account to define the framework for this type of analysis are indeed numerous. Due to that, I have narrowed the scope of analysis for the second part of this research work, where I have taken a specific television entertainment programme as a case study and I have focused on various aspects among the above mentioned so as to identify the contributions of this programme to the public television it belongs to. To do so, I have taken into account the mission and objectives of this public television and I have analysed the selected programme to identify the elements that contribute to the fulfilment of them from three perspectives: content, production/management and audience/reception.

More precisely I have focused on one of the core aims of the Basque Public Television (Euskal Telebista), namely the promotion and dissemination of Basque Culture and Basque Language. In this respect I will therefore take a cultural perspective to identify the contributions of this entertainment programme to this public television and, as a consequence, to Basque society. However, having said that, I have to point out that the various perspectives, reflections, topics and issues, that is to say, the information presented in this first part, will be essential to the research developed and the conclusions drawn in the second one.

1.9. Television entertainment: definition.

1.9.1. Entertainment.

Television entertainment being a core issue of this work, I understand it is central to explain what television entertainment is, and for that I will start defining the term ‘entertainment’ as such. Consequently, I will further on try to bring some insight about what is understood by this term. Hence, we all probably have different opinions about entertainment, and the perspective of what it is, it entails and implies, as well as its significance, is indeed different for each one of us.

Nirvana’s most popular song - *Smells Like Teen Spirit* - asks repeatedly in its lyrics ‘entertain us!’, but that claim is surely interpreted differently by the members of that popular rock band, and also by different people who have listened to that song all over the world. In fact, the idea of what entertainment is can be really subjective, as different things entertain different people and that which can be understood as entertainment and entertaining for some of them is not thought as such by others. Entertainment has different cultural meanings too. In addition, I would say that beyond subjective feelings and perspectives both objective approaches and definitions of entertainment are needed for an adequate understanding of this concept, mainly from an academic point of view.

1.9.1.1. Entertainment: definition.

When looking for a definition of ‘entertainment’ I will take into account *The Entertainment Manifesto*, published by the Norman Lear Center (2016), as part of The

Entertainment Initiative they have developed, as mentioned in previous sections. In this text they explain that (p. 3):

The *Oxford English Dictionary* locates the appearance of its modern meaning – “the action of occupying attention agreeably; that which affords interest or amusement; esp. a public performance of a varied character”- in 1612, citing Shakespeare. But entertainment is at least as old as the singers of the *Iliad* and *Gilgamesh*, and arguably older than the cave paintings of Lascaux and the children’s games of the Ice Age. Our species is *Homo Ludens*, the creatures who play. Evolutionary biologists say we have a “meme” for it, a kind of cultural gene for enjoying time. Entertainment means *not boring*. It is the ability to hang on to our attention; *tenir* in its etymology means “to hold.”

The text of this *manifesto* includes other interesting statements regarding television entertainment, and similar ideas are also expressed by researchers of The Norman Lear Center (cf. Blakley, 2001), as well by the director of this entity, Martin Kaplan, in their speeches and writings. I have chosen some fragments of the keynote address delivered by this prestigious academic at Soap Summit VI, on October 26, 2001 in Santa Mónica, California (Kaplan, 2001). In the text quoted below, he refers to the definition of entertainment given by the Norman Lear Center, noting that the members of this institution deal with a broad definition of the term, beyond distinctions between high and low culture and, therefore ‘high and low entertainment’, issues that we have reflected on throughout this work. In this regard, Kaplan defends that: ‘The idea of entertainment belongs as much to popular culture as it does to high culture. What Charles Dickens did to hold his audience is different from what MTV does, but both have the same intent.’, and presents his arguments about this matter (Kaplan, 2001, p. 4).

It’s probably worth answering the question “what is entertainment?” In our view, we define it extremely broadly. Some people draw a distinction between high and low. In our view, the relations between high and low within the

entertainment world bring things closer together rather than separating them. It's more interesting to think that Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Verdi's *Aida*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, for example, share something in common with *Port Charles*, *The Bold And The Beautiful*, and *Days Of Our Lives*. Thinking of these diverse styles of storytelling together in one continuum is much more illuminating than to think about them separately. So, one thing we do when we think about entertainment is to range across all vehicles of entertainment. (2001, pp. 2-3)

The reflection that Kaplan offers regarding the scope that entertainment covers nowadays is indeed interesting, too. He indicates that the sphere of entertainment has greatly expanded in recent decades, covering nowadays most of the fields of contemporary life (2001, p. 3):

There is another development or permutation we observe which has become more important and more relevant in recent years. Entertainment used to be thought of as this realm *over there*. *Over here* were other realms of contemporary life. *Here* is politics. *Here* is news. *Here* is education. *Here* is religion. *Here* is commerce. *Here* are museums and so on. Our notion is that over the last 20, 30, 40 years the sphere that you might have identified as entertainment has expanded. Now there is virtually no other sphere in contemporary life that is not affected by the imperatives of entertainment. The need to grab and hold attention, which is what entertainment has to do if it is successful, is also what a professor in front of a classroom has to do, what a retailer has to do, what a politician has to do, what a journalist has to do, what someone in the pulpit has to do, what the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao has to do. In some sense this necessity to grab and hold attention has conquered and shaped, for better or worse, every other realm of contemporary society.

Alongside his reflections about what entertainment is, in addition to the considerations regarding 'high and low entertainment' and besides his explanations about the actual scope of influence of entertainment, the issue that Kaplan and his colleagues in the Norman Lear Center also look at is the question about how entertainment entertains. They link the wish and need to be entertained with the concept

of *homo ludens*, brought forward by sociologist Huizinga during the Second World War, as Kaplan explained in his speech (Kaplan, 2001, p. 4):

However much we may cherish our reason, the way in which entertainment entertains depends centrally on who we are as physical creatures. When the Nazis occupied Holland during World War II, an amazing Dutch sociologist named Johan Huizinga wrote his masterwork, *Homo Ludens*. Imagine writing a book in the midst of Nazi occupation on the subject of play. He theorized that humanity, men and women, should not be thought of as *homo sapiens*, the creatures who think; or, as people in the 19th century thought, *homo faber*, the creatures who make things, who have tools. Rather, Huizinga proposed that humans are *homo ludens*.

Consequently, Kaplan highlights the importance that playing, enjoying, pleasure and happiness have for human beings, and he notes that entertainment responds to, and fulfils, those needs, adding that entertainment is cathartic. Hence we have also approached this topic from various perspectives throughout this work. In this regard Kaplan asserts that (2001, p. 5):

We are the creatures who play, and play is at the center of our very existence as humans: Our predilection to play is what entertainment takes advantage of. Entertainment also takes advantage of the fact that we as creatures like pleasure. We like to be happy. And that happiness is a relatively complex thing; it's not just comedy that can make us happy. Thrills, suspense, horror, tragedy can also make us happy in complex ways. We want to experience the complexities of happiness. (...). Entertainment also depends on our need for a release, catharsis, as Aristotle would describe it. We have pent up emotions. We have to deal with them.

Furthermore, this academic associates these needs and the possibilities that television entertainment offers in this regard with the empowerment of viewers, who select the programmes they watch; a choice which is closely associated to their feelings, and to whether they are entertained or are bored while watching a particular show. In

fact, he concludes that entertainment needs to win the attention of the audience, which he regards as fascinating (Kaplan, 2001, p. 5).

Entertainment does something else that is very interesting and surprising. I think of it as the fundamental element in human freedom. One of the great things that every single human has the ability to say about anything is that it's boring. (...). It means that we as consumers of entertainment, at all times, can assert the right to be bored and change the channel. We can switch from one thing to another. In so doing, entertainment empowers us, and gives us ourselves. It lets us have the freedom to be subjects, to be who we are. Ironically, at the same time as entertainment is turning us into our individual selves, entertainment is also allowing us to escape from ourselves. We can enter into other people's lives and we can empathize with them. We can forget about our daily lives. We can completely lose ourselves and free ourselves from our lives through the vehicle of entertainment. The thing that entertainment needs so desperately to win is our attention. Human attention is an amazing thing.

In these words copied below, selected from his keynote, Kaplan mentions the centrality of playing for this actual 'homo ludens', the need of television entertainment to hold and grab people's attention, the interest of human beings to be told stories, and the influence and power of television entertainment in this regard (2001, pp. 5, 6).

Our predilection to play is what entertainment takes advantage of. The thing that entertainment needs so desperately to win is our attention. What entertainment tries to do is hold onto our attention - to grab it and hold it so that we don't wonder about the bills we haven't paid, or the wash we haven't done. Rather, entertainment makes us stay in front of this thing that, ideally, we're riveted by. And when that riveting happens, entertainment can transform time. (...). We are creatures that love to be told stories. "Once upon a time" is the most basic of all devices, and because of that, Plato denounced storytelling's power to transport us.

In the same line are this scholar's remarks at the Posthumous Award Presentation to academic Vicente López, expressed in Barcelona's Pompeu Fabra University, in 2013, and gathered in the text entitled 'From Babel to Barcelona'

(Kaplan, 2013). In that speech Kaplan presents interesting reflections regarding entertainment in this new era, when technical developments and social changes bring forward new issues and topics of discussion with regard to entertainment media. In relation to the issues pointed out previously, I want to highlight Kaplan's reflections about what has the power to hold our attention. In this respect, he mentions fear, sex and novelty but also comments on the importance of aspects such as play, fame and storytelling. Finally, he emphasises the relevance of entertainment as a means to capture the attention of audiences. In addition, he speaks against the supposed triviality of entertainment, noting that it has the power to gain our attention, a fact that this distinguished academic and Director of the Norman Lear Center regards as political power (Kaplan, 2013, p. 5):

What has the power to capture and hold our attention? (...) Play has that power. We played with dice when we lived in caves. We love visual play, like illusions; word play, like jokes; number play, like puzzles. The Dutch sociologist Johann Huizinga said that all of human culture could be derived from the play instinct, and he named us *Homo ludens*, the species that plays. Fame has that power to capture attention. We look where other peoples' eyes are looking. Trending topics trend even more because they're trending. You can be wellknown for being well-known. Attention attracts more attention. Story has that power to captivate. If we hear "Once upon a time," we will not leave until we find out what happened. Scheherazade saved her life by telling stories that never ended. We are *Homo narrans*, the species that is hooked by narrative, that imposes cause and effect to make things make sense. There is a word that means: something with the power to capture our attention. Its etymological root is *tenir*: to hold. The word is *entertainment*. People sometimes talk about entertainment as if it were trivial. But its power is not trivial. The power to occupy attention is political power.

Finally, I want to bring to the fore some of the words pronounced by Kaplan, addressed to television professionals attending the conference mentioned at the beginning of this section, where he presented the arguments commented here. Actually, he refers to the mission of educating in addition to, and at the same time as, entertaining

and highlights the importance of television entertainment professionals in society (Kaplan, 2001, p. 7):

We can help you think of yourselves not only as producers, but also as communicators; not only as shareholders but as citizens; not only as executives, but also as neighbors; not only as writers and artists, but also as parents and children; and, not only as entertainers, but also as educators. Our goal is to make sure that you understand how important you are in this society, and how empowered you are; how necessary and appreciated you are.

1.9.1.2. Entertainment: related fields.

When looking for a definition of entertainment, and television entertainment in particular, the research work conducted by scholars Stephen Bates and Anthony J. Ferri is worth mentioning. In their article entitled ‘What’s entertainment? Notes Toward a Definition’ (2010) these scholars reflect on the meaning of this term and, when they approach this issue, they take into account both subjective and objective perspectives of it. Furthermore, they also refer to the links of entertainment with other aspects and topics, such as high/elite and low/popular culture, leisure, as well as enjoyment and pleasure. Likewise, they stress the importance of the element of play as central for the study of entertainment. As it can be observed, these approaches and topics are in line with the information and reflections already posed throughout the different sections of this PhD work and all these matters are highlighted by these scholars when approaching the task of looking for a comprehensive definition of entertainment. Bates and Ferri start their reflection highlighting the importance of entertainment.

Entertainment has been a part of all cultures, from the Chauvet Cave paintings to the iPad. For Rothman, it is “the storehouse of national values” (xviii). (...) Zillmann goes so far as to predict that entertainment “will define, more than ever before, the civilizations to come” (“Coming of Media Entertainment” 18). The importance of entertainment can be gauged by a study conducted by Brock and Livingston (259). They asked 115 American undergraduates how much money

they would require in order to give up television for the rest of their lives. More than half said they would demand over a million dollars, with several naming amounts exceeding a billion dollars. (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 1)

These authors also mention that despite the importance of entertainment in society, academia has not treated this subject appropriately, and they explain the reasons for that (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 1-2):

Despite the centrality of entertainment to society, however, academia has treated the subject in a disjointed, scattershot, sometimes condescending fashion, for a variety of reasons. To start with, the earliest communication theorists chose to study the mass media in terms of persuasion rather than entertainment, and most subsequent scholarship has retained that emphasis (Katz and Foulkes 376; Singhal and Rogers 120). Furthermore, many scholars look on entertainment as too trivial for study (Shusterman 291). They believe that entertainment amounts principally “to taking up large amounts of the daily time of individuals, but not representing an important force for human behavior change” (Singhal and Rogers 120).

These scholars mention Lieb’s statements in this regard who, according to their explanation (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 2), observes that theorists have largely failed to explain ‘what entertainment is, what kind of functions it inherits, and how much further it may expand’ (Lieb, 2001, p. 226). They add that Vorderer deems the academic response to entertainment ‘astonishing, to the point of being incomprehensible’ (Vorderer 2003, p. 131). Vorderer’s contribution to the study of entertainment is certainly relevant, as we have noted in various sections of this work. Bates and Ferri also refer to various texts of this scholar’s abundant work in this field (2003, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006).

Bates and Ferri state in their article that probably most academics on this field do not show interest in having a unique, overall, definition because a subjective approach to the term, which they explain further on in their text, is sufficient for them:

‘To be sure, some entertainment scholars may see no need for any single, overarching definition. For them, a subjective approach (discussed below) suffices: entertainment is whatever individuals find entertaining’ (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 2). As a consequence, Bates and Ferri express their interest to research this issue and it can be said that the already mentioned article responds to their intention to approach the study of entertainment and its definition in a mature manner, as they explain in this paragraph (2010, pp. 2-3):

So, with due acknowledgment that some may see our undertaking as bootless, this article sketches different approaches to defining entertainment and then proposes a set of criteria. Our hope is to help launch a conversation, one that can fruitfully continue as diverse approaches to the study of entertainment arise and mature. We begin with two observations that, though perhaps commonplace, ought to be kept in mind. First, entertainment often does more than entertain—or, put differently, entertainment functions are often intertwined with nonentertainment functions. (...) Second, and regrettably, “There are few things less entertaining than trying to define mass entertainment” (Bosshart and Macconi, 1998, p. 3).

1.9.1.2.1. Entertainment: popular culture, elite culture and leisure.

When studying about entertainment, Bates and Ferri identify and define various related fields, such as popular and elite culture, as well as leisure. In this regard we can observe that their explanations and references are in line with those already posed throughout this work. They refer to Meyersohn (1978), Mukerji and Schudson (1991) as well as Santino, Motz (1994) and Browne’s (1972, 1994, 1977) work when explaining the different definitions of popular culture (Bates & Ferri, 2010, pp. 3-4):

Meyersohn treats popular culture and entertainment as synonyms (p. 331). What, then, is popular culture? The term has been defined in capacious terms. Mukerji and Schudson write:

[P]opular culture refers to the beliefs and practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a

population. This includes folk beliefs, practices and objects rooted in local traditions, and mass beliefs, practices and objects generated in political and commercial centers. It includes elite cultural forms that have been popularized as well as popular forms that have been elevated to the museum tradition. (pp. 3-4)

Santino treats popular culture as “the expressive elements of daily life,” with expressive referring to the attachment of symbolic meaning and daily life referring to everything except elite art (Motz, 1994, p. 10). Browne proposes an even broader definition: “Popular culture is the television we watch, the movies we see, the fast food, or slow food, we eat, the clothes we wear, the music we sing and hear, the things we spend our money for, our attitude toward life. It is the whole society we live in, that which may or may not be distributed by the mass media. It is virtually our whole world” (“Popular Culture Medicine”, p. 260). (...) Popular culture in the broad sense, Browne maintains, includes mass culture, folk culture, and popular culture in its narrower sense - everything, that is, except elite culture.

When referring to the second related topic, that is to say, elite culture, Bates and Ferri indicate the difficulties in defining what elite culture is, and mention the opinions of various scholars about this term, such as Wollheim (1987), Fiedler (1955), Gans (1999), Mukerji and Schudson (1991), Kammen (1999), Levine (1988), Shusterman (2003) and Haberski (2007), reflections that help to comprehend what is generally understood when referring to ‘elite culture’ (Bates and Ferri, 2010, p. 4):

What is elite culture? Under one approach, elite culture is whatever cultural critics give their seal of approval. Wollheim writes of the institutional theory of art; (...) Fiedler (23) and, to an extent, Gans (9-10) argue that class partly affects taste; the upper classes are more likely to embrace what is defined as elite culture than the working class. Another approach emphasizes self-improvement, even at the cost of pleasure. (...) In general, however, elite culture is an amorphous category (Mukerji and Schudson 35). After all, lowbrow entertainments can become highbrow. Elizabethan drama was considered popular entertainment during its time but has now become high art (Kammen 9; Levine 11-81; Shusterman 292). With auteur theory, similarly, film became of interest to elite viewers and critics even as it remained mass entertainment (Haberski 39-40).

As said, leisure is the third related field to entertainment that Bates and Ferri identify and, consequently, try to define in their research, for which they take into account six different approaches to this term, as presented by different scholars, which are listed in the following paragraph (2010, p. 4, 5):

Leisure also overlaps with entertainment. Freysinger and Kelly discuss various approaches to defining leisure (17). It can be defined by a list of activities (...). Another approach is leisure as a state of mind: the feeling of having freely chosen to undertake a certain activity. A third is leisure as quality of action, which looks at whether the activity can be characterized as “playful.” A fourth approach is leisure as a social construction (...). A fifth approach considers leisure as political and examines relationships of power and privilege as they affect leisure activities. A final approach is leisure as a dimension of life, which considers leisure in the context of the individual’s other activities. The authors conclude that all of the approaches assume some levels of freedom and playfulness. Mobily and Shaw likewise report that studies generally find leisure to be characterized by freedom (14; 19-20). McLean, Hurd, and Rogers, however, note that leisure can include commitments and obligations, as in gardening or mastering a musical instrument (34).

With respect to leisure, I want to bring here some comments by Basque academic Xabier Landabidea, when he reflects about what he considers the complex relationship between television and leisure (2015). Landabidea highlights the centrality of television as a leisure artefact and indicates that its pastime, entertainment and informational functions are necessarily associated to leisure. He adds that, at the same time, television watching is at present one of most important leisure practices (p. 442). This scholar refers to the existing interplay and influence on both sides, as television determines the way people understand leisure and, at the same time, the use of television as a leisure activity does influence people in different manners, because this practice is embedded in their everyday life. He comments on these aspects in the following paragraphs:

Television has arguably transformed the leisure world of everybody since its inception, and despite the spectacular technological developments of the media ecosystem and the availability of new media choices, watching television remains immensely popular as a leisure activity. It is also revealed as one of the most conciliable leisure practices with other forms of social and media activity. (Landabidea, 2015, p. 454)

Leisure relationships with television are complex and varied and are not exhausted by quantitative audience measurements, nor determined by the broadcast content alone. The univocity of «watching television» is deceiving, as it hides different motivations, uses, gratifications and meanings that audiences encounter and build in a practice inserted in everyday customs, styles and leisure repertoires. (Landabidea, 2015, p. 461)

1.9.1.2.2. Entertainment: other approaches.

In this preceding section we have referred to the various topics that Bates and Ferri identify as related to entertainment. However, having done that, these scholars also focus on the definition of this term as such. As a starting point, they present what they consider traditional definitions of entertainment, to further on mention other interpretations expressed by different scholars. When referring to this traditional approach they comment on the explanation offered by Shusterman (2003) and Turner (1977):

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, entertain in its earliest usage meant “[t]o hold mutually; to hold intertwined.” The word comes from Latin, *inter*, meaning among, and *tenere*, meaning hold. One can construe hold as “focus attention” (Shusterman 292). Adding *among* suggests two meanings: to focus on one of several objects competing for attention; or to be one of several people focusing on an object. The multiplicity, in other words, can refer to entertainments or to members of the audience. The latter suggests a communal nature to entertainment. Turner applies a slightly different term in writing that entertainment “literally means ‘holding between,’ that is ‘liminalizing’” (73). Turner’s approach suggests that entertainment functions as a sort of passage, perhaps (among other things) the audience’s passage through an entertainment work. (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 5)

Beyond that initial, traditional explanation about what entertainment is, Bates and Ferri show their interest in presenting other viewpoints, expressed by different authors. In this regard, they establish a difference between what they consider as objective and subjective approaches. They indicate that a few scholars have proposed objective definitions of entertainment and comment on the cases and reflections of Zillmann and Bryant (1994, p. 438), Barnouw and Kirkland (1992, p. 50) as well as Mendelson and Spetnagel (1980, p. 20), who present different perspectives regarding this issue (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 6):

Zillmann and Bryant - “crudely,” by their own admission - define entertainment as “any activity designed to delight (...) (For Barnouw and Kirkland, entertainment is a commodity that requires profitability: (...) Mendelsohn and Spetnagel emphasize time and place rather than money ...

Further on, and more extensively, Bates and Ferri comment on the subjective approaches towards entertainment, as they state that what entertains each one of us is certainly subjective. Likewise, they indicate the different opinions and perspectives in this sense presented by various scholars, according to which a great deal of aspects do indeed influence the perception of what entertainment is for each person (2010, p. 6):

What entertains a given individual is inescapably subjective, a matter of taste (Lieb 230; Vorderer, Steen, and Chan 4). One might paraphrase Berelson: some kinds of communication, under some kinds of conditions, will entertain some kinds of people (184). Some scholars contend that empathy can signal the presence of entertainment. (...). To Vorderer, Affective Disposition Theory constitutes “the strongest theory on entertainment available” (“It’s All Entertainment” 252). More elaborately, Vorderer, Klimmt, and Ritterfeld develop an empathetic model that includes physiological, affective, and cognitive dimensions (389).

In addition, these academics indicate that many other definitions are functional in nature and that entertainment can provide diversion and rejuvenation. They mention various scholars' reflections in this regard, quoting Shutsterman's words:

To sustain, refresh, and even deepen concentration, one also needs to distract it; otherwise concentration fatigues itself and gets dulled through monotony. These lessons, one might say, are inscribed in our anatomy of vision: we succeed in securing our physical sustenance and refreshment by looking outward and inward (Shutsterman, 2003, p. 293, as cited in Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 7).

They also refer to the opinions of academics Katz (1977), as well as Zillman and Bryant's (1994) in this sense, ideas which are in line with what we have already mentioned in various sections of this work (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 6):

Katz posits "mild arousal" as an element of entertainment, and argues that people seek "a balance of excitement and security" through entertainment (72-73). Similarly, Zillmann and Bryant cite studies showing that people tend to seek particular types of entertainment depending on their moods, as a sort of regulator (457).

1.9.1.2.3. Entertainment: play.

The element of play is another aspect that is considered as central for the study of entertainment. At the beginning of this chapter we have commented on that, mentioning Kaplan's reflections in this regard. Bates and Ferri also focus on this issue and highlight its importance, citing Stephenson's explanations of this topic (2010, p. 8):

In a classic work, Stephenson stresses the element of play. As the key to the study of entertainment, he proposes looking for "conditions under which people can have communication-pleasure" (205). He distinguishes play—"disinterested, self-sufficient, an interlude ... that brings no material gain"—from work—"not disinterested, ... not an interlude in the day ... and produces goods, services, or ideas, etc." (192-193). Stephenson goes on to distinguish "communication-pain"

from “communication-pleasure,” in keeping with Mendelsohn’s and Wurst’s emphasis on enjoyment as an element of entertainment:

1.9.1.2.4. Antonyms of entertainment.

Bates and Ferri look for the antonyms of entertainment as a means to understand the meaning of the term. According to that approach, entertainment would be the opposite to boredom and even monotony, as explained in this paragraph below, in which they gather the opinions of various scholars who show these perspectives (2010, p. 9):

Like work and play, some terms are perhaps best defined by their antonyms. Leisure or play is the opposite of work (e.g., McLean, Hurd, and Rogers 37). Popular culture is the opposite of elite culture (e.g., Gans 7). What, then, is the opposite of entertainment? In keeping with Csikszentmihalyi’s flow concept, boredom is a strong contender (Bosshart and Macconi 4). Healy writes, “To feel bored is to suffer, in however slight a degree and for however short a duration. That is to say, it is a state of being from which one would like to be set free....” (42). Mikulas and Vodanovich define boredom as combining discontent and low arousal (1). O’Hanlon adds the concept of monotony to the blend (54).

1.9.1.2.5. Entertainment: cultural context.

Finally, I would like to point out that these scholars also refer to the cultural context as a key aspect for the definition of entertainment, due to the influence that entertainment has in society and vice versa. Their statements in this sense are also in line with the reflections that, in this regard, we have posed throughout this work. Actually, Bates and Ferri comment that ‘Most definitions talk of entertainment principally from the perspective of one being entertained. Taking culture in the sociological sense, we can consider entertainment in its broader context, too’ (2010, p.

9). Moreover, they state that, according to these cultural, sociological, perspectives, it is accepted that society and entertainment constantly influence each other (2010, p. 11).

1.9.1.2.6. Entertainment: elements of a definition.

In the last part of their article, Bates and Ferri mention some aspects involved in the definition of entertainment, which, in fact, outline the main factors that, according to their reflections, must be taken into account when researching on that topic. When doing so they also include other authors' perspectives and arguments, such as Mendelsohn (1967), Stephenson (1967), Wurst (2005) and Godkin (1895). The elements they identify and explain are the following, as extracted verbatim from their text (Bates & Ferri, 2010, pp. 11-15):

Objective: As noted above, we reject the notion that entertainment must be gauged subjectively. Even though what entertains an individual is subjective, we believe that entertainment must generally be defined in objective terms if the definition is to prove useful to the majority of scholars. (Bates & Ferri, 2010 p. 11)

Communication: We suggest that entertainment involves some sort of communication between an audience (including an audience of one) and a text, defined broadly. (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 11)

External stimulus: Consistent with our focus on communication, we believe that entertainment requires some sort of external stimulus. One cannot, by our definition, entertain oneself. (...). One can, however, be entertained in solitude, via a book, DVD, or some other text. The stimulus must be communicative, further, but it need not operate as mass media, contrary to Mendelsohn (15). Viewing a museum exhibition qualifies as entertainment. (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 12)

Pleasure: A principal goal of entertainment is to provide pleasure. This criterion is in keeping with Stephenson (45) as well as Mendelsohn (15) and Wurst (389). Boredom is not entertainment. Neither is unpleasant effort. If, as Godkin maintains, cultural immersion (elite culture, in his case) does not bring pleasure, it falls outside our definition of entertainment (202). (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 13)

Audience: As the foregoing suggests, we believe that entertainment must have an audience. Entertainment is at some level a public institution. This is not to rule out entertainment in solitude, as noted; a TV program does not lose its status as entertainment when the second person leaves the room. But entertainment must reach beyond its creator. (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 13)

1.9.1.2.7. Entertainment: passive audience.

When arguing about audience, Bartes and Ferri indicate that passive audience is an element that defines entertainment. Nonetheless, I want to note that these scholars do not refer to this concept from the same perspective as we have done throughout this work. In the next paragraph they explain what they mean when they mention this term and also quote some of Vorderer's (2000) statements in this regard (Bates & Ferri, 2010, pp. 13, 14):

Passive audience: Passivity is a commonly understood, if often unspoken, element of the process of mass communication, which traditionally "describes the media user as a witness to depicted events; an onlooker, listener, and, in general, an observer of what is presented on a screen, a page, or by a speaker" (Vorderer "Interactive Entertainment" 23). (...) A passivity criterion for entertainment excludes forms of active recreation, many of which are also excluded by our first criterion, communication: playing sports (though watching sports would qualify), playing an instrument (versus listening to a musician), dancing (versus watching dancers), gardening, gambling, riding a Ferris wheel, and, perhaps ironically, "entertaining" neighbors with a backyard barbecue. These excluded activities, we believe, qualify as leisure but not as entertainment.

Actually, these scholars admit that passivity is the most problematic of their criteria and, among other aspects, they note that entertainment entails sharing a common experience. They also notice that technological development and its influence on the media have introduced new parameters and factors that lead them to question some of their theories about entertainment, and also regarding concepts of audience activity and

passivity as presented by them until now. In this case they also cite Vorderer's words (2003, p. 143). (Bates & Ferri, 2010, pp. 14-15):

Like Tolstoy, we believe that people being entertained ought to share a common experience, not completely but to some significant degree. So we propose passivity as a criterion. Entertainment (unlike leisure or play) is, we suggest, an experience of spectatorship more than participation. This passivity, of course, does not exclude emotional involvement. (...) Concededly, passivity is the most problematic of our criteria, and perhaps the most likely to become outdated. With electronic games, Second Life, and other forms of virtual reality, some of which involve all five senses and movement of the whole body, the line between spectator and participant grows blurry. It is likely that interactive technologies will move viewers increasingly into doers. As Vorderer observes, the development of interactive media "has completely questioned our theorizing about entertainment" ("Entertainment Theory" 143).

1.9.1.3. Identifying and defining entertainment: difficulties.

As Bartes and Ferri explain when drawing the conclusions of their article, these authors are aware of the difficulties in defining and identifying entertainment. They summarise their main intentions when writing this essay, i.e. the proposal of criteria that would help to identify entertainment and differentiate it from other concepts such as popular culture and leisure, among others. Finally, they outline the main aspects that entertainment includes if we define it in a broad and objective way. In this text below they also mention Dyer's point of view (1992, p. 1) in this respect.

We have proposed criteria with which to identify entertainment and distinguish it from leisure, popular culture, and other categories. The challenge is considerable. "Entertainment is difficult to define because everyone knows what it is, because it is a common-sense idea," writes Dyer (1). We suggest that entertainment, defined in largely objective terms, entails communication via external stimuli, which reaches a generally passive audience and gives some portion of that audience pleasure. (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 15)

To end their reflections on this matter, scholars Bates and Ferri mention again the importance of the study of entertainment, as well as the lack of research and interest by a great part of academia in conducting studies in this field, according to what they noted at the beginning of their article and we have pointed out here. We have also written about this fact throughout this work, although I want to remark that these authors also show their hope that this field of study will gain importance. Likewise, they note the need to discuss the boundaries of this area of research for the better understanding of entertainment and the different areas and concepts associated to it. In these lines that I have taken from their article, they also quote Mukerji and Schudson's (1991, p. 1) statement in relation to this matter. (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 15):

Mukerji and Schudson observe that in a generation's time, popular culture studies went "from an academic backwater to a swift intellectual river where expansive currents from different disciplines meet" (1). Within a generation, perhaps the same will be true of the infant field of entertainment studies. The foundational task of discussing potential boundaries of entertainment can only help.

In this section we are trying to define and clarify what entertainment is, and when doing so we have presented several issues related to this topic, referring to the studies conducted by different scholars and from various disciplines and perspectives. In this regard I would like to note the prolific work developed by academic Peter Vorderer, an author who we have mentioned before in this dissertation, as it helps to understand both the significance of entertainment and the different processes and aspects related to it, mainly from a psychological approach. In this case I want to bring to the fore the article he wrote together with Christoph Klimmt and Ute Ritterfeld entitled 'Enjoyment: At the Heart of Media Entertainment' (2004). These scholars pose the difficulties in defining entertainment, and identify the conditions in which

entertainment takes place, as well as the consequences, contributions and effects of entertainment media. Being aware of the ‘dimensional complexity and dynamics of entertainment experience’ they outline and suggest a conceptual model of research that, as they explain ‘is centered around enjoyment as the core of entertainment’. Furthermore, they use that theoretical foundation ‘to explain why people display strong preferences for being entertained’ and ‘what kind of consequences entertaining media consumption may have’ (Vorderer, Klimmt and Ritterfeld, 2004, p. 388).

1.9.1.4. Entertainment and enjoyment.

Academics Vorderer, Klimm and Ritterfeld identify enjoyment as the core of media entertainment (conceptualised as an experience) and, as they point out, when doing so they ‘connect it to a research area of growing importance for communication theory as individuals in modern societies devote remarkable amounts of time to entertainment experiences’. Therefore, they highlight the importance of entertainment as a field of academic research and within the studies on communication theory, and they stress the significance of enjoyment in this regard. Hence, these scholars explain that even though ‘there are also other forms of enjoyment that lie beyond what may be called media entertainment’ they focus on this aspect because ‘when we look at what entertainment means for those who use the media and expect to be entertained by their content, it is enjoyment that we most often find.’ (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 389)

Consequently, we can affirm that from these scholars’ perspective enjoyment is a core element of entertainment. Nevertheless, they underpin the complexity of the entertainment experience and take into account various aspects of this process for their analysis. In fact, they research on both the prerequisites of the media user’s side and of

the media's side as well as on the motives for wanting to be entertained. They also refer to the outcomes and consequences of entertainment, so as to, finally, define what they describe as 'a complex model of entertainment', to apply it to various specific cases of different types in order to explain the particular characteristics of the entertainment process in each case.

I will quote below some paragraphs of that article regarding the various aspects they outline to define their research framework and model, as they can be illuminating to understand what is entertainment and the aspects, factors and processes that it involves. To start with they refer to the importance of the media as a means that responds to the search for fun and entertainment by modern societies (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 389):

The pursuit of fun appears to be the dominant theme of modern cultures, and as there are virtually countless ways to "be entertained," huge industries concerned with the production, distribution, and retail of entertainment products have evolved (Wolf, 1999). Although historically most forms of entertainment revolved around live-action events that occurred directly in front of the audience, for example, gladiator battles in ancient Rome or horse racing in British stadiums (cf. Zillmann, 2000b), today mass media channels are the central providers of entertainment production and distribution. In addition to live-action products that are still a popular format (e.g., broadcasts of sports events), the mass media offer a broad variety of entertainment opportunities (cf. Sayre & King, 2003). Over the past few decades, the demand for such opportunities, at least in the United States, Western Europe, Australia, and increasingly also in Asian countries, has increased for various reasons.

Furthermore, they underpin the need for research on this area to clarify and comprehend what is understood by the experience of being entertained (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 390).

However, the phenomenon itself, that is, the individual experience of being entertained, as regarded from a psychological point of view, stills needs to be

fully clarified and understood. This holds true despite the fact that the study of entertainment has been identified as one of the most important challenges currently faced by communication theory and research in the 21st century (Bryant, 2004). In addition to necessary theory-building in the field of basic research, applied work is needed as well, since the enjoyable “packaging” of media messages in new forms or genres has also displayed a significant increase. “Infotainment,” “Edutainment,” and “Entertainment Education” (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004; Singhal & Rogers, 2002) are keywords used by current research to describe this process, in which the integration of entertainment and learning reaffirms the role of communication as an enabler of social change, as well as emphasizes its task of serving the greater public good (cf., e.g., Slater, 2002; Vorderer & Ritterfeld, 2003).

Due to that, and according to what we have noted before, these scholars propose in their article a model to research on media entertainment that would help to understand it and what it involves. For that, they take a broad definition of the term, taking enjoyment as the key feature of media entertainment, and approaching to it from various perspectives among which the user’s experience is emphasised. In addition, though, other aspects of media entertainment are taken into consideration, as we have sketched out at the beginning of this section (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 390):

Because media entertainment -and media enjoyment at the very heart of this experience- have become so crucial in multiple domains of communication and daily life, we must formalize our understanding of it by using a theoretical framework and basic foundations. This article proposes a rather broad conceptualization of media entertainment (and of media enjoyment, thereby), one that would be capable of integrating various theoretical approaches to its understanding from the user’s perspective and also serves to advance the explication of a general, unified paradigm along with empirical research to substantiate it.

1.9.1.5. The complexity of entertainment.

Vorderer, Klimm and Ritterfeld admit that it is complex to define and understand ‘entertainment’, the entertainment experience, and note that most

researchers link it with positive aspects such as pleasure, enjoyment and delight (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 390):

From the user's point of view, entertainment has been understood not so much as a product (a film, a show, a book, etc.) or as a feature of such a product but rather as a response to it (cf., Zillmann & Bryant, 1994), i.e., as the experience one goes through while being exposed to the media (cf. Vorderer, 2001). At the core of this entertainment experience, most researchers have located certain characteristics that are usually linked to positive terms such as pleasure, enjoyment, and even delight (cf., e.g., Bosshart & Macconi, 1998; Zillmann & Bryant, 1994).

Nevertheless, they underpin the difficulties in defining, describing and explaining 'entertainment' and the processes it involves. Furthermore, they note that this is surely a difficult task for those scholars who conduct studies on entertainment, from various perspectives and within different disciplines. Due to that, they affirm, most studies of entertainment are based on prototypical cases (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 391):

In fact, most entertainment experiences in which we engage so often and deliberately seem to offer complex, dynamic, and even multifaceted experiences. Achieving a pure description of this process, let alone an explanation, presents a tremendous challenge for researchers in the field of communication and in related disciplines, as they all seem to have little in common and show a great diversity of appearances. This explains why most of the scientific descriptions and explanations of entertainment available today have focused and elaborated on prototypical cases.

In their proposal these academics present interesting explanations and conclusions about the different aspects they consider significant for the understanding of the entertainment experience and process. We have commented above that they research on those factors associated to the users' experience, in this regard, and in relation to the prerequisites for entertainment on the media user's side, they conclude:

In sum, enjoyment as the core of media entertainment experience not only manifests itself in many different ways but also depends on the audience's readiness and ability to suspend disbelief, to empathize with the characters at play, to engage in *parasocial* interactions and relationships with the personae, to be present somewhere else and with somebody else, and to have an interest in what the media presents. Some of these conditions have also been studied as consequences or as responses to media programs. We regard them as prerequisites, as entertainment seems impossible if the media users are unable or unwilling to provide them. As mentioned already, each of these conditions may appear in combination with any other one in a given situation. Also, additional conditions are likely to be found and, given more empirical evidence, certainly will be added in the years to come. We assume that at least one of them must be present at a given at a time in order to feel entertained by the media. (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 397)

Besides the requisites of the audience to enjoy and be entertained by the media, the media itself needs to fulfil certain conditions to entertain. In this respect these scholars mention the different fields that have been analysed to understand this process from the side of the media, and they state that 'The significance of technological, aesthetic, and design features for the usage of, the response to, and the impact of media has been studied carefully' (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 397). Nonetheless, besides that, they indicate the importance that others aspects such as the content and the way it is presented have when aiming to attract the audience's interest and entertain them (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 398):

It is not, however, only the technology, the aesthetics and their interaction with user characteristics that play a key role for the entertainment experience. It is also the content of the media product and how the content is presented (e.g., by a certain selection of topics, a particular portrayal of characters, etc.) that may lead to a program that is meaningful to the user.

1.9.1.6. Motives for seeking entertainment.

These authors also analyse the reasons for wanting to be entertained. They note the importance of motivation with respect to human behaviour and actions, comment that individuals often seek entertainment and they wonder why (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 399):

Human action is sponsored and directed by motives—states that individuals aim to realize. One question becomes apparent when we regard entertainment as an experience and observe that individuals seek entertainment with increasing frequency and time: Why do they do so?

When researching on this issue they mention those theories that refer to the wish and need to *escape*: ‘One possible motive for seeking entertainment may be the media users’ temporary interest and desire to escape from the social world in which they actually live’ (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 399). Likewise, they comment on the theory of *mood management* (Vorderer et al., 2004, pp. 399-400):

Another motive, which has been elaborated by Zillmann (1988a; 1988b) to describe the selection of entertainment programs, is very similar to the escapist one. It also has elicited the most empirical research (Knobloch, 2003), that is, the motive to regulate one’s own moods by modifying one’s own stimulus environment. As entertainment offerings are one part of such environments, the individual selection of them is an appropriate and obvious way to enhance or perpetuate and already positive mood.

These authors indicate that these different purposes and effects do not always happen at the same time, likewise they comment that various combinations of them are possible: ‘Again, these motives may not necessarily occur and lead to the respective behavior or action simultaneously. At the same time, they may also function in various combinations’ (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 401). There is another perspective these

scholars present too that I would like to mention. I am referring to the link between entertainment and play, an aspect that we have also written about in prior sections.

One approach with which to answer this fundamental question is the notion of entertainment as play. Vorderer (2001) has suggested a conceptualization of the entertainment experience as a form of play because it shares the most important characteristics with play. (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 401)

1.9.1.7. The consequences of entertainment.

The influence and effects of entertainment are also taken into account when these scholars study the meaning and significance of entertainment. They indicate that more research on this field should be conducted, due to the importance of this matter and the controversy about it.

Given the importance of immediate and long-term effects and consequences of entertainment and the amount of public controversy and concern the issues raise, it is surprising how little research has been conducted, let alone how very few theoretical concepts have been developed regarding this part of the process. (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 402)

In this regard, they indicate that they will mention ‘only the three most important domains of study - excitation transfer, catharsis, and learning’. In relation to the first theory they refer to prestigious academic Zillman’s work, and comment that:

Again, it was Zillmann (1996) who developed a theory to explain the excitatory effects that usually follow one’s exposure to entertainment. The bottom line of excitation-transfer theory is the observation that the physiological arousal accumulated during exposure, particularly to drama or action movies, does not drop immediately, but sinks rather slowly at the end of a movie. (...) ... the arousal is linked to positive cognitions, which results in euphoria. (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 402)

References to the cultivation theory are also made and they assert that there is still an open debate about that issue, as happens with another effect about which has also been theorized: *catharsis*.

Whether this media usage affects the thinking, feeling, and consequent acting of users in a more sustainable way, whether they are “cultivated” by the entertainment products in a more fundamental sense, remains an open question. This also holds true for another theoretically conceptualized effect, one that has been called catharsis. (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 402)

The third area they work on in relation to the outcomes of entertainment is comprehension and learning. The conclusions they present in this respect are interesting, as they indicate that entertainment can certainly help in the acquisition of knowledge, and in the learning process. These academics regard this consequence as one of the most important and useful effects of entertainment, and more precisely of television entertainment programmes. They state that, according to the studies conducted about entertainment education, ‘media users are more willing to learn and understand what is presented to them if it is within a programme that is entertaining’. (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 403)

One the most important of such useful effects of being entertained is comprehension and learning. Until recently, the assumption that learning, knowledge acquisition thinking, differentiating, and the like might benefit from being entertained, would have sounded exceptional (cf. Vorderer, 2001). As intrinsic motivation has been studied more systematically and more rigorously, and as our understanding of the effects of positive affects on individuals’ information processing increases (cf. Pennebaker, 1995), the possibility that individuals may think and learn best in states of positive affect becomes more reasonable. Programs in entertainment education (cf. Singhal & Rogers, 2002; Singhal et al., 2004) assume that media users are more willing to learn and understand what is presented to them in the context of a program that is entertaining.

1.9.1.8. Difficulties of entertainment processes.

Vorderer and his colleagues stress the difficulties that the processes of entertainment entail, an issue that is commented in various parts of this text and which is also mentioned when they assert that, due to that, it is almost impossible to predict the success of an entertainment product (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 398):

Although viewers tend to prefer specific genres, and although some of these preferences interact with the viewers' personalities (Weaver, 2000), it is almost impossible to predict the success of an entertainment product based on this alone. Each individual film, book, or TV show presents a topic, whether or not it is meaningful to the audience, in its own particular way. The extremely high failure rate of Hollywood productions and entertainment TV programs in the U.S., although official statistics are unknown, demonstrates this peculiar situation. As a consequence, the entertainment industries have apparently adopted a pragmatic trial-and-error method by which they try to avoid "mistakes" of the past, but they certainly do not know why audiences like or dislike particular media products or components of them.

These scholars refer to the aspects they have mentioned and explained in their article, and they regard them as useful for the understanding of the process and experience of entertainment. In spite of that, they also admit that there are other many aspects that influence the entertainment experience of media users: 'These are just a few, although so far the most thoroughly studied, conditions for an entertainment experience to take shape. They demonstrate that many aspects must come together to entertain a media user' (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 399).

Finally, Vorderer, Klimm and Ritterfeld include a few examples of specific entertainment products of different kind and they apply to them the model and framework defined throughout their article, to explain the various aspects involved in each one of those cases (Vorderer et al., 2004, pp. 403-404). They comment on their objectives when doing so and highlight their intention to show that the study of what

entertainment means is a more complicated and broader area than initially can be thought of. Nonetheless, they stress the importance and the need to conduct studies in this field, and comment that empirical research is fundamental in order to go beyond conceptualisation and to understand the complete picture of entertainment, its shape and circumstances, as well as its influence and effects.

These three examples should demonstrate how different the process of being entertained may be for different users, at different times, and with different products. It should elucidate how diverse the motives and conditions are (some on the user's and others on the media's side) that constitute the enjoyment that lies at the heart of entertainment. This is meant to draw a broader and more complex picture of what entertainment means to us. What now needs to follow from this conceptualization is an empirical research program that not only tests single hypotheses but also substantiates, validates, and modifies our understanding of the entire pattern of entertainment, its condition, and its effects. (Vorderer et al., 2004, p. 405)

Consequently, we could say that the research carried out by these authors and the explanations and conclusions presented in this article help to understand both the meaning and the importance of entertainment, and more precisely of media entertainment. The need for and significance of conducting studies on this issue are also brought to the fore by these scholars. Moreover, they present a model of enquiry that takes into account various significant areas related to the entertainment experience, which helps to understand the various processes and aspects involved. The explanations offered regarding each of them include interesting arguments that help to comprehend what is understood by entertainment and what it implies and involves. I would also like to underline the fact that these scholars place enjoyment in the centre and, as they emphasise, they regard it as the core of media entertainment.

1.9.1.9. Entertainment: different opinions.

We can say that the different ideas and reflections posed by these scholars, pointed out throughout these sections, do in fact gather and summarise the research and conclusions of most relevant academics that have shown interest, and conducted studies about entertainment. According to those arguments, it can be observed that there are different opinions and approaches to this topic. However, we can assert that when trying to define what entertainment is, what it includes and implies as well as which associated topics are involved in that definition and process, there are several issues that are generally acknowledged as associated to it by most researchers, regardless of the different perspectives and approaches taken when dealing with this matter.

Consequently, although etymologically entertainment means to hold attention, we can state that, at present, such term includes broader meanings and aspects, which, indeed, have to be born in mind when defining this term and when trying to identify the variety of topics associated to it. Terms and concepts such as *pleasure, enjoyment, delight, happiness, play, communication, audience, external stimulus, holding interest, amusement, not boring* ... are closely associated with entertainment, and are essential when looking for a definition of it. We have also observed the relationship of entertainment with other aspects and terms such as leisure, culture - and more precisely distinctions between high/elite and low/popular culture - and society (mainly with respect to the influence of entertainment in society and vice versa).

All these terms, aspects, topics and issues are, therefore, taken into account by those scholars who look for a comprehensive definition of what entertainment is and by those authors who research on what entertainment involves, as well as about the discussions around it. We can, indeed, observe that all these aspects, terms and topics

are not only present in the work of these academics, but that they are in fact the issues that this essay has focused on and that have been researched when looking for the contribution of television entertainment to public television which is, certainly, one of the main objectives of this PhD dissertation. Moreover, we can say that the information gathered and the conclusions drawn throughout this extensive work are in line with the main points presented in this section, referring to those academics who not only reflect on what entertainment means, but also point out its influence and importance.

1.9.2. Television: definition.

In the preceding section we have written about the definition of entertainment, trying to explain what is understood by this term, for which we have gathered and presented information of different approaches to this issue. According to that information and reflections, we can state that there are various perspectives towards entertainment and that this topic is still a matter of discussion. Nevertheless, and focusing on television entertainment, we can observe that there are not only discussions about entertainment and its definition, as at present there is also a debate about what television is. This has been happening mainly in recent years when, due to the high and quickly changing technical developments, we can assert that the definition of 'television' is not so clear.

Media consultant Dr. William Cooper reflects on this issue (2015, p. 4) and he affirms that 'the very concept of what constitutes television is constantly evolving' adding that 'television can no longer be defined by the way it's transmitted or the screen on which it's seen'. However, he comments that 'television is difficult to define, but we know it when we see it', and notes that the idea of television includes:

- The screen on which it's generally seen.
- The medium of broadcast, one-to-many transmission.
- The channel for delivering scheduled output.
- The form and format of programmes.
- The function of public service broadcasting.
- The business models of commercial and pay television.
- The regulation systems under which it operates.

Moreover, Cooper refers to the great amount of diverse audio-visual content of various forms, which, in addition, is delivered and watched in different ways and on different devices, mentioning that a lot of this material has features that permit its classification as television.

These are now becoming absorbed into a wider domain of video media, which can deliver many of the features we have traditionally associated with television. We can now view high-quality online video on a handheld screen. Whether we call that television depends on what we are watching as much as how it's delivered. We still think in terms of reading a book, whether we bought it from a bookshop, ordered it on line, or downloaded it to a tablet. (Cooper, 2015, p. 4)

Finally, this media professional and consultant states that: 'The medium of television is determined as much by the form of its programmes and the way they're viewed as any particular delivery technology.' (Cooper, 2015, p. 4)

Actually, just a few years ago it was easy to identify what television was as everything that was watched on a television set could be considered as 'television'. Likewise, the classification of television programmes with regard to their genre, or according to any additional parameters was much easier too. Nowadays though, the immense amount of audio-visual content which can be found and watched on various

platforms, devices and screens, make it very difficult to classify them and, in many cases, even to identify those that can be defined as ‘television content’. On the other hand, the new digital television sets permit watching on them all sort of audio-visual content including the great amount of audio-visual products, texts, that can be reached due to the internet.

Consequently, we can affirm that not everything that can nowadays be watched on a television set can be considered as ‘television’, that is to say, television content, whereas it can also be stated that a great amount of television content is nowadays watched on other devices and windows apart from that artefact which, until recent years, was the only screen known as ‘television’ and would therefore define and name the audio-visual content watched on it.

In fact, we could say that those years in which the name of the device on which audio-visual content was watched would name its content, in this case, television, are gone and, at the same time the constant change and evolution of the narratives of audio-visual texts make it difficult to include all of them in the traditional categories of audio-visual, and among them television, genres.

Nowadays ‘television’ or let’s better say ‘television content’ can be watched on multiple devices, screens and windows, and beyond traditional ways of disseminating television content, and in addition to the previously usual ways of consuming it, namely watching it on a television set and in the home mainly, new ways of both television content dissemination and consumption are taking place, changing and increasing quickly.

Television is nowadays watched where, when, and how it is wanted. In addition to the television set, multiple screens such as personal computers, laptops, tablets and

mobile phones are used to watch all sort of audio-visual content, and all sort of television products, texts, programmes, of all type of genres among them. Furthermore, multiple platforms and companies of various fields are nowadays creators, producers, providers and distributors of that audio-visual and television content, a content that, as said, is not always easy to identify as television as such.

Consequently, we can state that in this new landscape it is even more difficult to define and identify what ‘television’, that is to say television content, is. Furthermore, forms and narratives of those that can be considered as television products, texts, are changing and evolving, adapting to the needs and the specificities of those different sources and resources used to create, produce, disseminate and receive this new audio-visual/television content.

As a result, I would affirm that in the current television landscape a broader approach to television content is needed, a classification that would include a greater amount of categories in which the new mixture and hybridisation of traditional television genres should be taken into account. Equally, it has to be taken into consideration the advent of new type of genres and formats that are created and produced to respond both to the requirements and to the possibilities of new ways of producing, distributing, receiving and consuming audio-visual content, the so called new media among them.

Currently, the specificities of social media are leading to new formats and narrative forms which, we would say, are not always categorised within television content, although a great part of it is considered as such. This is the case of the short form formats that can be watched in the ‘television brands’ of so popular social media such as Facebook (Facebook-Watch), Snapchat (Snaptcht-Shows), Instagram

(InstagramStories - IGTV), and You Tube (YouTube Red / YouTube Premium) some of which have been launched quite recently, during the last months of 2017.

It has to be said that a lot of these products, which are disseminated on various and varied online resources and on different kind of platforms, including social media, as we have just mentioned, are indeed various forms of user-generated content, and most of them can be considered in fact, as entertainment audio-visual products of various types. Furthermore, due to their form, structure and content they could also be considered as new forms of television entertainment.

Actually, these new, mainly short form, videos of different type are among the products that can be seen on the new ‘television brands’ of new agents in this field such as Apple, Google, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and You Tube as we have commented above. However, besides that a lot of them are disseminated on most varied online platforms which are not labeled as television or, let’s better say, as television channels, platforms or even just television content providers, of different sort.

This phenomenon is still quite recent so it can be observed that both academia and the industry are still adapting to the quick changes that are taking place in the new television landscape and I would say that the definition and classification of new types of audio-visual content is still taking place, coinciding with, and adapting to, their recent advent.

Taking all this into consideration and to end this section, I will quote some statements expressed by media professional and consultant Dr. William Cooper (2015, p. 40) regarding the definition of television. Hence, his words summarise some of the ideas that we have referred to in this section, as he notes the difficulties in defining television, mentioning that the previous references are no longer valid and regarding as

such new forms of creation and distribution. Finally, he concludes that television should be defined by its meaning to viewers (2015, pp. 40, 41):

Television isn't a single coherent experience. It consists of a complex mix of modes, genres and forms. (...) Television is not defined by the display on which it's watched. The means of distribution isn't necessarily limited to broadcast transmission. The forms and features of programme formats are being reproduced outside traditional television.' (...) We can no longer define television by screen, medium, channel, form, function, business or regulation. (...). Television is ultimately defined by what it means to its viewers.

Beyond that, I would also like to mention some of Cooper's statements with regard to some of the features of television in the current scenario as well as his reflections about that, which I have selected from various parts of his report (Cooper, 2015).

Live television remains important for viewers who want to feel that they are sharing a television experience with the outside world. (p. 21)

The consequence of wanting to watch whatever, wherever, whenever we want is that we're more likely to be watching alone. (...) The more we watch alone, the more important the sense of a shared experience becomes. (p. 27)

We still watch television in very similar ways to how we did years ago, partly through conditioning. Many of our activities are based around habitual, sometimes arbitrary, routines. Television is no different. Television is habit forming. The more we watch, the more we want to watch. Broadcast work hard to establish and sustain these behaviours and viewing patterns.(...) The daily and weekly schedule and viewing seasons provide a structure for our viewing and the perception of a simultaneously shared experience. (p. 32)

We have increasingly high expectations of television. We expect to be able to stream and download programmes and watch them at our convenience. Yet the ritual of watching television remains remarkably resilient to change. We still watch the vast majority of video on a television screen. (p. 41)

There's a continuing role for (p. 41):

- Live television and direct address presentation.
- Broadcast distribution both for live events and popular programming.
- Scheduled programmes and events promoted to appeal to a mass audience.
- Television will mean more to its viewers but traditional channels will still be seen as the best way to watch new and live programmes.

The future of television remains to be seen. One way or another, we'll still be watching television for many years to come. (p. 43)

1.9.3. Television entertainment content.

According to the information and reflections posed in these previous sections regarding entertainment, television, and television entertainment, we can foresee the difficulties in identifying and defining television entertainment content in the current scenario. Nonetheless, and beyond the definition and explications of these terms commented above, when researching on this issue the classification of television entertainment, that is to say of television entertainment programming, is central for the understanding of what can be considered as television entertainment as such and to learn about the way in which different genres and formats are categorised. When doing so, the classification of this kind of programme regarding the various genres, subgenres and type of formats included within the macro-genre of 'entertainment' has to be taken into account.

1.9.3.1. Television genres.

Genres are a core reference for the understanding of what can be taken as television entertainment, and when defining a framework for the categorisation of the various and diverse forms in which entertainment is presented in television content. Genres are, indeed, categories of television programming, as academic Joseph D. Straubhaar notes in this text where, referring to Mittell's reflections, he also indicates the aspects that the categorisation by genres comprises (2007, p. 134):

Genres are categories of television programming. Mittell (2004) argued that genres should account for the particularities of the medium (TV versus film), negotiate between specificity and generality, develop from discursive genealogies (...) be understood in cultural practice, and be situated within larger systems of cultural hierarchies and power relations.

In fact, when referring to television genres and their classification different perspectives have to be considered, as their categorisation changes depending whether it is formulated by academics, or professionals. Among them, different groups also organise them in diverse manners too, according to their specific fields of work, as Straubhaar (2007) states (p. 134) mentioning Feuer's comments in this regard: 'Different groups - critics, producers, advertisers, distributors, programmers, and audiences - often structure genre categories differently (Feuer, 1992). Moreover, Straubhaar explains the various approaches to television genres in each of these cases (pp. 134 - 135).

Academic Edorta Arana, from the University of the Basque Country, also comments on this issue when analysing television programming (Arana, 2004), and he highlights four different existing proposals for programme classification. Arana selects them because, as he explains, they are provided by solid and reliable companies and

institutions, which disclose annual information in a regular manner and have a long tradition in the research field. Arana also includes in his book details about these companies' lists, according to the television genres and subgenres that each one differentiates in their categorisation (Arana, 2004, pp. 61 - 66). Moreover, he describes the specificities of each one of those main television genres, too (pp. 67 - 104).

The four main classifications that this academic takes as a reference are the following: i) The ESCORT classification (*European Standard Classification System for Radio and TV Programmes*), by the EBU-UER (European Broadcasting Union/Unión Europea de Radio Radiodifusión); ii) The classification provided by the CSA (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel) in France, as well as that used by the firm Médiamétrie which, as Arana comments, follows a similar criteria; iii) The categorisation made by Euromonitor, the television observatory body formed by research groups of five European countries (Italy, United Kingdom, Spain, France and Germany); iv) The Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) classification, referring to this multinational consultancy (now known as Kantar Media) and the programmes grouping system this company uses for their varied reports about television consuming. (cf. Arana, 2004, pp. 61-63).

1.9.3.1.1. Studying television genres.

With regard to television genres, explanations and reflections of Jonathan Bignell (2013) about this topic are worth considering. This scholar comments that genre derives from the French word meaning 'type', and defines genre as 'a kind or type of programme', explaining that 'programmes of the same genre have shared characteristics'. This scholar also comments that regarding television, the study of genre has derived from approaches and terms used in other cultural forms, such as film and

literature, which he finds adequate, because, as he indicates, ‘some of the most established television genres derive from type found in another media’. (Bignell 2013, p. 124)

This British academic also explains the basis of the study of genre and notes how it helps academics to classify television content according both to the convention and norms that can be found in those audio-visual texts as well as by linking them with the audiences’ perspective of television (Bignell, 2013, p. 126):

The study of genre is based on the identification of the conventions and key features that distinguish one kind of text from another, such as the characteristics of westerns, musicals and thrillers in cinema. The study of genre allows theorists to link the conventions and norms found in a group of texts with the expectations and understandings of audiences. In this respect the study of genre aims to explain how theorists and audiences classify what they see and hear on television according to: i) features of the text itself; ii) generic cues which appear in programme titles; iii) supporting information in the Radio Times or other listings and advertising publications; iv) the presence of performers associated with a particular genre (in the way that Bruce Forsyth is associated with television entertainment programmes, for example).

Bignell, therefore, refers to classifications made both by theorists and by viewers. In this text below he mentions Steve Neale’s comments in this regard (Bignell, 2013, p. 126): ‘Most theorists of genre argue that generic norms and conventions are recognised and shared not only by theorists themselves, but also by audiences, readers and viewers.’ (Neale and Turner, 2001, p. 1)

Likewise, this scholar reflects on the different opinions about the way television genres are classified, and poses various questions regarding this issue. Finally Bignell notes that several aspects are involved in the categorisation of television content within different genres, and comments that the study of genres in television includes different factors and perspectives. In this regard, the features of each audio-visual text, the

categorisation made by television producers and the way audiences classify the programmes they watch are all valid when including television texts within certain groups. Furthermore, according to Bignell's explanation the study of genres responds to all those perspectives (2013, pp. 124-125):

Theorists working on genre have disagreed about where genre categories come from: Do genre forms arise naturally from the properties of texts? Are they categories used by the producers of programmes? Are they categories brought by audiences to the programmes they watch? The answer is that genre is a term used to study each of these things.

Bignell's explanations about this topic go even further because he also poses the issue of the discussions about the functions of academics researching on television genres, as some voices defend that the study of genres should be constricted to the identification of television texts for evaluation purposes. Other scholars, though, think that the study of genres must be associated to the way audiences use genre to understand better the programmes they watch. The way different theorists and audiences value television programmes regarding the use of the rules of each genre is also commented by Bignell in this paragraph below (2013, p. 125):

...there is a disagreement about whether the task of the theorist is to identify genres so that programmes can be evaluated, or whether that task is to describe how actual audience make use of genre in their understanding of programmes. From an evaluative point of view, both television theorists and television fans might regard some programmes as transgressing the rules of genre and therefore evaluate these programmes as inferior. (...) By contrast, some television theorists might argue that programmes that transgress the boundaries of a genre a more valuable because they potentially draw the audience's attention to the conventional rules of television genre and therefore have a critical dimension. This argument derives from the perception that genre applies most neatly to mass-market popular culture texts, so that programmes which are firmly within the boundaries of a genre are regarded as formulaic whereas texts that mix genres are more interesting.

The different perspectives and opinions about the study of television genre as well as the different classification of television content according to them are commented by this academic. Moreover, he underpins the importance of the study of genre as such, and he explains his arguments in this regard, as we can read in this paragraph (Bignell, 2013, p. 125):

Nevertheless, all texts participate in genre to some extent, and often participate in several genres simultaneously. The study of genre is not only a way of pinning programmes down but also a way of explaining how programmes become interesting and pleasurable by working against genre conventions as well as with them.

Bignell notes that ‘genre categories are used in Television Studies to make sense of the differences between broadcast material and arrange it into hierarchies and groupings’ (2013, p. 127). In addition, the study of genre is considered relevant by this author not only for the categorisation of television programmes, as he indicates that it is also important to explain the way television content can be appealing for different audiences. Nevertheless, this scholar remarks that ‘it is rare for the components of programmes to belong exclusively to a single genre’ (p. 125) and notes the difficulties in categorising television programmes according to genre:

One of the difficulties in the study of genre in television is identifying which features of programmes are unique to a particular genre, to the extent that these features could form a list enabling the critic to establish the boundaries of a genre. (Bignell, 2013, p. 126)

Reflections and explanations about genre presented by scholar Jean K. Chalaby are also interesting. Chalaby highlights the relationship between creators and producers of television content and audiences, indicating the importance of television genres for all of them.

TV genres are ‘constructs created through social relationships between creators and audiences that delineate the similarities and differences among cultural objects’, and they matter for several reasons (Bielby and Harrington, 2008: 67). From the production side, they enable broadcasters to manage risk, as they can roughly gauge the size and type of audience that exist for each category (Bielby and Harrington, 2008: 67). For viewers it is about managing expectations. In the same way that a consumer purchasing a tin labelled ‘tomato soup’ would expect exactly that having opened the tin, a TV viewer selecting a romantic comedy looks forward to the story of a lead character overcoming misunderstandings and obstacles to find love, not being dismembered in a wood by a maniac with a chainsaw. (Chalaby, 2016, p. 43)

Chalaby also mentions that when classifying television content according to genre the boundaries are not very clear and that they keep changing, noting that some television programmes fall in between the shifting boundaries of the various categories used when classifying television programmes and formats regarding their genre. In fact, this author highlights the fact that the main issues in relation to television genres, their classification and their cultural relevance are still matters of discussion, referring to the work of various prestigious researchers in this regard (Chalaby, 2016, p. 43): ‘The history of the genre, its boundaries and cultural significance, remain open to debate (e.g. Bignell, 2005; Holmes and Jermyn, 2004; Kavka, 2012; Kilborn, 2003; Ouellette, 2014).’

1.9.3.1.2. Television genres: classification.

It can be said that the difficulties in classifying television content by genre is highlighted by most scholars researching about this topic. In fact, on the one hand different criteria are used when ordering television programmes according to genre, while on the other, it is generally admitted that the boundaries between different genres are not clear and keep changing. Spanish researcher Jaime Barroso refers to television

genres as the great groups in which programmes can be classified due to their thematic content or regarding the public they are addressed to (Barroso, 2002, p. 189, mentioned by Guerrero, 2010b, p. 239)

It has to be noted that besides that general criteria that refers to the thematic content and the targeted audience, other aspects are also taken into account when classifying television programmes and defining television genres, among them the time slot where a certain programme is broadcast. That is the case of those ‘talk shows’ that are defined as ‘late shows’ due to the time of the day when they are aired, an aspect that Guerrero also mentions (cf. Guerrero 2010b, p. 239). We can, therefore, note that their position in the programming schedule also define their categorisation. Categorisation and classification of television programmes can be extremely broad indeed depending on the parameters used for it.

With regard to television genres and their classification on the academic side, I will also note the reflections on this matter posed by Professor Luis Miguel Pedrero in his article ‘Armas de seducción catódica: Los géneros de entretenimiento en la neotelevisión contemporánea’ included in the book *El entretenimiento en TV: Guión y creación de formatos de humor en España* (Sangro & Salgado, 2008).

This academic comments that, regardless of the various and most diverse approaches to the study of television media (historical, cultural, economic, narrative, ideological, technological, philosophical and an anthropological), what stand out as key aspects are those systematisations that try to classify these audio-visual products, texts, both in terms of their form and content. According to Pedrero’s comments, researchers have always made an effort to search for those genre marks in television, to be able to reach an adequate understanding of television programming and programmes.

Furthermore, this scholar emphasises the fact that, due to its own idiosyncrasy, television activity, its development, has never been dependent on the previous definition of a model -call it genre, format or formula, its meaning is the least-, he states. On the contrary, he asserts, experimentation and constant splits from the previously tested versions and variations are the factors that boost the evolution of television proposals and he suggests a permanent revision over the classification of genres (Pedrero, 2008, pp. 33-34).

Consequently, Pedrero assumes that the classic theory of genres has lost validity when trying to apply it to a television whose speed encourages, stimulates, ambiguity more than reflection on the evolution of its contents. Therefore he proposes simple and easy categorisation criteria, even eclectic he affirms, but due to that, he understands that it is probably compatible with any other proposal either from the past or in the future. According to these reflections this scholar establishes three big genres, or macro-genres, as it has also been labeled in the scholarship dedicated to this topic: fiction, reality and entertainment, as Pedrero explains.

He indicates that this classification within those three axes is more adequate to the *neotelevision* era, reformulating the categorisation of times of *paleotelevision* which classified television programmes within three main categories, information, culture and spectacle. This author explains that this new categorisation that he proposes gets the inspiration from the classification by Argentinian researcher Gustavo F. Orza (2002) who gathers the different television programmes in three core areas: reference genres, fictional and hybrids (Pedrero, 2008, p. 35).

Hence, following these reflections, the classification of television content according to the parameters previously mentioned -fiction, reality and entertainment-

that Pedrero proposes in *contemporary neotelevision* is the following (Pedrero, 2008, p. 36):

- Fiction: Series, Serials, Sit-coms, Films, TV movies, Mini-series.
- Reality: News, Life events, Documentaries, Docuseries, Reality shows, Sports, Advertising.
- Entertainment: Competition, Shows, Humour, Talk shows, Docu-shows, Lifestyle, Children.

Focusing on television entertainment genres this scholar also mentions that the mixture of different genres, the assembly of fiction, information and spectacle is a feature of the current television output, mainly regarding entertainment programmes (Pedrero, 2008, p. 36).

1.9.3.1.3. Television entertainment: hybridity of genres.

According to the different classifications provided by academics as well as professionals, it can be said that television entertainment can be considered as a television genre as such. Nevertheless, it can also be observed that, nowadays, a great mixture of genres and subgenres can be identified when analysing and classifying the different types of television programmes. In addition, we can see that different classifications are made, due to the diverse criteria applied and the varied frameworks taken for each categorisation.

Hence, this fact, namely the mixture, the hybridity of genres, that can be noticed at first glance when watching the television output of most broadcasting companies of any kind, is also mentioned by many scholars. Academic Enrique Guerrero also

mentions it in the next paragraph when, referring to television entertainment and the classification of entertainment programmes, he notes that entertainment, besides being the main objective of television at present, is considered a television macro-genre of very heterogeneous characteristics, which gathers such different programmes as realities, game shows, informational or humour. He also states that the increasing tendency to mixture and fusion among them is softening their boundaries (Guerrero, 2007, p. 19). Likewise, he refers to Professor Bustamante's comments in this regard (Bustamante, 2002, pp. 222-223, in Guerrero, 2007, p. 3).

El entretenimiento, además de constituir el principal objetivo de la televisión en la actualidad, es considerado un macrogénero televisivo de características tan heterogéneas, que agrupa a programas tan dispares como los realities, los concursos, los divulgativos o el humor. La tendencia creciente al mestizaje entre ellos difumina cada vez más sus fronteras. (Guerrero, 2007, p. 19)

It can be said that the consideration of television entertainment as a macro-genre that includes a lot of subgenres of which classification is not easy is generally admitted. Actually, the various aspects mentioned here, that is to say, the difficulties in identifying and defining the specific characteristics of each genre regarding television, the fact that within the same television programme different genres and subgenres can be included, the blurring and continuous changing of the boundaries between television genres, and the fact that hybridity and intertextuality are key features of the current television content are all aspects that must be taken into account when referring to the study of television genres and the classification of television programmes according to that.

Actually, hybridity, intertextuality between different genres is an aspect which is very much mentioned by television scholars as a characteristic of television programmes at present. Although this aspect has been diminished for many years, as

Bignell comments, it is evident in the current television scenario whose complexity is also reflected in the difficulties in classifying television content regarding genre due to the mixture of genres and the blurred boundaries between them (Bignell, 2013, p. 127):

...programmes borrow intertextuality from a variety of genres and blur the boundaries between them. As Steve Neale (Neale and Turner 2001: 2) argues, 'The degree of hybridity and overlap among and between genres and areas has all too often been underplayed'. But, on the other hand, Neale goes on to note that 'Underplayed, too, has been the degree to which texts of all kinds necessarily "participate" in genre ..., and the extent to which they are likely to participate in more than one genre at once'. To make sense of the complexity of the contemporary television landscape, viewers become expert in recognising genre, and also derive pleasure from the manipulation of genre and from the ways that television plays with its boundaries.

1.9.3.1.4. Clasifying television entertainment.

In relation to television entertainment, its definition, and the classification of television entertainment programmes I would say that the arguments that Guerrero presents are worth taking into account. In the article in which he analyses the entertainment programmes of the Spanish public television company RTVE he poses several statements in this regard (Guerrero, 2007). Guerrero mentions the importance of the entertainment function of television, and its primacy over others, a fact that, as he points out, is underscored by many authors (2007, p. 1). He refers to Gérard Imbert among them who, as he notes, understands television as an entertainment machine with regard to the two definitions of the term that he mentions, that is to say 'to keep occupied' and to 'enjoy' (Imbert, 2003, p. 44).

Consequently, Guerrero states, in this context the term 'entertainment' can be applied to three different aspects. First of all, it is one of the main functions of this medium. Secondly it refers to a television macro-genre that includes a great diversity of

genres, such as ‘realities’, magazines, humour programmes and game shows. Finally, Guerrero notes, the concept ‘big format-entertainment’ is used by some television analysts to refer to an entertainment subgenre that is also known as ‘variety’ (Guerrero 2007, p. 1). In fact, these ‘variety’ programmes that Guerrero refers to are also classified as ‘light entertainment’ and are also labeled at present as ‘shiny-floor entertainment’.

En este contexto, es posible aplicar el término entretenimiento a tres realidades distintas pero relacionadas. En primer lugar, como ya se ha señalado, es una de las funciones básicas del medio. En segundo término, hace referencia a un macrogénero televisivo que aglutina a géneros tan diversos como los *realities*, los magazines, los programas de humor o los concursos. Y, por último, el concepto de “entretenimiento-gran formato” es empleado por algunos analistas televisivos para referirse a un subgénero del entretenimiento que también recibe el calificativo de “variedades” (Guerrero, 2007, p. 1)

Regarding Guerrero’s reflection, finally I want to point out the arguments he presents and the final criteria he uses for the identification and classification of television entertainment. In fact he mentions that, due to the difficulty that the definition of the term ‘entertainment’ implies, he approaches it from a ‘negative sense’ and, therefore, he focuses on those television programmes that cannot be classified either as fiction or information. According to that general categorisation, he centres his study on those genres, programmes and formats that he considers ‘entertainment’, that is to say all those that cannot be included in the ‘information’ and ‘fiction’ categories (Guerrero 2007, p. 4): ‘Ante la dificultad que implica definir el término ‘entretenimiento’, lo haremos en un sentido negativo. Es decir, estudiaremos los contenidos que no puedan ser clasificados como ficción ni como información.’

This author also refers to the difficulties in classifying television content and television entertainment in particular, in his book *El Entretenimiento en La Televisión*

Española. Historia Industria y Mercado (2010), and he proposes a classification that groups television programmes within four macro-genres, which, according to his explanation are entertainment, fiction, information and sport. Consequently, he indicates that generally speaking entertainment would be all that which cannot be classified as fiction, information or sport. This scholar explains that the following type of content would be included within the entertainment macro-genre: competition, informational, docusoap, docu-show, entertainment, humour, children, late show, magazine, musical, reality show and talk show.

Para una mayor claridad y para facilitar la comparación del entretenimiento con los restantes contenidos televisivos ofertados en el mercado, se han agrupado los géneros en cuatro grandes grupos o macrogéneros: entretenimiento, ficción, información y deporte. Por tanto, de forma general y casi por exclusión, diríamos que entretenimiento es todo aquello que no puede ser clasificado como ficción, información y deporte. Más en concreto, se incluyen dentro del macrogénero de entretenimiento los siguientes tipos de contenido: concurso, divulgativo, *docuserie*, *docu show*, entretenimiento, humor, infantil, *late show*, magacín, magacín de crónica rosa, musical, *reality show* y *talk show*. (Guerrero, 2010, p. 25)

Taking all this into consideration, we can affirm that there are different perspectives over the definition of television entertainment and the classification of television programmes regarding their genre. We can also note the difficulty in defining this term and in categorizing the great amount of different television programmes that are produced at present. Furthermore, it can be observed that the boundaries between genres are blurring and keep shifting. In addition, both the mixture of genres and the presence of various subgenres in the same programme are also core features of the present television output, and this fact is even more noticeable in the case of television entertainment. Finally I would also add that the terminology also keeps changing, and it is not unified either, as the same terms are used differently in many cases.

All these aspects, I would affirm, make the identification and classification of television entertainment programmes regarding genre parameters a difficult task, which does not respond to a unified criteria either in the academic or industrial field, although both areas, I would say, try to adapt those identifications and classifications to the rapid an numerous changes that can be observed in television content, with regard to genre, in recent years.

1.9.3.2. Television formats.

When defining and categorizing television content, that is to say television programmes, a reference has to be made to television formats, due to their significance in the television landscape during recent years and at present. Albert Moran is one of the pioneer academics studying on this topic, a field where he has developed a significant amount of research. His book *Copycat TV. Globalisation. Program Formats and Cultural Identity* (1998) has been edited several times, and is very much referred to by scholars conducting studies in this field since then. Moran tries to define what a ‘television format’ is at the very beginning of the first chapter of that book and, in this regard he comments that:

...in television the term [format] has been intimately linked to the principal of serial program production. A format can be used as the basis of a new program, the program manifesting itself as a series of episodes, the episodes being sufficiently similar to seem like instalments of the same program and sufficiently distinct to seem like different episodes. (...) Thus, from one point of view, a television format is that set of invariable elements in a program out of which the variable elements of an individual episode are produced. Equally, a format can be seen as a means of organising individual episodes. (...) Several elements constitute a format (Dawley 1994). From an industrial perspective, television programs can be divided into two types: those to do with ‘reality’ programs, such as news, talk and game shows; and those to do with drama, including situation comedy. (Moran, 1998, p. 13)

Actually, it can be said that three main elements are identified as television content ‘big’ units, namely genres, formats and programmes. Academic Enrique Guerrero (2010b, p. 239) mentions that fact and adds that a hierarchical categorisation can be established among them. According to his comments genre would hold the main category, followed by the format and, finally, the programme, which, he explains, implies the audio-visual materialisation of the project:

Por tanto, puede establecerse un esquema jerárquico en la clasificación de los contenidos televisivos, en el que el género representa la categoría mayor, seguido por el formato, y por último, el programa, que implica la materialización audiovisual del proyecto. (Guerrero, 2010b, p. 239)

Furthermore, Guerrero refers to Jaime Barroso (2002) and indicates that this author perceives a subordinate relationship of the format in respect to the genre, as he considers that formats are formal variations of the genre which determine the structure of the programme. Likewise, for the definition of both, formats and programmes, Guerrero mentions Cortés’ comments (1999), which define format as the group of elements of which a programme is formed. More precisely, Guerrero adds, referring to academics Moran and Malbon (2006), that a format is the set of elements that don’t change in each one of its outputs, and he notes that, according to Cortés definitions, a programme would be the basic unit of the programming schedule of a television channel. Finally, Guerrero states that, therefore, the format is the structure of content that acts as a reference for the adaptation of programmes, a process that this scholar considers essentially creative (Guerrero, 2010b, p. 239):

Este mismo autor [Barroso] percibe una relación subordinada del formato respecto al género al considerar que los formatos son variaciones formales del

género que determinan la estructura del programa. (...) Por su parte, José Ángel Cortés define el concepto de formato como “el conjunto de los elementos de los que se compone un programa” Más en concreto, se trata del conjunto de elementos que permanecen invariables en cada una de sus emisiones. (...) Asimismo, Cortés define programa como “la unidad básica de la parrilla de programación de una cadena de televisión (...). En definitiva, el formato es la estructura de contenido que sirve de referencia en la adaptación de programas, un proceso esencialmente creativo’.

1.9.3.2.1. The importance of television formats.

Academic Jonathan Bignell also highlights the importance of formats for the classification of television programmes. He understands that they are more appropriate than genres as he considers formats more stable. From his point of view formats define the characteristics of a programmes in a very extensive manner so their definition and classification is more reliable than when doing so according to genre, whose characteristics are more difficult to specify in the current television scenario, due to the various reasons we have pointed out previously. Bignell defines format as: ‘the blueprint for a programme, including its setting, main characters, genre, form and main themes’ (Bignell 2013, pp. 25, 71, 126). He explains the arguments just mentioned in this paragraph that I have quoted below.

Because of the instability of genre, it can be useful instead to consider the significance of format, since formats are more stable. Format specifies the ingredients of a programme, to the extent that the programme could be made by another television production company if that company combines the ingredients in the same way. A format is like a recipe, and can be the legal property of its creators so that if another company makes a similar programme, the makers of the new version could be taken to court for ‘stealing’ the programme idea. (Bignell, 2013, p. 127)

Consequently, we can say that, when referring to television programmes, products, and genres, and even more specifically to those classified as entertainment shows, the significance of television formats must indeed be taken into account. Actually this term is quite new, as it is associated to the increasing trade of television programmes, of different kinds, that has taken place in recent years, mainly during the last decade of the last century, and more noticeably during this new millennium. Academic Jean K. Chalaby comments on that and describes this phenomenon as ‘the format revolution’ and he states that ‘There are many reasons why TV formats -shows that are adapted to local audiences- deserve full attention’ (Chalaby, 2016, p. 1).

As we have mentioned previously J.K. Chalaby is among the academics who have developed interesting and prolific research on this topic. He states that the importance of formats and their trade is such that he considers that it has led to a ‘revolution’ of television entertainment. Actually, that perspective is already reflected in the title of his book, which is the result of extensive research on this area, namely *The format age. Television Entertainment’s Revolution*, (2016). Throughout this interesting text he presents comprehensive information about formats and their influence in the television entertainment field, presenting many examples which are analysed from various perspectives. In the introduction of that book he refers to the importance of television formats mainly in recent years, regarding their economic influence, but also due to their place in TV schedules all over the world and consequently, in relation to their effects on media globalisation (Chalaby, 2016, p. 1).

There are many reasons why TV formats -shows that are adapted to local audiences- deserve full attention. Following a quiet fifty-year period, the format revolution that came with the new millennium suddenly transformed a small commerce that was lying at the fringe of the TV industry into a global business. Today, hundreds of shows are adapted across the world at any one time, reaching a cumulative value (in terms of distribution and production fees) of

several billion dollars per year. (...) The impact of formats on television is manifold, starting with TV schedules. (...) The TV format business is deepening media globalization on several counts.

Likewise, the editorial comments that can be read on the back cover of Chalaby's book (2016) emphasise the significance of television formats:

Few trends have had as much impact on television as formats have in recent years. Long confined to the fringes of the TV industry, they have risen to prominence since the late 1990s. Today, they are a global business with hundreds of programmes adapted across the world at any one time, from mundane game shows to blockbuster talent competitions, from factual entertainment to high-end drama. Based on exclusive industry access, this book provides an in-depth analysis of the complex world of the TV format from its origins to the present day.

As Chalaby indicates (2011, p. 293) 'formatted brands exist in all TV genres and reach almost every country in the world'. In fact, as this scholar mentions 'many of today's popular TV programmes are formats that are adapted for local audiences as they travel from country to country'. He states that this industry was transformed in the late 1990s, when the format business turned into a global industry and 'concepts adapted from territory to territory began to cross borders in great numbers'. This author also explains that traditionally, international TV trade flows have been dominated by finished programmes, such as films and TV series, many of them produced in Hollywood, but he adds that this industry changed especially during the last decade of the past century, when the format business became global. Likewise, this academic comments that 'before this turning point, the few formatted programmes were most likely American game shows that travelled slowly and to a limited number of territories' (Chalaby, 2011, p. 293; Chalaby, 2012, pp. 36-37).

1.9.3.2.2. Television formats: concepts and ideas.

According to Chalaby's comments the formats trade implies the travelling of concepts, of ideas, although very well defined and described. In fact in this new scenario, programmes are not sold and distributed as final, closed, products but as 'formats' in which the main features of the original programme are defined but are later on adapted to different markets, according to their needs and demands. These formats are monetised through license fees that permit them to be tailored, and customised, glocalised indeed, to respond to the cultural specificities of the audience they are addressed to, beyond the almost unique glocalising way that was used until then, that is to say language adaptation, either by dubbing or subtitling. It is important to remark that these initial television shows, which were distributed and sold internationally, previous to formats trading, were fictional products, either films or television series of different kind and genres, and most of them were originally from the United States.

Unlike in that initial period though, formats which nowadays travel internationally and are adapted in many different countries worldwide with great success are mainly non-fiction products, that is to say those programmes which are also labeled as non-scripted/unscripted. It should also be noticed that many of them have not originated in the U.S.A. hence some countries in Europe do play a key role in this field. The UK is in fact the origin of some of the most popular formats that can be seen in television of most diverse countries all over the world. In any case we are certainly referring to entertainment programmes.

Academic Jonathan Bignell notes the possibilities that format trading offers to producers as it permits them to sell the idea of a programme, instead of a finished one. He mentions that this business presents interesting possibilities and remarks that: 'Some

television companies specialise in the development and sale of formats, and there have been spectacular successes' (Bignell, 2013, p. 73). He presents various examples of companies that have succeeded within the format business, and he also mentions the case of *Strictly come dancing*, a programme we have referred to in various occasions along this work. Bignell comments that this British format, which it is still on air in Great Britain, has been sold worldwide and adapted successfully in many different countries: '*Strictly Come Dancing*, for example, had been made in twenty-seven countries by 2006, using the same format as in Britain but with local contestants, judges and presenters' (Bignell, 2013, p. 71).

Bignell explains what the format business involves and the way in which programme ideas are sold, a process that implies the definition of the narrative structure and the main features of that show. In fact, as this author notes it is the template, the set of instructions that is sold and bought. As a matter of fact it is the information needed to adapt a certain programme to the cultural specificities of the society where it will be finally produced and watched which is defined when selling and buying licensed television formats.

The sale of programmes to other national broadcasters and diversification into global channels are useful ways for broadcasters to consolidate their position in the international television marketplace, but it is also possible to sell the idea of a programme, its format, rather than the programme itself. The sale of programme formats is similar to the business of selling complete programmes to other national broadcasters. The format business involves the sale of a programme idea and its narrative structure, character relationships and setting, often including the scripts for batches of episodes. So, rather than buying copies of the original programme itself, overseas broadcasters acquire the template or set of instructions which enables them to remake the programme using their own facilities, performers and native language and locations. (Bignell, 2013, p. 71)

Consequently, it can be said that the success of television formats entailed the trade of television shows of various genres, both fictional and non-fictional, and their adaptation to different markets and cultures. This ability, capability, to be adapted is in fact one of the keys to the success of television formats, a success that scholar J.K. Chalaby defines as a revolution. This academic names this present period as ‘the format age’ and he states that this phenomenon has brought a revolution in the television entertainment field. In this regard, the importance of non-fiction formats, those also labeled as non-scripted/unscripted formats is evident, a fact that is highlighted by this scholar. (Chalaby, 2016)

1.9.3.2.3. Formats: distinctive narrative and local adaptation.

Having said that, Chalaby mentions the difficulties in understanding and defining formats. In fact, he comments that ‘formats are notoriously difficult to fathom’ (2011, p. 294). Being aware of this difficulty and the discussions about it, Chalaby suggests the following definition: ‘a format is a show that can generate a distinctive narrative and is licensed outside its country of origin in order to be adapted to local audiences.’ (Chalaby, 2012, p. 37; 2011, p. 296)

This author admits that there is not a general agreement about what formats are and he also suggests Moran’s explications in this regard (Moran 2006, p. 20, mentioned by Chalaby in 2012, p. 37). Likewise, he refers to other opinions and among them to some negative comments as well as to the responses of some professionals from the industry who argue against them, as can be read in this paragraph (Chalaby 2011, p. 294):

Cynics say that a format is any show that anyone is willing to pay for, and some lawyers claim there is no such thing as a format since ideas cannot be copyrighted. The industry dissents with the latter point, pointing out that formats are not merely made of ideas but combine a great deal of expertise (Lyle, interview 2009).

Chalaby explains the definition he proposes and indicates that formats must have a ‘distinctive narrative dimension’. He adds that they are *inherently* transnational and he affirms that ‘a programme becomes a format only once it is adapted outside its country of origin’. In this regard he refers to the words of Michel Rodrigue, ‘one of the industry’s founding fathers’ (Chalaby 2011, p. 295) who emphasises the concept of formats as means that allow ideas to cross frontiers and to adapt them to the different cultures:

A format is not a product, it is a vehicle, and thus the only *raison d’être* of formats is the international market. . . . the format is a vehicle which enables an idea to cross boundaries, cultures, and so on, and to be localized in every place where it stops. (Rodrigue, interview 2008)

Nonetheless, it is the aspect of the narrative dimension conferred to formats that I would like to focus on now. In this regard Chalaby mentions the way FRAPA defines formats, a definition that underpins the importance of the narrative aspects of television formats (2011, p. 294):

The Format Recognition and Protection Association (FRAPA), founded by David Lyle in 2000, defines a format as follows: ‘In the making of a television programme, in the ordering of the television elements such that a distinctive narrative progression is created’ (Gilbert, interview 2008).

Moreover, I would like to note the explanations that Chalaby presents to show how the narrative thread, the storyline indeed, is created in unscripted television formats. Actually, this scholar argues that it is not totally different from the way

narratives are constructed in scripted entertainment. In this paragraph below he refers to three types of unscripted formats, which he regards as relevant, to explain how narratives are developed when creating them (2011, p. 294):

In three key genres of the format trade – reality, factual entertainment and the talent competition – a good format creates and organizes a story in a fashion that is not dissimilar to scripted entertainment, with all the highs and lows, tensions and conflicts, twists and conventions of drama. These formats are driven by an *engine*, ‘essentially the rules’ (Keane and Moran, 2009), which is designed to create *dramatic arcs* and produce *story lines*. In factual entertainment and talent shows, the narrative arc is based on the *journey* that the contestant makes and which, in the most dramatic cases, transforms their lives.

Finally, I will quote some of this author’s words where he compares the narrative resources used to create trigger, jeopardy moments, and he indicates that, in fact, the drama is similar in both genres although the way the stories are produced to create it is different. In the case of formats, he explains, it is their engine what helps to create the narrative whereas in fiction a previously written fictional script is the basis for that (Chalaby, 2011, p. 295):

Drama is also created with *trigger moments* (also known as ‘jeopardy’ moments). In reality TV, such moments are produced by unexpected twists or nomination nights. In quiz shows, jeopardy is generated with questions worth a large sum of money. In talent shows, such moments occur when the presenter announces the outcome of the public vote. The drama that is on display in these programmes is similar to scripted entertainment. The main difference lies in the way these stories are produced: it is the engine of the format that helps create the narrative as a programme progresses, whereas in fiction, the story is written first and then played out.

1.9.3.2.4 Formats: frames for production.

Academic Josep D. Straubhaar also comments on television formats and highlights their significance. In the paragraph I quote below (2007, p. 181), he remarks

that format is in fact a more specific frame for production than genre. This scholar refers to the main classification of formats proposed by Albert Moran and to the definition of format by this author, who explains that ‘a television format is that set of invariable elements in a program out of which the variable elements of an individual episode are produced’ (Morán 1998, p. 13). We have indeed mentioned Moran’s explanations in this regard at the beginning of this section. Therefore, Moran (1998, 2004) distinguishes two main kinds of formats, responding to a classification within which various genres, subgenres and diverse type of formats are included in each one of these two main areas.

Actually, Moran differentiates between fiction, that is to say scripted entertainment, and reality. In the first group he includes fictional formats, such as drama and situation comedy whereas in the second group, that he defines as reality shows, he includes game shows, talk shows and live dramatic situations. All this is noted by Straubhaar in this paragraph that I quote here (2007, p. 181):

Some new genres have become the focus for a global form flow and adaptation, the licensed format trade. *Format*, in this sense, is a more specific framework for producing that *genre*. According to Moran (1998), “a television format is that set of invariable elements in a program out of which the variable elements of an individual episode are produced” (p. 13). So a melodrama or a prime-time serial is a genre. The concept, script, and production guidelines of *Desperate Housewives* constitute a specific format. (...). Morán (1998, 2004) observed that the two main kinds of formats are (1) drama, situation comedy, or scripted entertainment, and (2) reality shows, including game shows, talk shows, and live dramatic situations, such as MTV’s *Real World*.

In addition to the general explanation and categorisation of formats given by Moran, in the glossary list of his book *Television Program Formats: Their Making and Meaning* (2006), this author includes two other definitions of the word ‘format’, as a noun and as a verb, which help to clarify the meaning of this term which is used both in

the industry and by academics who study about television programmes, in relation to their making and trading processes as well as their content:

- (1) Format (noun) essentially, this is the total package of information and know-how that increases the adaptability of a programme in another place and time.
- (2) Format (verb) the activity of systematically documenting and organizing together those elements that will increase the adaptability of a programme. To format is to arrange together the different parts of a format. One of the subsidiary actions involved here may include obtaining copyright clearance on particular materials to be included in the package.

With respect to the consideration of formats as adequate frames for production and for the trade of television content, the report *How to create a hit format in 10 lessons* (The Wit, 2016) includes interesting information, which, among other things can help to understand the various definitions of the term. Actually, in addition to those explanations and definitions we have presented throughout this work, the various concepts and processes related to format creation and trading that are explained in that text can be illuminating in this regard (The Wit, 2016, pp. 4, 5):

A foreign producer can draw inspiration from a foreign show they have seen, then build on it with other ideas; and from this *mélange*, create a new format they can sign under their own name. They will then incorporate current trends that reflect their TV viewers' demands. (...) ...non-scripted television -which cannot sell "ready-made" products so successfully, due to language or cultural barriers- must provide the possibility of "local adaptation", or "localisation", thus creating a need for "formats". (...) They organise and formalise the main elements that are characteristic to their show, creating a format. The resulting format becomes a form of "intellectual property" which, like any property, can be bought and sold on the market according to some basic rules and agreements.

This document also mentions two aspects that are closely related to the concept and meaning of formats. On the one hand, the importance of tailoring and adapting them to local specificities, namely their 'localisation', which is considered a significant

feature of television formats, as well as one of the main reasons for their creation and for their success, is commented in this text. It has to be said that they also point out that most of this type of television content is classified as unscripted, as we have noted throughout this work. Both aspects are commented in this report published by that internationally known television formats consultant company: ‘...non-scripted television -which cannot sell “ready-made” products so successfully, due to language or cultural barriers- must provide the possibility of “local adaptation”, or “localisation”, thus creating a need for “formats”’. (The Wit, 2016, p. 4)

On the other hand, the need to be adapted to other markets, cultures and languages, that is to say, to ‘travel’ across boundaries, to be ‘transnational’, is also considered as a core feature of television formats by the professionals of The Wit, as it can be read in this paragraph that I have extracted from the aforementioned text (p. 5):

In the late 1990s, when formats first began taking shape, a format was understood as a show that was sold, adapted to the local market, and aired in at least one foreign country. In other words, an original show became a format as soon as it was replicated in another language and for another viewing audience. Before being exported, a show was not a format; that is to say it had not been formatted, or transferred abroad. The fact that it was sold is what made the title of format applicable, and also what bestowed it with commercial value.

Hence, we have referred to both features throughout this work when mentioning the definition of this term provided by various academics. Actually it can be noticed that scholar J.K. Chalaby also points out those two aspects, localisation and internationalisation, as essential in the definition of formats, a fact that what we have pointed out in the preceding section.

1.9.3.2.5. Paper-formats.

In relation to the various definitions of formats that we have pointed out in this text, I would like to include a final reference to another term closely associated, which is often used in the industry. I am referring to the word ‘paper-format’. The document unveiled by The Wit refers to this term and explains both its origin and what can be understood by that denomination. Furthermore, the difference between the two concepts, ‘format’ and ‘paper-format’ are also shown in that text (2016, pp. 5, 6):

Not long after the success of these formats, interest spread in this concept and nearly everything became a format, even mere ideas and concepts of TV shows, as long as they were written on paper. Thus the paper format was born. An idea became a format even before it had been tested anywhere in the world, and were immediately offered on the international market, with no reviews, no proven success, and no experience. A paper format can come with: i) a pitch, concept, or idea; ii) a written development; iii) a mood tape made of extracts from other shows that helped inspire it; iv) a 3D animation showing how it works, for minor costs. By definition, a paper format has never been produced, even as a pilot, nor tested before. (...) It is valuable, but by no means does it offer the thing that made formats so successful in the first place: the ability to minimise risk when the show is produced and aired. Paper formats do not minimise risks as regular formats do, and this is because they skip the creation and development phases that are critical for testing an idea’s quality in a market. (...) Unlike its tried-and-tested sister, a paper format is essentially a bet on the suitability of the creator’s concept, its genius, and its capacity to exist on the screen. It’s cheaper, but it’s paper.

When writing about television formats in this work we have often referred to Albert Moran, who is indeed one of the most prestigious researchers on this subject and, as said, is one of the academics who first started analysing this topic. Since that early work a lot of research has been conducted in this field, an area that is evolving very rapidly as well as gaining importance. Regarding the analyses that have taken place around this issue, and in addition to the numerous articles and various books written by Moran, I would say that, as noted previously, the work developed by Jean K. Chalaby is

also worth mentioning. Actually, along with the several articles published by this scholar during recent years, the book that he has recently written (2016), entitled *The Format Age. Television's Entertainment Revolution* presents complete information and analysis about this topic, from different perspectives. We have mentioned previously that book in this work when referring to the importance of television formats and their trade in relation to economics, and regarding their cultural influence too but besides that, the reflections and information that Chalaby presents in relation to the definition and classification of television formats are indeed relevant.

At the beginning of this section we included several explanations about the definition of this term suggested by Chalaby and in relation to the way narratives are constructed in unscripted formats, in comparison to the cases of fictional, scripted entertainment genres. In this case I want to focus on the classification of television formats that Chalaby proposes.

1.9.3.2.6. Formats: 'fiction' and 'real'.

In fact it can be observed that Chalaby follows Moran's general classification, as this scholar also differentiates between scripted genres and reality. Chalaby, nevertheless, separates reality programming in four main categories, and, as it can be observed, this classification of subgenres within the reality genre differs from Moran's categorisation. Moreover, Chalaby doesn't include genres such as talk shows and game shows within the reality category, unlike Moran.

Actually, I would say that this different categorisation is mostly a matter of terminology as, in fact, both authors differentiate between fictional, scripted, formats and non-fiction, unscripted formats, creating two big groups to classify them. In both

cases the main categorisation is, indeed, between ‘fiction’ and ‘real’ a classification that still remains as generally accepted in most cases, although it can be said that at present the terms scripted and non-scripted/unscripted are used most to label those two main categories.

Nonetheless, we can observe that Moran defines as ‘reality’ the unscripted/non-scripted group, and he includes within that category all the formats that are not fictional. Chalaby, on his side, groups within the ‘reality’ category only certain subgenres, whereas others such as quizzes, game shows and talk shows are not included. In both cases though all these formats are classified in opposition to the fiction, so called scripted, category and, consequently included within the non-fiction, non-scripted/unscripted group.

Chalaby, however, explains that he categorises formats in that way for his purposes as he is aware that the boundaries between genres and the way they are classified are still not clear, as those limits keep shifting. In addition, he admits that some programmes can be included in more than one group. This academic, finally, comments that the purpose of the typology he proposes is to differentiate formats, not deliver a detailed genre analysis. Hence, he notes that ‘Reality television is a broad church, with many strands in constant evolution, and therefore does not lend itself easily to grand statements’ (2016, p. 43). I quote below the five groups he proposes within the reality category and the programmes that he presents as examples of each case (Chalaby 2016, pp. 43, 44):

- observational documentaries (e.g. *Benefit Street*)
- factual entertainment (e.g. *Wife Swap*)
- reality competitions (e.g. *Big Brother*)
- talent competitions (e.g. *Dancing with the Stars*)

- constructed reality (e.g. *Made in Chelsea*)

Chalaby highlights indeed the importance of these unscripted genres that he groups within the category of ‘reality’. In fact, this author explains that reality television had great influence on the evolution and relevance of TV formats, indicating that this new type of unscripted programmes entailed a big shift with regard to the genres that were most common until then, mentioning among those genres drama, comedy, news and current affairs, as well as quizzes and panel and talent shows (Chalaby, 2016, p. 44).

The advent of reality television was another innovation that helped to bring about the TV format revolution. In terms of genre, TV schedules had not changed much in half a century: 1990s TV staples such as drama, comedy, news and current affairs, quiz shows, panel shows, and amateur and talent shows had all begun life in the sound broadcasting era. Thus the rise of a new unscripted genre is an event of historical significance that both denotes profound changes and heralds new ones.

1.9.3.2.7. ‘Reality’ formats: basic elements.

Chalaby explains the characteristics of those subgenres that he categorises as reality television, and he indicates that there are three core elements, which can be identified as inherent to this type of formats although in a different manner depending on each case. As can be observed, this scholar notes that this type of formats are unscripted, that real people play themselves instead of actors who perform their part, and that the stories are somehow ‘real’. Nevertheless he notes that the boundaries between different genres and subgenres are not always clear (Chalaby, 2016, p. 44):

... all reality sub-genres consist, to a varying extent, of three basic elements: (1) unscripted storytelling, (2) contestants who play themselves and (3) claims to a connection with the real world. In reality shows, the narrative arc is not generated by a script but engineered by *rules* and *situations* that create drama. As ever in television boundaries are fluid and some reality programmes are partially scripted (dating shows in particular), just as some constructed reality shows are fully scripted.

This author also comments on the differences between scripted, fictional, genres and non-scripted, reality programmes. When doing so he focuses on the characters that take part in each case. This author points out the importance of these entertainment shows starring 'real' people and he explains that, in fiction, characters, that is to say actors, play a scripted role whereas in reality television characters play themselves. In this text below Chalaby argues on that and presents various examples to clarify his statements (Chalaby, 2016, p. 44):

The distinction between scripted and reality genres is not about the casting of everyday people versus actors but about characters who play a scripted role versus characters who play themselves. A soap actor on *Celebrity Big Brother* or *I'm a celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* plays himself or herself, and viewers hope to get to know the person behind the persona.

Authenticity is the third characteristic of the great amount of formats that can be included within the reality genre according to the classification proposed by this scholar. Chalaby explains, though, that there are different levels of authenticity, which, in general terms depend on the specific features of each subgenre. Consequently there are differences in this regard between, for example, observational documentaries or talent competitions. This author notes that fixed-rig productions, fly-on-the wall programmes, which portray real life, are appealing to viewers because they seem more authentic, whereas other shows such as talent competitions are more structured and so they are perceived as less authentic by the audience watching them. Chalaby also

comments about it in this paragraph below, presenting several examples of well-known British programmes to illustrate his arguments (Chalaby, 2016, p. 44):

Finally, all reality shows lay claim to authenticity, which is stronger and more genuine in the case of observational documentaries than in that of talent competitions. Fixed-rig productions that use remotely controlled cameras unobtrusively reach areas that were previously out of bounds to film crews. Shows like *24 Hours in A&E*, *Educating Essex* or *Gogglebox* do well with viewers because they use a depiction of life in schools, hospitals and living rooms that viewers feel is both honest and intimate. With more structured shows like talent competitions, an element of doubt over authenticity is inherent to the genre, and production teams know that establishing the degree of manipulation of such programmes is a game that audiences like to play (Carter, interview 2014).

1.9.3.2.8. Formats: new classifications.

Since the first studies conducted about this topic, which started during the last decade of the past century, a great deal of research about television formats has been carried out, and this issue has been analysed from different perspectives, both in the academic and the professional field, that is to say, within the industry. Furthermore, the evolution of television formats in these last years, both regarding market perspectives and narrative ways is very significant indeed and, consequently, we could say that new classifications are made, beyond those early and broad ones initially proposed by academics researching on this topic. We have already mentioned Chalaby's categorisation which, although following Moran's general gathering, groups those formats considered as reality programming in a slightly different manner.

Furthermore, these new categorisations keep changing and evolving as new types of formats are added to that initial list. Actually, as already commented, the

mixture, the hybridisation of different types of genres, subgenres and formats is a key characteristic of the current television scenario, a landscape that is changing and evolving constantly and rapidly. Hence, we could state that this blend of genres that is noticed in the creation of new formats implies the inclusion of new elements in the identification of television entertainment products, texts. Likewise, this fact influences their classification regarding their genre and in relation to the main characteristics that permit the inclusion of each one within a specific group or category. Moreover, terminology in this regard is also changing and evolving.

1.9.3.2.8.1. Scripted and non-scripted/unscripted formats.

Actually, it can be observed that, according to the terminology and categorisations that have lately become most common, the two big groups that Moran initially differentiated would respond to a general classification of the so called ‘Scripted’ and ‘Unscripted/Non-scripted’ formats. The former category would refer to those television products which are strictly and entirely fictional, in which the two main subgenres that Moran mentions, drama and situation comedy, would be included. In this broader categorisation, the second group that Moran defines as ‘reality shows’ would in fact be included within the group of the so called ‘unscripted/non-scripted’ formats, which would indeed contain among others the genres and type of formats that Moran mentions, such as game shows, talk shows and live dramatic situations.

According to their etymology, the terms ‘unscripted’ or ‘non-scripted’ referring to television formats would, therefore, define those programmes which do not respond to, and are based on, a script, a definition and classification that, it must be said, is not totally correct. Actually, most of the programmes included in this category do indeed

need a script of some kind to be produced. Nevertheless, with regard to the classification of television formats, the terms ‘unscripted’ and ‘non-scripted’ are generally accepted for those formats which are not strictly and totally fictional. In fact, it is generally acknowledged that when using/mentioning the term ‘script’ in this context it is a ‘fiction-script’ which is being referred to. Consequently, the formats classified as ‘non-scripted/unscripted’ are those which do not follow a pre-written, fiction-script.

Hence, a great amount and diversity of formats are included within this category. I would also add that in many cases some of the programmes, formats, and even genres that are included within the ‘unscripted/non-scripted’ group do include parts which are not only scripted but are even totally fictional. This is the case of some talk shows, and it is most evident in those categorised as ‘late shows’, where various types of sketched comedy, and therefore fictional-scripted audio-visual texts, television products, are often included. (cf. Bignell 2013; Chalaby, 2016)

1.9.3.2.8.2. ‘Reality’, ‘factual’ and ‘factual-entertainment’.

Terminology used for the classification of formats and programmes is not very clear in some cases, and the terms used vary and evolve. In fact, we have observed that the term ‘reality’ is used in different ways by different scholars, and that is also the case, I would say, of the term ‘factual’.

Actually, regarding the terms ‘reality’ and ‘factual’ it can be said that, in some respect, both classifications respond to similar parameters. Thus, ‘reality’ would refer to those programmes which show ‘real situations’ as ‘factual’ includes those programmes which reflect facts, and, therefore reality. Consequently, we could say that the boundary

between those categories is not always very clear, even though it can be observed that, in general terms, this classification responds to a categorisation made in opposition to the fictional/not real/not factual formats.

Likewise, the term 'factual-entertainment' is nowadays very much used to categorise those formats that although present facts, and consequently reality, do include aspects which are considered entertainment elements. That is to say, they have features that, regarding content and/or narrative resources, can be defined as such. Hence, as we have mentioned previously in this work, academic Toby Miller notes that this new term, 'factual-entertainment', was coined to differentiate this type of formats from the 'more pure', 'serious', 'factual' ones (Miller 2010, p. 82). Actually, in many cases the category 'factual' includes the documentary genre in its various forms.

Hence, observing the different classifications of television programmes at present, it can be said that the term 'factual' can be considered a broad category which includes informational television content. Nevertheless, within this group a difference between purely factual and informational formats and programmes - such as some documentaries- and the so called 'factual entertainment' -which includes both informational and entertaining aspects- can be established. Consequently, we can affirm that factual entertainment programmes are at the same time informational and entertainment television, and that this is one of the subgenres included in the hybrid category of 'infotainment' previously mentioned, a subgenre that Chalaby, on his side, includes within the broad group that he labels as 'reality'.

Having said that, the various forms of documentaries which mix different genres and include other resources than those purely real, factual, informational elements and narratives, can be categorised in some cases as factual entertainment or at least, within

the broader category of ‘infotainment,’ as is the case of those formats labeled as docu-soap, docu-reality, docu-show, mockumentary, docutainment, and even those labeled as fly-on-the wall documentaries.

Finally, as we have commented before, some formats present a mixture of genres that implies their categorisation as part of different groups at the same time, as is the case of many programmes of various kind, which can be equally categorised as reality shows, factual entertainment and even variety shows and which, in most cases, mix to some extent informational and entertainment elements. A mixture of genres and subgenres in these cases is evident and, consequently their categorisation under a unique umbrella is not easy.

1.9.3.2.8.3. New formats: new categories.

Consequently, we can observe the difficulties in classifying television content while, in addition, new terms are being coined to name, describe and define the new type of formats that have been created, and that respond in many cases to a mixture and hybridity of the different genres that were traditionally considered in the classification of television content. Therefore both in academia, and mainly in the industry, new formats are classified under new categories. Moreover, the names chosen to label them reflect the mixture and hybridity already mentioned, and the softness, the plasticity, of the boundaries that differentiate them. Among them, the aforementioned term ‘infotainment’ is broadly known, a word created to define those genres that gather and combine elements of both macro-genres information and entertainment. That combination between genres traditionally considered as merely informational and the entertainment ones is evident in many talk shows but it is also reflected in those

programmes that combine elements of the documentary genre with others more associated to the entertainment area, as we have noted previously.

Likewise, as said, many formats that are easily categorised as ‘entertainment’ include elements and features that, in fact, can be classified amid different subgenres. Hence, many formats that are broadly labeled as ‘talent shows’ may include elements of such diverse subgenres as factual, reality, competition, gameshows, talk shows, variety and light entertainment. It has to be said that many of them also include aspects that can be categorised as informational and that can refer to most diverse topics, disciplines and fields. The great amount and variety of formats that are classified within the category of factual-entertainment certainly present this mixture of genres and subgenres too.

Taking all this into consideration, we can affirm that the mixture and hybridity of genres and subgenres is a key feature of television programmes and formats at present, and that this fact also influences the nomenclature used to name them. This combination takes place in all directions, as not only informational and entertainment genres are mixed but also are fictional and non-fictional elements. Furthermore, various different subgenres can be included and even combined within the same format or programme. Due to that, we can also state that a clear and unique classification of television programmes is not easy and that can be even confusing, as in many cases similar television programmes and formats are grouped differently and under different labels. Furthermore, it can be observed that not only the same types of programmes are named and classified differently, as the same nomenclature is also often used in different ways from different scholars as well as from different companies and entities within the industry.

1.9.3.2.8.4. Classifying television content: the industry.

We have already noted that fact in this text, when referring to the classifications made by different academics. Equally, the different ways of classifying and labelling television genres, programmes and formats within the industry is also evident. Enough arguments to back up that statement can be found if we just look at the information provided by different television companies as well as by various and varied entities related in different manners to this activity, either public or private. Likewise, the great and varied industrial reports of different kind that are constantly disclosed reflect these differences. It can be observed that different criteria, as well as numerous and varied labels are used to name and classify the great amount of television entertainment programmes that are created, produced and distributed at present all over the world. The way programmes are grouped and ordered in the web sites of different television companies worldwide and the reports disclosed by varied media consultancies are good examples of these different classifications and labellings (e.g. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/tv/programmes>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/tv/programmes/genres>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/tv/programmes/formats>; MipCom/MipTV/MipFormats Reports, The Wit's reports and conferences ...).

In this respect, we have earlier mentioned that a general classification that differentiates between information and entertainment and among scripted/fictional and unscripted/non-fictional formats and programmes seems to be under quite general consensus at present, mainly in those classifications that can be found within the professional field. Nonetheless, it can be observed that within those general categorisations differences can also be noticed.

I shall present as an example the professional report distributed recently by the company Parrot Analytics about the situation of ‘Unscripted content around the world’, in 2018. In this report the classification of genres presented distinguishes between four main genres: *Drama, comedy, children* and *unscripted*. On the other hand, within the ‘unscripted’ content they establish three main groups, that is to say ‘reality’, ‘variety’ and ‘documentary’. Furthermore, when analysing the global demand for unscripted content, within the most demanded programmes and formats of the ‘variety’ genre they include the following subgenres, as well as examples of popular programmes in each category: Sketch Comedy (*Saturday Night Live*), Late Night Talk Show (*The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*) and Talk Show (*The Daily Show*). Within the ‘Reality’ group, on its side, they differentiate the following subgenres among the most watched: Performance Reality (*America’s Got Talent*), Celebrity Reality (*Bigg Boss*), Comedy Reality (*America’s Funniest Home Videos*), Competition Reality (*The Voice*), Science Reality (*Mythbusters*) and Fashion Reality (*RuPaul’s Drag Race*).

Finally, the third subgenre that they differentiate within the unscripted group, which is broadly labeled as ‘documentary’ in this report by Parrot Analytics, is divided in various categories according to their theme, and ordered as here following their popularity globally: Biography, Nature, Science, Travel, True Crime, Historical, Social and Food.

This is just an example of the varied ways in which programmes and formats are classified at present. Other industry and professional reports such as those distributed during, and in relation with, the prestigious international MipCom and MipTV markets held annually in France, show various classifications of entertainment programmes and formats, both scripted and unscripted, that differ from this categorisation. Equally, the way that internationally known television formats consultant company, The Wit,

classifies programmes also differs, as it can be seen in the various conferences that they annually offer during the aforementioned MipTV, MipFormats and MipCom events in Cannes, France, as well as in the professional reports that they regularly disclose for their clients. In fact, various classifications are made in the industry according to the different parameters used and the degree of detail demanded in each case.

1.9.3.3. Television content: information and entertainment.

Taking all this into consideration, we can state the difficulties in classifying television content and the lack of consensus in this regard. We can observe that the rapid change and evolution in this field, the quick and almost constant proliferation of new types of programmes and formats in which the mixture and hybridity of various subgenres is evident, along with the blurring of the boundaries used to differentiate them, entail extra difficulties for the categorisation of television content within the same parameters, under equal groups and using the same terms and labels.

Due to that, in this new television scenario, and for my purpose, I would propose a broad classification of genres to define and categorise television programmes. In fact, from my perspective I would initially differentiate between the two main macro-genres in television, that is to say information and entertainment. When doing so, and following the information and arguments presented previously, I would include inside the information genre only those subgenres, formats and programs that can be considered strictly informational, those that have the sole objective of informing, without any additional intention and/or elements that can be identified as entertainment. News and current affairs programmes would mainly form this group, where news bulletins, ‘hard-talk’ interviews and debates, and some kind of documentaries and

‘factual’ programmes would be included. All of them strictly informational programmes as said.

Within the entertainment genre I would, therefore, integrate all the rest, i.e. those programmes that cannot be considered strictly informational, because they have elements that can be regarded as entertainment, no matter in which proportion. Those programmes and formats whose objective wouldn’t be exclusively, uniquely, to inform would be grouped in this category. Consequently, I would say that whatever is not ‘pure, genuine, information’ can be considered as entertainment content in the current television landscape.

In this respect, I somehow align with Guerrero’s argument who, as commented previously, takes a general approach to defining and classifying television entertainment programmes, taking a classification in a ‘negative sense’ as a basis. According to his proposal he differentiates this category from others taking as a starting point a definition of what is not entertainment. Consequently, from his point of view all those programmes which do not respond to that premises (not-entertainment) would be valid for their categorisation as television entertainment content.

From my perspective, though, in this actual scenario I find it easier to identify those programmes and formats which are purely informative, those which have none of those features that can be considered by any means as entertainment content, those which have no intention further than to inform and consequently no pretensions to entertain. Due to that, I would say that it is easier to identify and classify those formats and programmes that, because they are not purely informational, could therefore be included within the broad category of television entertainment. From this perspective all

those different types of programmes and formats, including hybridisations of different kinds, would be included in this macro-genre called television entertainment.

1.9.3.3.1. Television entertainment: ‘fiction’ and ‘non-fiction’.

Having said that, and observing the different classifications that are made within the entertainment genre I would say that, in most cases two big groups are differentiated within the television entertainment field. Those big categories do in fact distinguish between fiction and non-fiction content.

The group labeled as ‘fiction’ would include that content which is purely and strictly fictional, those television products which are recorded with actors, following a fiction-script. Various types of television series and serials, films and the so called TV movies, as well as the diverse television fiction genres and subgenres such as situation comedies and soap operas would be within this category. It has to be said that other forms of fictional products such as sketch comedies are not normally included in the ‘fiction’ group. Actually, it can be noticed that, in general terms, there seems to be quite a general agreement about what can be included in the ‘fiction’ category.

The second big group would therefore refer to those programmes and formats that are not strictly and completely fictional, those which indeed are not included in the ‘fiction’ category according to the terms previously mentioned. At present most of these are labeled as non-scripted/unscripted, according to the arguments that I have commented previously, but they are also named as non-fiction. It goes without saying that, as mentioned previously, these formats and programmes may have elements and sections that are indeed fiction, as is the case of most late shows and, most noticeably, the sketch comedy formats. In fact, all the hybrid genres and subgenres of any kind, that

is to say those that mix information and entertainment as well as fiction and non-fiction elements and even those which include different subgenres of any kind among them, would be part of this categorisation within television entertainment. It goes without saying that an enormous amount and diversity of television formats and programmes form this broad group.

I would like to stress the relevance of this type of formats and programmes in the current television landscape, both regarding their significance due to the space and position they occupy in most television schedules internationally as well as for their importance in the world television content industry. Their cultural significance, the facility of this type of formats to be adapted to the specificities, needs and demands of local cultures communities is also worth mentioning. (cf. Moran, 1998; Chalaby, 2016)

In addition, and regarding terminology, it should be noted that the terms ‘scripted entertainment’ and ‘unscripted entertainment’ are also used to name those two big groups within which most television entertainment content is broadly categorised nowadays. In these cases it can be noticed that sometimes the classification varies slightly from the above mentioned because the category of scripted entertainment sometimes includes some types of sketched comedy too.

1.9.3.3.2. Television fiction and television entertainment programmes.

Consequently it can be said that, in general terms, and for my purpose, I agree with, and take as a basis, Guerrero’s proposal for the identification and classification of television programmes. I, however, slightly differ from it because I include fiction within television entertainment, whereas Guerrero refers to it as a third category differentiated from the other two, i.e. information and entertainment.

In any case, even though he distinguishes fiction and entertainment as two different genres, Guerrero highlights the importance of entertainment content as a whole in television programming, as he remarks that ‘fiction and entertainment are the most common genres and two major keystones in television schedule design’ (Diego & Guerrero, 2006, p. 1)

Again, I would say that this classification is more a matter of case of nomenclature, both regarding the term ‘genre’ and the name ‘entertainment’ and linked to what different academics understand about each one of those terms, and more precisely about concepts such as ‘television entertainment’ and ‘television entertainment genre’. From my perspective, there is little doubt about considering ‘television fiction’ as entertainment, and according to the explanations about what can be understood by the term ‘genre’ presented in previous section, I would say that neither are there about categorising television fiction as a genre. That is why I have taken the category of ‘television entertainment’ as a macro-genre and included the television fiction genre in it.

Having said that, I would add that the differentiation between ‘fiction’ and ‘entertainment’ that Guerrero presents would actually correspond to the classification as ‘fiction’ and ‘non-fiction’ that is also used to differentiate the television content included within what can be considered a broad ‘television entertainment’ category. Finally, as in previous statements, I would like to add that this classification seems to be broadly accepted nowadays and that, furthermore, the terms ‘scripted entertainment’ and ‘non-scripted entertainment’ are commonly used to refer to those big categories in which television entertainment content seems to be divided at present.

However, I would say that what Guerrero does, in fact, is to differentiate between fiction television and a broad category that he names ‘entertainment’. For my purpose I do indeed distinguish those two big groups too, although I name them differently because, as said, I understand that although divided in two groups all that television content is indeed entertainment, and, therefore, all those products, texts, have to be included within the entertainment genre. Consequently, and for my purpose, in order to differentiate those two big groups I name them ‘television fiction’ and ‘television entertainment programmes’.

Nonetheless, it has to be said that the scope of analysis I want to stress in the last part of this work is the same as Guerrero’s. Thus, for my purpose I also leave fiction on one side, to focus on those type of programmes that Guerrero classifies under the generic term ‘entertainment’ and that, on my side, I prefer to label as ‘entertainment programmes’. In fact, I want to highlight the importance of this type of programmes in the current television ecosystem as I understand that this is an interesting area of research due to different reasons, as I will mention at the end of this section.

I have no intention though to theorise about television genres, as that itself is an area that needs deep analysis due to the great and rapid changes that are taking place in this field. Hence, my objective in this respect is to define and identify ‘television entertainment’ and to find a satisfactory way to order, categorise and label the great amount of television entertainment content that has been created, produced and disseminated during recent years and at present. I want to do so in order to define an adequate framework of research that will enable us to study television entertainment programmes from different perspectives, so that the positive contributions of this type of audio-visual content can be identified and explained in a structured manner. That is why I prefer to take a broad classification that differentiates those two big groups

aforementioned, although being aware that there is not even a total consensus in this regard. I have also provided information in this section about further classifications, but, as can be observed, the differences when classifying and ordering the great amount and diversity of television programmes and formats at present, as well as the varied nomenclature used, are evident.

1.9.3.4. Television content: other categorisations.

1.9.3.4.1. Sports.

There is a category that I have not cited so far in this classification but that I would say needs a mention on its own, I am referring to sports. Sports broadcasting in television can be certainly considered as entertainment television content, and relevant I would say, according to the audience figures it has and the attention it attracts. Consequently I would consider sports as a category of television entertainment as such, although for the purpose of this work I will not take into account sport events broadcasting. Scholars Diego and Guerrero also mention sport as an important category when classifying television content, even though they don't include it within the entertainment genre. Again, I would say that it is more a matter of terminology, as I have pointed out previously when referring to Guerrero's classification of television content. These scholars comment that: 'the schedule of a television network is supported, mainly, by four kinds of content: information, fiction, sports and entertainment' (Diego and Guerrero, 2006, p. 9).

1.9.3.4.2. Children programmes.

In the same line, within classifications made taking into consideration the audience target regarding age, children's television content is normally categorised in a different group as such. This is surely considered a relevant category which includes all sorts of genres and subgenres in it but, as said, is normally treated separately. It can be noticed that most children's content is indeed entertainment, but I will not refer to this category in this work either. Likewise, other categorisations made regarding target criteria would include family programmes, adult programming and the various categories that differentiate audiences according to their age and, or, profile.

1.9.3.4.3. New generation content.

In this regard it can be observed that a new classification is being made just recently, as the term 'new generation content' is starting to be used to refer to those new television formats of different kinds which are indeed addressed to, and are most popular among, youngsters. Most of this content, it has to be said, is audio-visual material that is created, produced and disseminated to be adapted to the new devices and windows that due to the development of new technologies are so much used mainly by those youngsters which are named as 'new generation'.

Actually, we would say that, when referring to this new type of television content, this term 'new generation' is used with two meanings, although closely related. On the one hand it would describe that content that is mainly addressed to, watched and consumed, and even created, by 'the new generation' of viewers. On the other, it labels those new forms of content which are created according to the specific characteristics, needs and possibilities of the new devices, windows and ways of producing,

disseminating and consuming audio-visual content at present, due to ‘new generation technologies’. As a consequence, the specific features of these television products, texts, permit naming them as ‘new generation content’, according to the aforementioned two meanings, i.e. a content for the ‘new generation’ of viewers, and the existence of which is closely related to the ‘new generation technologies’. The new formats that can be watched mainly on most popular social media seem to be taking this nomenclature at present (cf. MipFormats 2018 - Handbook; MipTV 2018 - Handbook).

This type of television content, which is mainly entertainment, is gaining importance in recent years and it can be said that in certain fields and mainly within the industry, it is in fact classified at present as a category on its own. Hence, it can be noted that these formats have specific characteristics regarding both form and content.

1.9.3.4.4. Short-form content.

Equally, another category labeled as ‘short-form content’ is taken as a broad group of audio-visual products, the main common feature of which is their duration, as these products are, as the term that names them indicates, of short length. Among them different genres and subgenres can be included too, which in many cases respond to new audio-visual forms and narratives that are being created to fulfil the needs, demands and new possibilities that the new devices, platforms and windows have brought with them. It has to be said that many of the formats included within this category are also considered as ‘new generation content’. In fact, most of the content that is created to adapt and respond to the needs and possibilities of those new agents, platforms and devices, to ‘new generation technologies’, and which is addressed to that ‘new generation’ of viewers, is ‘short-form’ content.

Actually the conference programmes of the 2018 edition of the worldwide known MipFormats and MipTV international events reflect the gaining importance of this type of television formats (see: MipFormats 2018-Handbook; MipTV 2018-Handbook). Furthermore, we can observe that the content of those conferences reinforces that fact. On the other hand, the latest *Broadcast Digital Awards* arranged in the United Kingdom also take into account this new type of audio-visual content, as can be seen in the 2018 and 2019 list, where they include various categories of this type of products, classified as: *Best Short Form Comedy*, *Best Short Form Documentary*, *Best Short Form Drama* and *Best Short Form Format*. (cf. *Broadcast*, 18 May 2018, pp. 10-11; *Broadcast*, 8 March 2019, pp. 10-11).

1.9.3.4.5. Classification by theme.

Finally, just a brief mention to the classification of programmes and formats which is made regarding the theme, the topic they deal with, as this parameter is also used for ordering them, and permits most varied ways of grouping and categorising television content. The detailed report *Escort 2017* disclosed by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) includes this type of classification, too, in the long list this institution provides for classifying radio and television programmes. Needless to say, besides the general categories that the main companies and entities differentiate for ordering the different television content according to the topic they deal with, these lists can be as long and diverse as needed, depending on the detail required in each case.

1.9.3.4.6. The industry: awards categories.

We can observe that the naming and categorisation of audio-visual content is almost constantly changing, mainly on the side of the industry, as they keep adapting to new creative, production, distribution and reception possibilities that technological developments and new consuming habits imply. These changes entail form and narrative variations that are also reflected in the new categories established when classifying television/audio-visual content. The categories included in different awards reflect this new reality, as is the case of the aforementioned *Broadcast Digital Awards*, which, besides the different types of short-form content mentioned previously, include the following in their list of categories they prize in the current edition, 2019 : Best Comedy Programme, Best Documentary Programme, Best Drama Programme, Best Entertainment Programme, Best Popular Factual Programme, Best Programme Acquisition, Gamechanger Programme of the Year, Best Digital Children's Content, Best Sports or Live Event Coverage, Best Digital Support for a Strand, Channel or Genre, Best Digital Support for a Programme, Best Content Partnership or AFP, Best Original Web Channel, Best VR Experience, Best Entertainment Channel, Best Factual Channel, Channel of the Year (Non-PSP Group) and Channel of the Year.

The latest edition of the *International Format Awards*, arranged in coproduction by leading players of the format business - C21 Media, FRAPA and EMC -, in association with MipFormats, also reflect these changes in the audio-visual industry. These prizes, which are considered the leading awards for the global format business, establish the following categories when rewarding creativity and excellence in this field: Best Brand Driven Format, Best Competition Reality Format, Best Comedy Format, Best Factual Entertainment Format, Best Multi-platform Format, Best Scripted Format, Best Studio Based Gameshow Format, Best Returning Format, Best Reality Format,

Best Host of a Television Format and, finally, The International Formats Business Gold Award is also chosen by the jury so as to recognise the outstanding contribution to this field. (cf. *C21Media* - online newsletter -, 7 January 2019)

1.9.3.5. Television entertainment programmes: additional aspects.

1.9.3.5.1. The importance of television entertainment.

Taking all this into consideration, I would like to highlight the fact that, beyond the various classifications of television content that we have presented here, the importance of television entertainment as such is evident, both regarding the high presence and the position of this type of content in television schedules all over the world as well as due to the great influence of this genre in different fields. I would also like to remark that regardless of the diverse categorisation of television genres, programmes and formats, when referring to television content a general and broad classification that differentiates between information and entertainment is generally accepted at present. From my perspective, and according to this general and broad classification, and following the arguments presented previously, I would say that in the current scenario all that television content that is not purely informational can be considered as entertainment television. Consequently, we can affirm that the scope of analysis when researching in this field is extremely broad and so is the role and influence of television entertainment, both in the television landscape and in many areas of society.

This having been said, I would like to add that within this work I have presented a broad range of arguments, perspectives and theories that show that, beyond those fields of research and the analyses that stress the negative effects and bad influence of

television, the positive effects, the benefits, and the contributions of television entertainment are numerous and, undoubtedly, worth taking into account. Furthermore, those arguments, fields of research, theories and diverse studies that have been conducted from these perspectives explained throughout this text provide a thorough framework for the study of the positive effects and contributions of television entertainment, both to television as such and to society too.

1.9.3.5.2. Television entertainment programmes: an important area of research.

Within this broad field of research, namely television entertainment, I would like to focus on those television programmes that, according to the classification mentioned previously, are categorised as ‘non-fiction’ television entertainment content, most of which, as commented, are nowadays also labeled as ‘unscripted/non-scripted’. I am referring to that television content that, for the purpose of this work, I have named as ‘entertainment programmes’, to differentiate them from ‘fiction television’, according to the explanations presented in this chapter.

From my point of view, the study of these TV entertainment programmes, from different perspectives, is a broad and interesting area of research. I can mention several reasons for that, reasons that are backed up by the numerous arguments, reflections and information in this regard that I have posed throughout this text:

- First of all, the tremendous offer of this type of formats and programmes, as well as their high presence and success in television programming schedules internationally, make them an interesting field for researching on the influence, and consequently about the contributions, of this type of programmes to

television, in general, and more specifically to public television, which is among the main aims of this doctoral work.

- On the other hand, it can be observed that the analysis of television content has been mainly centred on fictional shows for many years, whereas far less research on other entertainment programmes has been carried out within academia.

- Likewise, this genre, that is to say non-fiction entertainment, has often been diminished and negatively considered, from three different perspectives: first, as part of television content; in a second stage, when comparing the entertainment genre with the informational and educational ones; and third, when contrasting this type of programmes with the fiction genre, which has in general terms gained better consideration than entertainment programmes of different kind.

- Finally I want to remark that most of these programmes are generally either adapted or created to respond to the specific needs and demands, including cultural aspects, of the different markets, territories and communities. Moreover, the ability of this kind of entertainment formats to customise and adapt to those cultural specificities are also interesting aspects for their analysis, in order to find out about the contributions of this type of formats and programmes to television. Moreover, I would say that this aspect is most interesting with regard to public television, and even more specifically to that type of public proximity television channels that can be defined as regional, which respond to the needs of a community with a specific cultural identity.

However, it has to be said that this is indeed a broad field of research, due to various reasons. The existence of a great amount of different formats, as well as the immense quantity of programmes of this kind alongside the different public television companies that can be found around the world, constitute indeed numerous variable factors, which would lead to different conclusions, regarding the various and varied potential elements to study in each case. Actually, it is obvious that different formats and different programmes do influence in a different manner the different television companies, as well as within the diverse communities and societies where this content is created, produced, broadcast and consumed.

Due to that, for the last part of this work I have chosen a specific case to focus on, a programme that was produced and broadcast by a public television company and that was on air for 6 years. From my point of view the features of this programme, which I have defined as ‘night-show-magazine’, make it suitable for this analysis. In fact, this entertainment show can be categorised as ‘non-fiction, non-scripted/unscripted’, and, according to my explanations previously noted, would be among those that I name as ‘entertainment programmes’. In addition, this show includes many and diverse genres and subgenres, even fictional, which can be also classified as entertainment television content. In the last section of this work I, therefore, focus on that specific case, in order to identify its contributions to the public television where it was produced and broadcast.

1.10. First Part: final reflections.

The objective of this first part just finished was to research on the negative perspectives of television and, more precisely about television entertainment, to afterwards go beyond that and study the positive approaches to this medium and this genre. At this stage it was also the aim to construct an adequate theoretical framework for further studies in the field, studies interested in tackling the issue of television entertainment from a positive perspective. Finally, my intention to provide enough literature to support and illustrate the information and arguments presented, and to highlight that which can be referential in this regard, also underpins the content of this previous detailed text.

Having finished this first part I can therefore state that its objectives in this respect have been fulfilled. In fact, this text can be considered as a proper, complete, research work as such that thoroughly responds to the objectives initially posed. I have, however, used both the information and conclusions drawn from this study to conduct further analysis, whose results I present in the second unit of this work, where I apply the etymology and theoretical framework that has resulted from the work developed in this first part to a specific case, so as to take a step forward in the analysis of the contribution of television entertainment to public television, which is also one of the aims of this work. When doing so, I will finally complete the four axes of research intended for this PhD dissertation, as earlier reflected in its title.

Consequently, once I have finished the first unit of this PhD work, I can affirm that I have found enough evidence and arguments that backup my initial statement, that is to say, the negativity towards television and more precisely over television entertainment within different sectors of society. I have also analysed the reasons

involved in that criticism and the various topics, concepts and theories linked to that negative perspective and associated to that often dismissive attitude towards television entertainment programmes. I have extensively referred to those aspects in this work.

This having been said, the thorough research conducted in a second stage within this first part, has allowed us to also identify positive perspectives of television and television entertainment in various manners and fields. Furthermore, the information, reflections and arguments expressed in this regard as well as the existing research models and theories also presented here permit the establishment of a comprehensive framework that enables investigation of this issue from a more positive approach, beyond the initial almost unique negative ones.

In fact, it can be observed that, in contrast to the initial studies conducted about television within critical sociology, which mainly focused on the negative effects of this medium and on its bad influence on the audience's behaviour and habits, further studies developed within academia, in different fields and from other approaches, have permitted the identification of many positive effects and contributions of television, and also of television entertainment specifically. Likewise, voices that defend the positive aspects of television entertainment programmes can be found nowadays both in the professional and the academic world.

Actually, according to the information and reflections posed in previous sections, we can observe that the negative perspectives of television and more precisely of television entertainment started almost at the same time as this communication and entertainment medium was launched. Worries and anxieties about the consequences of this new artefact were common since its first years of existence. It can also be said that

negative perceptions of television and television entertainment in particular, are still very much widespread and still prevail in many sectors of society.

The first critical studies about television took place within the discipline of sociology. At that time most analyses focused on the influence of television on viewers, the so called *Effects Theory* is the best paradigm of this kind of analysis. This research model was developed by academics of the scholarship known as the Frankfurt School from the early 50s in the United States and its influence since then and until present times is generally acknowledged. This theory stressed the negative effects of this medium on viewers, the harmful influence that television would have on people's behaviour and attitudes was highlighted. Audience was considered a mass of passive television watchers highly and negatively influenced by this artefact, whose power was emphasised. The concepts of passive audience and negative effects are core in this theory.

Further analysis brought forward other theories which permitted a more positive approach and consideration of television. Concepts of active audience, an audience who are capable of decoding audio-visual texts in different ways and who choose to watch television and select the programmes they want according to different reasons, alongside the cultural aspects of television and television consumption, were highlighted by these new research models. The Cultural Studies branch that started in Great Britain from the 70s and that was developed mainly during the 80s within the so called School of Birmingham is essential within this school of thought. The *encoding/decoding* model and the *uses and gratifications* theory focused on this concept of active audience and started presenting a more positive view of television comparing to previous analyses.

Studies based on active audience entailed an important shift, from the so called audience studies to a broader concept of reception studies. In this new branch of research analyses on audience go beyond the initial models that studied the effects of television on viewers. From those initial theories that were centred on what television did to audiences these new studies also focused on what people did to and with television; effects in both directions, to and by viewers are central in reception studies. This scholarship's research presents several parameters which are adequate to identify the positive aspects of television. The contribution of the *uses and gratifications* theory (U&G) in this regard is certainly relevant.

This model of research, U&G, is also highlighted by studies conducted within the psychology field, as well as by research developed within the study of effects. Academics from this area analyse entertainment among media effects. The positive effects of television as an entertainment medium, and amongst them its entertainment functions, are studied and its positive effects are taken into consideration by researchers of these disciplines.

The study on effects has attracted great interest since the beginning of academic studies on television and a great amount of research has been carried out in this area. The scope and focus of analysis within this field has evolved and broadened though, and besides the initial negative approach of the *traditional theory of effects*, or *effects theory*, other perspectives also show more positive points of view regarding the influence of television.

Hence, the study of effects can be considered the most important branch of research within television studies due to the great amount of work developed in this field from the beginning of academic enquiry into this medium. However, television

studies includes other disciplines and fields of study which are gaining importance, and television studies as such is also becoming more relevant in recent years. The various areas of analysis included and the studies conducted within this scholarship permit the identification of new parameters that highlight the importance of this medium and, consequently, of its positive aspects.

Among them, the economic and industrial side of this activity reflects the contributions of this sector to the economy. Technical aspects, the creation, production and distribution of audio-visual content and, within that business activity, the importance of television formats trade and development, are among the areas associated with television which are regarded as highly influential in the economic sector. In addition, within this field, cultural factors are also taken into consideration as television is part of the cultural creative industries.

However, the study of television from a cultural perspective is mainly conducted either within the discipline of cultural studies or amidst the studies on popular culture. These approaches also present various aspects that permit the identification of some of the positive contributions of this communication and entertainment medium to society. Moreover, we can affirm that the analyses conducted within these scholarships and the theories developed as a consequence are essential for tackling this issue from a positive perspective.

Having said that, it can also be observed that, when analysing television and television entertainment programmes, additional approaches and topics lead us to new paths of research that also help us to identify the positive impact and contributions of television, and more precisely of television entertainment content. Among them we can mention the following: research on the social impact and the social value of television

entertainment; globalisation and glocalisation aspects; analyses on cultural identity and cultural proximity factors, along with the objectives of public television and, among them, of those regional, proximity television companies. In addition, the role of television as part of the cultural creative industries and within the television industry in general should also be considered in this regard. Actually, we would state that all these areas of study should be also taken into account when conducting research about the positive contributions of television entertainment content.

Consequently, it can be stated that the scope of research with regard to the study of television entertainment and its contributions in different areas is very broad indeed. I would say that, in this respect, the information, reflections and conclusions presented in this work offer a broad range of elements and arguments to create a comprehensive theoretical framework for its analysis. This framework can certainly be adapted to the varied perspectives that can be taken and to the specific areas and topics that can be objects of research within this broad field.

Having said that, and with regard to the analysis of television entertainment from a positive perspective, we can also see that the television landscape is changing tremendously and rapidly, mainly in recent years, due to relevant technological developments, variation of the audience habits and to the great amount and diversity of television entertainment content existing at present.

In this new scenario it is difficult even to define what television is and, even more complicated to classify television content. New forms of audio-visual content output make it difficult to categorise all of them within legacy television classifications parameters. For the purpose of this work we have taken a broad categorisation, according to which two big groups are made regarding television content: information

and entertainment. Within entertainment we have differentiated two main categories, fiction and non-fiction, including in the former mainly TV series and TV movies of any kind, and naming as 'entertainment programmes' those grouped in the latter. Similar classification corresponds to another labelling which is most used at present, that which names them as scripted and non-scripted/unscripted.

Beyond the initial almost unique negative criticism, positive analyses and comments about varied television entertainment content can be more easily found now, either by television and media critics, or by scholars and media professionals of different areas. Nevertheless, these early positive comments were initially referred only to what was then considered as 'quality' television, which in fact practically just included the so called cult, 'must see', series and high-end drama. The rest of the television entertainment output, and mainly those shows that we have classified as 'entertainment programmes', have had little consideration almost until very recent times.

Little research that focus on the positive side of these shows has been conducted and most profoundly in comparison to those studies that focus on negative criticism and highlight negative comments as well as their negative effects and impact. It is just recently that a more positive view of these programmes is also presented whether in academic documents and events, or among media critics, while it seems that the industry and its professionals started showing a more positive view a bit earlier than the rest.

Therefore, I would say that the analysis of this type of programmes from a positive perspective present an interesting field of study, which has not been explored sufficiently. Furthermore, I would add that this fact is even more evident in the case of

public television, an aspect that I have already shown my interest in studying. However, because of the enormous possibilities in approaching both topics, namely the positive aspects of television entertainment and the benefits of this type of content for public television, a need to narrow the area of analysis in each case is evident. In this second case the field of study is almost endless, too, due to the immense amount of entertainment programmes that can be the object of analysis, and the diversity of public television companies existing at present. Likewise, various approaches can be taken in each case, too, alongside different fields of analysis.

In any case I would say that all the approaches to this issue already presented throughout this work, besides the information and arguments posed, provide a diverse and considerable amount of interesting parameters that permit a comprehensive theoretical framework for the analysis of the positive contributions of television entertainment in various fields and from various perspectives, including the specific case of public television service.

That is why, and due to the reasons just pointed out, with regard to the final part of this work, and for my purpose, I will focus on a particular case and I will apply this theoretical framework for its analysis. I shall, therefore, hereafter refer to a television entertainment show that, for various reasons and due to its specific features that I will further on explain, I consider very much adequate for the analysis of the contributions of television entertainment programmes to public television, which is one of the objectives of this work. That is, actually, the principal aim of the following final part.

PART II

**THE NIGHT-SHOW MAGAZINE *SORGINEN LARATZA* AND
EUSKAL TELEBISTA.**

2. THE NIGHT-SHOW MAGAZINE *SORGINEN LARATZA* AND EUSKAL TELEBISTA.

2.1. Introduction.

In this chapter I will present the results of the research conducted on a specific television entertainment programme regarding its contributions to the public television company where it was created, produced and broadcast. It is the case of the night-show magazine/night magazine-show *Sorginen Laratza* and the Basque public television company Euskal Telebista.

The information, reflections and conclusions that I will show further on synthesise the results of an investigation that has been developed in two phases, as I have explained previously. The first stage consisted of professional research, which included the study of different fields and parts of that programme, from different perspectives, as well as the empirical applications of the results and conclusions of that work and the analysis of those new elements, in a permanent process of both theoretical analysis and empirical application that took place permanently during 6 years (1999-2005). In fact, this part of the research was carried out during the period of production of that particular programme when, as part of it, permanent analysis in various fields was developed. Moreover, the results and conclusions of those studies were applied directly in further episodes in the form of new sections and narrative modes that were again tested and analysed as part of both the production and research processes. Reports and whitepapers of different kind were also produced during those years.

The second part of the research on this television programme has been carried out more recently, for which the analysis conducted in the first part of this PhD work and the framework it provides for the analysis of television from positive perspectives

and, therefore, for the research about the contribution of television entertainment to public television, have been taken into consideration. In this case I have focused on the contribution of an entertainment programme in particular, *Sorginen Laratza*, to Basque public television, that is to say to Euskal Telebista, the Basque public television company. Documental analysis both of written and audio-visual material of that programme has been carried out in this part.

To identify the contribution of this specific television programme to the Basque public television company, I have taken into account two main general axes. On the one hand the so called Reithian principles, that is to say, inform, form and entertain; principles that the Basque public television, Euskal Telebista, aims to fulfil, as public television companies in general do. On the other hand, I have focused on the main missions of this public television company, among which the development and promotion of Basque culture and Basque Language have been central since it was founded, in 1982. In addition, other functions of this public entity have also been born in mind when carrying out this investigation.

For the study of this contribution I have conducted analysis in three fields, which are considered as core areas for the study of television programmes by most prominent academics in television studies, that is to say, content, production and audience/reception.

Consequently, I could say that the information and reflections that I present in this section summarise the extensive research work developed about this programme and this topic during many years, and synthesise the main arguments and conclusions in this regard. Likewise, previous academic analysis work conducted and unveiled by this researcher associated with this topic has also be taken into consideration when writing

this section (Azpeitia, 2012; Azpeitia, 2016), as well as numerous professional reports produced in different periods of time.

Therefore, as said, in this final part I focus on a specific television entertainment programme, a programme that I have defined as a night show and magazine, and therefore labelled as ‘a night-show magazine’/ ‘a night magazine-show’, entitled *Sorginen Laratza*. This programme was produced and broadcast, live, for 6 years (1999-2005) on the first channel of Euskal Telebista, the Basque public television station. It is a case of an in-house production of a genuine entertainment television show which, on its side, was formed by many different audio-visual elements that, according to the arguments and explanations presented throughout this work, can also be classified as television entertainment content of different kinds. I would also add that although this show finished more than a decade ago, its format could be easily adapted to the specific needs and features that the new television scenario both enables and demands. Moreover I would say that the specific characteristics of this particular format and programme make it very suitable for this task.

Those two aspects, namely, the special features of this programme in this regard and the fact that it was created, produced and broadcast on and by a public television, as is the case of Euskal Telebista, have been crucial for my choosing this specific case. It has also been relevant for this choice my thorough knowledge of this programme of which I was co-creator and the executive producer since it started and during de six seasons it was on air (1999-2005).

Furthermore, my interest in my nearest reality and my own culture and in applying global knowledge for their analysis, have indeed influenced this decision. Likewise, the scarcity of this type of studies, not only within academia but also in the

professional field, is a core factor for my interest in studying a case of this type. Finally, the little space that the study of television entertainment programmes created, produced and broadcast in a minority language, and, in this particular case, in Basque Language, has in the current global landscape is a fact that has been also central for my choice both of the general topic of research of this PhD work and of the case study I have selected for this second part.

2.2. Euskal Telebista.

Euskal Telebista (ETB) is the television brand of Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB), which is a public-owned broadcasting corporation dependant on the Basque Government. It is one of the 13 autonomous television channels existing nowadays in Spain, that is to say, those regional television companies of the different Autonomous Communities that form this State. EITB was founded in 1982, when the Basque Parliament unanimously passed the law on the creation of this public entity. At present Euskal Irrati Telebista (Basque Radio and Television) is the first media group in the Basque Country, with a broad output on information and entertainment, which is disseminated through its five TV channels, five radio stations, and its website. EITB is also very active on social media where both information and different type of content related to EITB and its output is constantly spread.

This public company has three business units - television, radio and the internet/online division -and three main sites, which are set in Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastian and Vitoria-Gasteiz. With regard to Euskal Telebista, television news and sports main productions units are placed in Bilbao's headquarters whereas the television programmes' production centre (Miramon) is located in San Sebastian.

Euskal Telebista's main channels are ETB1, which broadcasts in Basque, and ETB2, which content is aired in Spanish. Both of them are generalist, linear channels. ETB3, also in Basque, is mainly addressed to children, whereas ETB4 focuses mostly on sports, films and TV series. All these channels are broadcast through Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), free-to-air, and most of their programming can also be viewed on the internet web sites *eitb.eus* and *eitb.tv* (on demand platform), where the international channel ETBSat is also available worldwide, streaming.

In addition, this international channel can also be watched in many parts of the American continent, both north and south, through Hispasat satellite, under the *Canal Vasco* brand. Its offering consists of a selection of the content originally broadcast on the main channels of Euskal Telebista. The main purpose of *Canal Vasco* is to bring Basque TV and culture closer to the Basque Diaspora in America, as well to all the Americans. This is explained on the official web side of this public entity (*eitb.eus*), where its main missions are also mentioned, as summarised in the next paragraph:

EITB is a multimedia public service committed to democratic values, the plurality of Basque society and management transparency. Our task is to enrich people's lives with an attractive, quality offering in information and entertainment, and to contribute to the development of Basque culture and Basque language, Euskara.

2.3. Basque Country, Basque Culture, Euskara.

As said, Euskal Telebista is the public television of the Basque Country, or, to be more precise, the public television company of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. In this regard I would like to include here some information that can be useful to understand some of the terms and topics that I will refer to in further chapters.

2.3.1. Basque Country, Euskal Herria, Euskadi.

To begin with, I understand that some conceptual precision is needed when explaining the different terms used to refer to the country of the Basque people and to the varied terminology used when establishing differences between cultural, linguistic and geopolitical divisions in this regard. Professor of the Public University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) Ramón Zallo presents detailed explanations when he refers to this matter, for which I will use his words to posit this issue here (Zallo, 2006, p. 22):

Euskal Herria, the Basque Country or Vasconia is the country of Basque men and women seen from a historical, cultural and identity standpoint. Euskal Herria can also be translated as Basque People, the collective that has inhabited it for several millennia. This broad area encompasses three socio-political and legal entities, the Autonomous Community of Euskadi (“Comunidad Autónoma de Euskadi” in Spanish) or the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country –as it is called institutionally, the Autonomous Community of Navarre (“Comunidad Foral de Navarra”, or “Navarra” in Spanish or “Nafarroa” in Basque) and the French Basque Country, or Iparralde (which means “the northern part” in Basque). While the first two communities are part of the Spanish state, or Spain, Iparralde belongs to the Republic of France, (...) the Autonomous Community of Euskadi comprises the territories of Alava, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, the Autonomous Community of Navarre has only one province, and Iparralde is formed by the territories of Lapurdi, Zuberoa and Behenafarroa (Lower Navarre).

As Zallo explains further on Euskal Herria is the sum of those seven territories, the seven provinces that form those communities, four of which are part of Spain (Alava, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarra) whereas the other three belong to France (Lapurdi, Zuberoa and Behenafarroa). Regarding the use of the various names mentioned I will clarify the difference between most common terms used to name both the whole of the seven provinces that form the Basque country as such, the territory of the Basques, and the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, of Euskadi. In

this respect, with the purpose of this work I will align with the ways these different terms are used by Zallo in his essay about the Basques, as explained by the author, and which, I must say, are mostly extended at present when referring to the Basques, the Basque country and Basque culture (Zallo, 2006, pp. 23 - 24):

This handbook is going to refer in this way to Euskal Herria (which etymologically means Basque people or people who speak Basque), and in terms of methodology it has chosen the following, albeit debatable, option: Euskal Herria or Vasconia are neutral terms that describe a historical and cultural reality, the historical-cultural map of the set of the historic territories, beyond the political or administrative structures. (...) .On the other hand, it is a term that defines historical, cultural, linguistic and identity space, a historical-cultural entity that, even with its differences in territorial development, shares a significant part of heritage, art, culture, language and history, as well as pre-political space. (...). In other words, it is a space defined by identity, culture and relations, and three differentiated political spaces (Euskadi, Navarre and Iparralde).

Further explanation is needed regarding the term Euskadi, as nowadays it is commonly used to refer to the Autonomous Community of Euskadi or, better said, to the Autonomous Community of The Basque Country, as this is its official denomination. This difference is well explained by Professor Zallo in this paragraph below:

As for the word Euskadi (homeland of the Basques), it was coined by Sabino Arana to refer to all of Euskal Herria, but time has placed the meaning of the terms in different planes. It seems appropriate to make a more precise use of these terms, reserving “Euskal Herria” for the historical-cultural entity and the cultural, communicative and relational space made up by all these territories, and saving the term “Euskadi” for the Autonomous Community that defines itself as such in its own Statute of Autonomy, the Autonomous Community of Euskadi. (Zallo, 2006, p. 25)

Therefore, in this work I will refer to those terms, Euskal Herria and Euskadi, according to the definitions and explanations just posed. I must also add that The

Autonomous Community of the Basque Country is run by the Basque Government (Eusko Jauriaritza/Gobierno Vasco). Zallo's comprehensive book about Basques offers detailed explanations in relation to the political organisation of Basque society and the different institutions involved (Zallo, 2006 pp. 83-97). As noted previously, Euskal Telebista depends on the Basque Government, and, more precisely, on its Department of Culture, which supervises, and mainly finances, the activity of this public television company.

2.3.2. Basque culture and Basque Language.

Concerning culture, it can be observed that Professor Zallo's reflections about this topic are in line with some of the information and arguments already presented throughout this work. I have highlighted this paragraph which summarises some of the main points in this regard.

Culture is the nervous tissue of a society and it has a three-fold function: social integration, communication and the creation and production of meanings in a plural community. (...) Culture is less a prescriptive set of rules and stereotypes for the whole collective than the result of its amalgamation, from which it is possible to deduce certain common threads perceived as belonging to that culture (language or languages, cherished values, ways of life, recognisable symbols, customs, knowledge, arts, myths, important institutions ...). In addition, all this is bathed by the subjectivity of both the sense of belonging and of individuals and their decisions. Along with the culture of the community, in plural and open societies there is also permanent communication and influence from other cultures through international curricula in education, information, a large part of cultural contents and fashions and internationalised leisure activities. (Zallo, 2006, p. 125)

The extensive chapter devoted to Basque culture in Zallo's essay *Basques Today* (Zallo, 2006, pp. 125-303) includes thorough information and interesting analysis about

this matter. The initial pages of that part of the text help to posit the issue, and provide essential information in this regard. The fact that Basque culture is clearly different from those of the two nation-states where the Basque country is situated is noted by Zallo. Likewise, the influence of those two strong neighbouring cultures is also commented, as can be read in this paragraph (Zallo, 2006, p. 126):

Basque culture is a differentiated culture situated between two strong and identifiable cultures the Spanish and the French, the cultures of two nation-states. Moreover, in its different territorial versions, Basque culture is not independent from them, because it internalises them in part, as a result of both external influence and their presence within the Basque culture itself.

The relevance of language as a core element of cultural identity and its essential role in the creation and definition of different cultures are broadly acknowledged. In the case of Euskara, the native, autochthonous, language of Basque men and women, Zallo also highlights its significance as a central element of Basque culture and Basque identity, and comments on its importance for the creation of Basque culture throughout history (Zallo, 2006, p. 128). He also refers to its enigmatic origin and the great efforts made in recent decades to recover and foster it, as we can read in this passage:

Euskara is the language and the specific heritage of the Basques and it is their most marked sign of identity. The admirable continuity of Euskara remains unexplained by historians. The community that speaks it is found mainly in Euskal Herria. Preserved from generation to generation, it is now experiencing a significant recovery, thanks to a general collective will. (Zallo, 2006, pp. 127, 128)

Actually, Euskara is a minority language whose real origin remains unknown. According to the latest Sociolinguistic Survey of the Basque language, the 6th one, published in 2016, there are 751,500 persons over 16 years old who are *euskaldunak*, namely, persons who can understand and speak Euskara, taking into account the whole

of the Basque speaking area, that is to say, the seven provinces of Euskal Herria. In addition, it can be mentioned that other researches indicate that the total amount of people who at least understand this language in the whole of the world at present can be around one million.

Following the various theories that have been developed about where this ancient language comes from, we can assert that there is no real confirmation of its provenance and its relationship with other neighbouring languages, as Zallo explains in his text, referring to the studies of prominent linguists who have studied this matter for many years.

The Basque language is a linguistic and historical enigma yet to be solved. It remains unclassifiable. Its roots are unknown and there are no semantic groups in which to include it. According to the general opinion held among linguists, Euskara is not related to any other current or historical language, nor have theories associating it with Mediterranean pre-Indo-European languages, or with the Iberian language or with language of Africa or the Caucasus, been confirmed. (Zallo, 2006, p. 131)

This having been said, we can assert that the existing close interrelation between language and culture is especially important in the case of Euskara and Basque culture. Being the case of a minority culture and a minority language, the future of both are closely connected. On the one hand, the development of the different issues related to Basque culture as well as the promotion of its multiple and varied expressions and outputs are essential for nurturing and disseminating both Basque culture and Basque language. On the other, the promotion of Euskara influences directly on the promotion of Basque culture. Finally, it can be asserted that the development of Basque culture is fundamental for the development and reinforcement of its linguistic expression, Euskara. Therefore, we can state that a symbiotic relationship exists between Basque

culture and Basque language, without leaving aside the fact that, as said, language is a core element of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity. Zallo summarises these aspects in his text, where he also highlights the importance of public help in this regard, due to the inferior position of Basque culture and Basque language among other proximate hegemonic cultures and nations. (Zallo, 2006, p. 128):

The close relationship between Euskara and Basque culture means that the future of Basque culture depends as much on Euskara as on overall cultural development in all issues related to the creation, production and dissemination of Basque culture, (...). And of course the future of Euskara requires the strengthening of culture in all its manifestations. Given the small size of the country and its small percentage of bilingual speakers, the scale economies of cultural products in Euskara are smaller than those cultural products in Spanish or French, and thus require special public attention for their dissemination and promotion.

Most of the information and reflection commented here can also be found in the extensive report entitled *Basque Plan for Culture*, unveiled by the Basque Government –Eusko Jaurlaritza, in 2005. This complete document includes general information and reflections about Basque culture as well as a diagnosis of its situation hitherto. Furthermore, it presents proposals and lines of action for the development of Basque culture in the medium-term, as well as indications up to a decade ahead. The need of support of Basque society, ‘of Basque society in general, of its civil society in particular, of the cultural agents and of all public and private institutions’ (Eusko Jaurlaritza-Gobierno Vasco, p. 53), to develop them and, therefore, to achieve its goals, is also pointed out. The mission of this Basque Plan for Culture is described in that document as follows (Eusko Jaurlaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 53):

The mission consists of putting *Basque culture*, the culture of Basque men and women, in a position capable of responding to the *great cultural challenges of the 21st century*. It is also necessary to increase awareness of the social

importance of culture. Heightening appreciation of the value of culture –through its conservation, creation, production and dissemination –has the two-fold virtue of enabling the integration, adaptation and development of our society and of unleashing the economic potential of culture in our times.

There are various themes and aspects presented in that document that I would also like to underscore, as they are in line with some topics we have already written about in this work. As we can observe, some of these broad, general matters are approached from the perspective of Basque society and Basque culture in this whitepaper. When reflecting on today's world and Basque culture the main topics which are pointed out in this text are similar to those we have already identified and written extensively about throughout this PhD dissertation, as can be read in the next paragraph:

The debates affecting cultural life revolve, among other topics, around the relationship between global and local, public and private, tradition and innovation, high culture and popular culture. Until recently these matters were addressed in terms that were almost mutually exclusive, while today they are approached from more flexible, but more diffuse, positions. (Eusko Jaurjaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 20)

The magnitude and relevance of globalisation is also referred to in this paper, and some of its effects in the sectors this Basque Plan for Culture centres on, that is to say, on those 'specialised in producing, distributing and managing culture' (Eusko Jaurjaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 20) are pointed out. Among them I would like to emphasise the next three consequences of globalisation they mention (Eusko Jaurjaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 20, 21):

- The economic importance of culture as a sector that generates wealth and employment, with greater weight than other traditional sectors in terms of employability of a better-prepared youth.

- The formation of a significant and uneven international cultural market, controlled by large multinational companies, which is disseminating a culture that is more uniform than universal.
- The increase of cultural offerings and the multiplication of singularised audiences, at the same time that cultural mercantilisation creates gaps in terms of access.

Focusing on the Basque country and Basque culture, four basic factors are identified as conditioning the development of the sectors previously highlighted (Eusko Jaurlaritzza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 21): i) The *mercantilisation* of culture; ii) The *internationalisation* of creation and of cultural markets; iii) The *small size* of the Basque Country, which conditions the return obtained from cultural projects and makes it more difficult to generate economies of scale; iv) The possibility of *institutional support* for Basque culture, as well as concerted efforts with the cultural agents and the involvement of a very active society.

Furthermore, the central difficulties that this situation entails, due to the fact that Basque culture is a minority culture, are also mentioned in this report. Among the problems noted is the complicated place that minority cultures have in the networks and in the chain of exchanges, due to the prominent position of dominant cultures and global companies over them. In this regard it is asserted that:

The biggest danger lies in the displacement of national and local interests by other global interests managed by large transnational companies, in the standardisation of subject matter, formats and productions, and in the substitution of points of view, concepts and approaches. (Eusko Jaurlaritzza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 21)

Amidst the different areas that are studied as part of the structure of the Basque cultural system in this report, the importance of the cultural industries is highlighted, as

it is considered that they ‘display the most dynamism, growth and influence, and have the greatest impact on the social and economic fabric’ (Eusko Jauriaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005 p. 19). The relevance of audio-visual and multimedia industries is specially mentioned in this document. Moreover, in this respect, the importance of the Basque public multimedia communication company, EITB, is noted, as can be read in different parts of this text, among which I have extracted the following statements (Eusko Jauriaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005):

- EITB is and should be an asset which serves to strengthen all areas of culture. (p. 32)
- There is a new generation of quality creators in the fields of writing, music and audiovisuals. In the case of the sector with the largest volume and growth, the audiovisuals sector, the prestige of directors, creative workers, performers, technicians and companies all join forces with the hotbed of human resources created by EITB. (p. 35)
- In audiovisuals, EITB is a collective asset with programmes and broadcasting that bring together different audiences. Faced with the proliferation of thematic television, it could undertake the task of guaranteeing the production of quality programs, thus fulfilling its cultural and democratic functions. The presence of EITB gives us the benefit of a constant value, which should be understood as a starting point for the sector to produce for others as well. (p. 35)
- The role of EITB in the promotional arena, using its own selection criteria, should be central to all the cultural industries. (p. 45)

This having been said, we can also observe that most of the strategic axes that define the activities to be carried out as part of the aforementioned Basque Plan for Culture, fostered by the Basque Government, are closely related to the activities of this public entity, EITB, and very noticeable of its television brand, Euskal Telebista. In fact, we can affirm that this public television channel can contribute greatly to the fulfilment of most of the objectives of this scheme, and most prominently of those

defined in this whitepaper within the following strategic actions plans (Eusko Jauriaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 63):

Strategic Axis 1: Construct the Basque Cultural System through the convergence of institutions, resources and agents, constituting an interterritorial cultural network; (...) Strategic Axis 6: Invigorate the sphere of Cultural Industries and its value chain; Strategic Axis 7: Heighten the presence of Euskera in culture; Strategic Axis 8: Promote the development of culture as an axis of social cohesion in the context of the Society of Knowledge. Strategic Axis 9: Encourage the reappropriation and adapted used of the new technologies and expressive forms for the renewal of creation and production; Strategic Axis 10: Project Basque culture internationally.

In this regard, I would also like to highlight another paragraph whose content, I understand, is closely associated to the role of this public television as a significant agent that can help to overcome the difficulties/disadvantages that differentiated minority cultural communities face due to the power of national states. I am referring to that text that emphasises the need for cultural policies to facilitate the production of cultural products that include symbolic elements but, at the same time, are competitive and in line with actual trends. I would say that the activity of a public television is indeed essential for the fulfilment of these objectives, explained in the following text withdrawn from the Basque Plan for Culture to which we have referred to until now (Eusko Jauriaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 22):

Absolutely vital are *active cultural policies* that require, in our time, a significant effort in economic and industrial resources favouring the growth and competitiveness of our cultural offerings and lessening the relative regression occurring in the Spanish state due to the processes of geographical concentration of cultural production. The generation of an identifiable symbolic production adapted to the times and a sector that generate employment are the two routes for achieving this aim.

Furthermore, I would say that Euskal Telebista is also most significant for the promotion of Basque language, according to the action plans indicated in this document in relation to this mission, an objective that is identified as essential. In fact, Euskal Telebista can indeed contribute to the development of Euskara in the terms expressed in various parts of this main document, and among them, in relation to the improvement of its corpus, status and normalisation as well as in the production and dissemination of cultural products in Basque language. In this respect, the presence of this language in all the different parts of those processes should also be valued (Eusko Jauriaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005, p. 23):

The General Plan for the Promotion of Basque Language Use made a priority of achieving the highest possible number of speakers and of broadening the use of Euskera by society. The lines of action and objectives set forth in the Basque Plan for Culture must also serve to improve the situation of Euskera (in terms of both its corpus and its status). In the end, improving the situation of Euskera and normalising its use constitute a decisive part of our cultural strategic axes. (...) The economies of scale of cultural products in Euskera are different from those cultural products in Spanish or French. Euskera needs to be the object of special attention and encouragement in dissemination and in the media such as television, radio, the press, Internet, etc. (the language of public communication), in products (the language of cultural produce of service) and in cultural productive processes (the language of work).

2.3.3. Euskal Telebista and Basque Culture.

In the preceding section we have referred to the importance of the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and Basque language, for their development and reinforcement. Furthermore, we have mentioned that the creation, production and dissemination of varied expressions of Basque culture and Basque language are essential for their fostering and nurturing, most pronouncedly due to their inferior

condition as minority culture and language. Moreover, for that reason, the need for public attention for the attainment of these objectives has also been noted.

In addition, throughout this work we have posed plenty of information about the relationship between television and culture, in many fields and from different perspectives. Many of the reflections already posed support the arguments about the value of television both in the creation of meanings as well as in relation to the creation, production, promotion and dissemination of culture.

Moreover, the significance of the cultural industries has also been mentioned, and, in the case of the Basque cultural industries, their relevance within the structure of the Basque cultural system has been noted. Their value as a means to develop and foster Basque culture and to influence both the social and economic fields has been underscored. Among the varied activities included in this area, the significance of the audio-visual sector and, hence, of television, has been pointed out.

This having been said, in this regard we can, therefore, note the importance of the existence of a Basque public television for the fostering and development of Basque culture and Basque language. As we have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Basque public television company, Euskal Telebista, was founded in 1982. Its foundation law (5/1985- 20th of May) already refers to the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and Basque language as core missions of this public entity.

The launching of Basque Television entailed a great advance for Basque society, Basque culture and Basque language in particular, which was acknowledged and valued by most sectors of Basque society. It can be said that most academics who have conducted research on Basque media, Basque television and Basque culture agree about this matter as can be reflected in many of their communications, research papers, essays

and books published during these last years. (cf. Amézaga, 2006, 2007, 2011; Amézaga & Arana, 2012; Amézaga, Arana, Narbaiza and Azpillaga, 2013; Arana, Amézaga and Azpillaga, 2006; Arana, Amézaga & Azpillaga, 2014; Arana, Azpillaga, & Narbaiza, 2003; Arana, Azpillaga and Narvaiza, 2007; Artero, Orive & Latorre, 2015; Casado Del Río, Guimerà i Orts & Miguel De Bustos, J.C., 2016; Casado, Peñafiel, Fernández de Arroyabe, & Gómez, 2008; Garitaonandia & Casado, 2007; López & Corominas, 1995; Pavón & Zuberogoitia, 2013; Zabaleta, Xamardo, Gutierrez, Urrutia and Fernández, 2010; Zallo, 2006).

Carmelo Garitaonandia and Miguel Angel Casado focused on this matter in particular in their paper entitled ‘Television to Save a Language and a Culture: The Basque Case’ (2007). Actually, some of the reflection posited in this text can also be read in the extensive article that Garitaonandia wrote for GECA’s television annual– *El Anuario de la Televisión*- (Garitaonandia, 2002, pp. 195-208).

Professionals and managing directors of Euskal Telebista have also commented about some of these topics, among others related to this public television channel, in different editions of the mentioned GECA Television Year Book, a prestigious and thorough professional analysis of television which was published by this television consulting company during several years. (e.g. Zupiria: GECA, 2000, p. 78; Ortuzar: GECA, 2001, pp. 86-87; Sarasola: GECA, 2001, p. 207; Ortuzar: GECA 2002, pp. 84-85 and GECA, 2004, pp. 334-335). In fact, the role that this public television company plays for the normalisation, promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and Basque language is highlighted in many professional reports, as well as in whitepapers and documents published by several institutions, in addition to those produced and released by Euskal Telebista itself. (cf. EITB - Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2016a; EITB - Eusko

Jaurilaritza, 2016b; EITB, 2017a; EITB, 2017b; EITB, 2017c; EITB, 2017d; EITB, 2018a; EITB, 2018b; EITB, 2018c; EITB, 2019 ...).

Moreover, many of these documents also underline the importance of the cultural industries for the development of the cultural and economic sectors, as well as the significant function that Euskal Telebista has among them, especially as a driving force of the Basque audio-visual sector. The Whitepaper of the Basque Audiovisual Sector (*El Libro Blanco del Audiovisual – Ikus-entzutekoen Liburu Txuria*), published in 2003 after a comprehensive analysis of the situation of this economic and industrial area in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, highlights Euskal Telebista's role in this regard.

The importance of Euskal Telebista for the promotion and development of Basque Culture, its relevance within the cultural system of the Basque Autonomous Community, and its role as a significant agent of the Cultural Creative Industries, were in fact mentioned in the Basque Plan for Culture (Eusko Jaurilaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2005), as can be observed in the various paragraphs we have drawn from that thorough document, as quoted and commented in the previous chapter. The significance of the cultural and creative industries field is underscored by the Basque Government in further years, too. This can be observed in the white-paper released by this entity (Eusko Jaurilaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2014) as a result of the analysis of this cultural and economic sector in Euskadi conducted, from a European perspective, in 2013.

In the same line are diverse events arranged and other documents published and disseminated by both the departments of industry and culture of the Basque Government as well as other public bodies, related to this topic (e.g. Be Glocal II. European Creative Industries: The Challenge of internationalisation (2016) – EIKEN &

Diputación Foral de Bizkaia, 2016; Basque CCI, (2016) [Video file] 3:23 – 5:54) - EIKEN, 2016). Moreover, it is most significant that the development of this sector is among the commitments of the Basque Government's programme for the present period, 2016-2020, as detailed in the 'Commitment 111' of the public, official information unveiled by this entity in this regard (Eusko Jaurlaritza-Gobierno Vasco, 2017).

According to this objective, numerous surveys are regularly carried out and published by the Basque Government and by one of the institutions devoted to this task within it, i.e. Kulturaren Euskal Behatokia-Observatorio Vasco de la Cultura [The Observatory of Basque Culture]. The information these documents gather shows the situation of the cultural and creative industries in the Basque Country in recent years, as well as the activities and policies carried out by the Basque Government in this field. The audio-visual sector, in which television is included, is among the areas they focus on (cf. Eusko Jaurlaritza-Gobierno Vasco & Kulturaren Euskal Behatokia-Observatorio Vasco de la cultura, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019a, 2019b; Kulturaren Euskal Behatokia-Observatorio Vasco de la cultura, 2018 ...). All these publications can be checked in this Basque Government's website where they are regularly uploaded: <http://www.kultura.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r46-kebargit/eu/>
<http://www.kultura.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r46-kebargit/es/>

2.4. *Sorginen Laratza.*

The television programme *Sorginen Laratza* was launched in September 1999 on the first channel of Euskal Telebista, ETB1, whose programming is broadcast totally in Basque. At that time ETB had two main television channels, ETB1, in Basque, and

ETB2, in Spanish. In addition, two international channels were launched soon after *Sorginen Laratza* started. Actually, in the year 2000 the new brand, Canal Vasco, began to broadcast in the American continent a selection of programmes of Euskal Telebista's principal offering, by the Hispasat satellite. The international channel for Europe, ETBSat, started a year later, in 2001, which permitted the watching of some of Euskal Telebista's programming in this continent, through the Astra satellite. At present, the output of these international channels is available worldwide on the internet, under the ETBSat brand.

Sorginen Laratza was part of ETB1 night prime-time schedule for 6 years, during the first 3 years on a Monday to Thursday basis whereas the following 3 years it was broadcast once a week. During two of those last seasons it was aired on Thursdays while for the last year its airing varied from Mondays to Tuesdays. Those years both ETB1 and ETB2 had to compete for the attention of the potential television audience with the main Spanish television channels at the time, which broadcast for the whole territory of Spain, that is to say, the Spanish Public Television Company, TVE, and the two private, commercial, television channels, namely Antena 3 and Tele 5.

The initial project of this television show was created and written in June 1999, responding to the requirements of the direction board of Euskal Telebista, and according to the premises established for this project. Consequently, objectives regarding content and audience were established, as well as economic and resources premises that determined the production framework, because the programme was entirely produced in, and financed by, this public television channel. In fact this programme was created to respond to various needs and limitations that the direction board of this Basque public television company, Euskal Telebista, had identified at the time in relation to its first channel, ETB1.

Actually, according to their information, this channel and its programming were then perceived by the audience as traditional television, mainly centred in a rural and folk concept of Basques and Basque culture. Consequently an entertainment format which would offer a modern and more contemporary image was thought necessary to change this perception of the Basque television channel by the public. Likewise, the profile of ETB1's viewers at that time responded mainly to specific groups too. With respect to age, children and over 65 viewers groups were most relevant. Due to that, the need to gain new viewers of other ages and mainly within the spectrum of 24 and 55 years old people was taken as fundamental; in general terms, the gaining of young audience was also wanted. Furthermore, this channel, which broadcasts in Basque language, was mainly consumed in rural areas and small towns, having less penetration in urban districts and, especially in the big cities of the Basque Country. Therefore, the need to attract the population of those zones and territories was considered fundamental too.

An additional objective was established with regard to the people this programme should reach. Actually, audience figures showed that ETB1's programming consumption traditionally decreased after 22:30 and dropped considerably after 23:00 and 23:15. It was really difficult, indeed, to keep the Basques watching this channel after that time, mainly from Monday to Thursday.

Consequently, following the arguments of the managing directors of this public television channel, premises regarding look and content were set so as to produce an entertainment programme, modern and somehow transgressive, with the aim of changing the audience's perception of Euskal Telebista and, especially of the Basque language channel, ETB1. The objective of reaching and attracting younger audience and those living in big towns, cities, and urban areas in general, was also behind those

premises. Likewise, the need to keep these viewers during the night prime time slot after 22:30 and even beyond 23:15 was pointed out and asked for.

Other needs and limits as a consequence of production aspects also conditioned the features of this programme, both regarding production management and content. Actually, the production system established for those programmes that used the resources of the existing big TV studios in Euskal Telebista's programmes production centre, which was implemented in order to respond to the programming requirements of this company, entailed additional complications. The intention to avoid these problems was behind the decision of producing different episodes of the same format for four days a week. This resolution affected the production system of both the programme as such as well as of the production centre of Miramon headquarters, but it also influenced the content of this show.

Actually, the fact that this programme was designed to cover such a big part of the night prime time schedule every week, that is to say, to be broadcast each day for an hour and a half, on a Monday to Thursday basis, entailed the need to create a broad format. Hence, this programme had to include different types of content, bearing in mind that it would take the place of the various programmes, different in form and content, which, until then, had filled that programming slot for four nights a week. Consequently, all these aspects, needs and requirements on the side of the company influenced directly the features of the final product, regarding form, content, aesthetic, production and production management, as we will explain further on.

After the programme's project was defined and accepted, at the end of June of 1999, the pre-production period started, which was fairly short taking into account the features and the complexity of this programme in various fields. Finally, the first

episode went on air on the 17th of September of that year. Once the programme was launched it worked in many aspects as a semi-independent unit within the company, both regarding content and production management.

This having been said, it has to be noted that the programme was always under the scrutiny of the direction board of the company, and mainly on the side of the direction of programmes, direction of production as well as by the managing director of Euskal Telebista. Equally, the various direction boards involved in the management of this public company did ultimately have a say and, among them the Council Board of the Basque public entity Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB) to which, as we have previously explained, the television brand, ETB, belongs to.

Moreover, being a public company run and mainly financed by the Basque Government, other public entities also supervised its activity, such as the Basque Parliament and the High Court of Auditors of the Basque Country, having to respond to their enquiries satisfactorily, as it happened several times during the 6 years production and broadcasting period of this Basque television programme. Besides that, it goes without saying that, being a programme produced and broadcast on a public television company, it was constantly and carefully observed and analysed by the public, the audience, as well as by media critics and various social agents.

During the period *Sorginen Laratza* was on air (September 1999- June 2005), 498 episodes of this magazine show were produced and broadcast, all of them aired during the late evening/night prime time, in ETB1. Among them, 479 were genuine, original programmes, including the special editions for New Year's Eve (*Sorginen Laratza - Kaixo, 2000-2001-2002-2003-2004*). In addition, 19 compilation programmes were also produced, gathering 'the best moments' of each season, which were broadcast

sporadically throughout those five years. They were of similar duration and were aired within the same programming slot as the original ones (22:30-24:00). This table below summarises the main data just commented. Additional charts including more lists are also provided further on in this text (see section 2.4.3.1 *Sorginen Laratza*: Production).

| SORGINEN LARATZA 1999 – 2005 ALL EPISODES (498) | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|---|
| SEASON | AIRING DATES | FREQUENCY | Prod. Numbers |
| 1999 – 2000 | 17/09/1999 – 22/06/2000 | Daily (Monday - Thursday) | 996288 – 1/130 |
| 2000 – 2001 | 5/10/2000 – 14/06/2001 | Daily (Monday - Thursday) | 996288 - 131/249 |
| 2001 – 2002 | 1/10/2001 – 13/06/2002 | Daily (Monday – Thursday) | 996288 – 250/372 026053 – 78/79 |
| 2002 – 2003 | 12/09/2002 – 29/07/2003 | Once a week: Thursday. | 026323 – 1/43 026510 – 1 026323 – 15,30,42,43 |
| 2003 – 2004 | 11/09/2003 – 26/07/2004 | Once a week: Thursday. From 14/06/2004 on Mondays | 036284 – 1/40 036492 – 1 046323 – 1/2 |
| 2004 - 2005 | 14/09/2004 – 27/06/2005 | Once a week: Tuesday. From 02/05/2005 on Mondays | 046346 – 1/35 046519 – 1/2 |

Figure 1: *Sorginen Laratza* 1999 – 2005. All episodes.

During the 2002 season extra short compilations of every-week programmes were also produced, to be broadcast in the early afternoon. 77 episodes of this type, of 30 minutes each, were edited and subsequently aired from 15:00 to 15:30, on a daily basis (from Monday to Friday), from January 2002 until the end of June. All of these *Sorginen Laratza*'s episodes were broadcast on the first channel of Euskal Telebista, ETB1, which transmits in Basque Language. In addition, from June 2000 most of

Sorginen Laratza's programmes could also be watched in America, on Canal Vasco, the international satellite channel of Euskal Telebista at that time.

2.4.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: description

Throughout this work we have observed the difficulties in classifying television content and in defining and naming the various and varied types of audio-visual products and texts, as well as in categorising them within different genres and subgenres. I would say that this is also the case of this programme, *Sorginen Laratza*. According to the arguments posed previously, though, I can affirm that there are no doubts about the categorisation of this television programme within the entertainment genre. Furthermore, following those reflections we can certainly consider it as a genuine 'entertainment programme'.

In addition, the analysis of its content leads us to conclude that it is a clear case of a hybrid programme where the inclusion and combination of various types of audio-visual content is evident. Likewise, it can be observed that those numerous and varied television forms included are on their side different expressions of television entertainment, which, moreover, are often hybrid forms too. We could therefore affirm that *Sorginen Laratza* is a television programme, a television format indeed, of the entertainment genre and that it is formed by many and varied audio-visual elements, which can be classified within different genres and subgenres of this macro-genre. As said, the programme as such is an hybrid, and so are most of the different parts, sections, and hence audio-visual content forms included in it.

2.4.1.1 *Sorginen Laratza*: a night-show magazine

I have mentioned above that I have defined this programme as ‘a night-show magazine’ I will now explain the reasons for classifying it as such. Its content, the different parts and sections included, the way it is structured as well as the position of this show in the general programming schedule, that is to say its airing time, determine this labelling on my part.

2.4.1.1.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: a night talk show

Although *Sorginen Laratza* contains many different sections, we can assert that it is generally structured over a basis of what can be considered as a talk show, and, more specifically of a night talk show. Actually, the programme is arranged principally around talk in its various forms which is, indeed, the main characteristic of a talk show. The so called ‘television talk’ takes a very old form of communication, conversation, and it may be defined, in Erving Goffman's terms, as ‘fresh talk’, that is, talk that appears to be generated word by word and in a spontaneous manner. However, even though it is always to a degree spontaneous, television talk and talk shows as such, are highly structured. In fact, these conversations are framed by a host figure, take place in ritualized encounters and are shaped and tailored to the diverse talk formulas of television. (cf. Talk Shows -Museum of Broadcast Communications – Encyclopedia of Television)

Therefore a ‘talk show’ is a show that is quite clearly and self-consciously built around its talk. Television talk shows originally emerged out of two central traditions: news and entertainment. However, most talk shows are nowadays hybrid forms which mix news, public affairs and entertainment. They are almost always anchored by a host

or a team of hosts and are sensitive to topics that will interest a mass audience. Hosts are in most cases either journalists or talents that have an entertainment profile, such as comedians. (cf. Talk Shows -Museum of Broadcast Communications – Encyclopedia of Television)

Within the various types of talk shows, *Sorginen Laratza* has many features of those programmes labelled as ‘late shows’, a name that, in fact, refers to ‘late night talk shows’, programmes which are considered a subgenre within the broad genre of talk shows. These programmes are also based on talk, and interviews, mainly with celebrities, are core elements of this type of format. Likewise, they include various entertainment elements, such as comedy sketches and musical numbers. Funny comments over current affairs and the news are also a feature of the so called ‘late shows’. These elements are relevant in *Sorginen Laratza* too, and we can observe that they became indeed part of the essence of this format.

The extensive article about late-night shows that media writer Elise Czajkowski published in *The Guardian* on the 6th of April, 2016 presents a thorough review of this type of television programmes, and highlights their importance, both as part of the television output as from a cultural perspective and comments on their evolution. She also refers to the report unveiled by *TruthCo.*, written by Alix Korn (‘Talking late’).

Late-night television is “a really foundational genre for television in general; it’s also the one that has changed the least, in certain ways”, according to Alix Korn of the cultural consultancy *TruthCo.* who wrote a recent report on the new trends in late-night television. The late-night talk format, invented in the mid-20th century and perfected on Johnny Carson’s *Tonight Show*, was static for decades; now it’s undergoing a seismic shift in tone and style. “The format is really loosening up, and there aren’t those hard and fast rules any more”, said Korn. (Czajkowski, 2016, April 6).

In fact, Alix Korn, cultural analyst of TruthCo at the time, emphasises the cultural importance of late night talk shows in her complete report ‘Talking Late’ (Alix Korn, 2016, TruthCo. New York), mentioned by Czajkowski, whose main reflections are summarised in the next text:

Even in today’s time-shifted world. Late Night Talk is still a staple of culture’s current content obsession. But the genre is evolving to include a wider array of formats, faces and fans than ever before. In a moment in culture where traditional news sources are suspect, and information is instantly accessible from endless sources, the role of Late Night Talk as a cultural first responder is more relevant than ever. (Korn, A., 2016)

According to the features of *Sorginen Laratza* and the characteristics of the Late Night Shows/Late Night Talk Shows we can affirm that this Basque television programme can also be classified as such, because many of the characteristics and elements of this genre are also features of the aforementioned Basque show. In fact, if we analyse the various articles and reports that refer to this genre and to the different programmes of this type that were broadcast in Spain during those years *Sorginen Laratza* was on air, we can easily backup this argument.

In several reports published in various editions of GECA’s television annual (*El Anuario de la television*), which correspond to those seasons this Basque television entertainment programme was broadcast, the different features of this particular genre are analysed and descriptions of the specific shows of this type are included. (GECA, 2001, pp. 191-192; GECA, 2001, pp. 204-207; GECA, 2002, pp. 196-198; Pérez & Gómez, 2003, pp. 38-40; Pérez & Gómez, 2005, pp. 30, 36; Sánchez, Ortega, et al., 2006, pp. 49-52).

The information posed in those articles permit the assessment of the position of these shows in the Spanish television scenario at that time. Moreover, those texts also

refer to many aspects regarding this genre we have already commented about throughout this work. Among other factors, their entertainment function is also mentioned. (e.g. Sánchez, De Zubiaurre et al., 2006).

This having been said, I have rather labelled *Sorginen Laratza* as ‘night’ instead of ‘late night’ (show/ talk show), as this categorisation is made regarding the time of the day in which a programme is broadcast. Actually, in the above mentioned Czajkowski’s article this author distinguishes between ‘late night’ and ‘almost-late-night shows’. In the case of *Sorginen Laratza*, its average broadcast time slot was between 22:30 and 24:00. Therefore, from that perspective, it cannot be considered a proper ‘late-night’ show, because programmes of this type aired in its broadcasting area and nearby (in different TV channels of Spain) generally start around 24:00. In fact, in this territory, the ‘late night’ slot is considered that which goes from 0:00 to 2:30. (cf. GECA, 2002b, pp. 196-198; Pérez & Gómez, 2003, p. 29; Sánchez, Ortega et al, 2006, pp. 49-52; Diego & Guerrero, 2006). That is why I have labelled it only as ‘night’ show instead. In fact, according to the classification of programmes regarding their broadcasting hour we can affirm that it is a prime-time programme, although taking also part of a slot that is often labelled as ‘second prime time’.

2.4.1.1.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: a night show

I have included the word ‘show’ when classifying this programme. In this regard I must explain that this term is often used as a synonym of the word ‘programme’ (a radio or television programme), therefore a television show can be a television programme of any kind. However, the term ‘show’ is also used to define different types of entertainment events, as the various definitions of this word included in the Oxford

Dictionary reflect. Hence, among them we can read: ‘A spectacle or display, typically an impressive one’; ‘A play or other stage performance, especially a musical’. When referring to television, though, this dictionary only includes the light entertainment genre as in this regard the definition of the term ‘show’ offered is: ‘A light entertainment programme on television or radio’.

In this case, I use the word ‘show’ taking into account some of its various senses. Actually, *Sorginen Laratza* is indeed a television programme but, it can be affirmed that it is also an entertainment event, which includes, following the definition just noted, ‘spectacles or/and displays of different kind, some of which can be impressive, as well as various kinds of stage performance, including musical ones’. In addition, it has also parts that can be classified within the light entertainment genre.

In fact we can find this type of content in its various forms in all the episodes, almost 500 of an hour and a half average duration, which were produced and broadcast during those 6 years that *Sorginen Laratza* was on air. Different kinds of what can be considered as purely entertainment performances, including music and dancing, but also different forms of comedy as well as other type of shows and parades, were indeed important parts of this television show.

Likewise, I have explained that I have used the word ‘night’ instead of ‘late’ as I understand this term is more adequate due to the time of the evening this show was on air. I have also mentioned that ‘late show’ is often used as an abbreviation of ‘late talk show’. In the same line, when I am referring to this programme as a ‘night show’ I am also taking into account a similar abbreviation. Actually, *Sorginen Laratza* can also be considered as a ‘night talk show’, because it has the features of a talk show in general, and also, as mentioned above, some of the specific ones of the so called ‘late shows’

(late night talk shows). Consequently, we can affirm that this programme includes characteristics of talk shows, late night talk shows and entertainment, variety, shows.

2.4.1.1.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: a magazine.

This having been said, I must add that I have also selected the term ‘magazine’ to label this programme. I have done so because *Sorginen Laratza* contains many sections that are often found in the television magazine genre, such as video reports of different kinds, which include varied information about a lot of different issues and events. I would say that within the great variety of topics approached and the diverse narrative forms used to present and deal with them that can be observed when analysing this programme, many characteristics of the television magazine genre can be found.

The peculiarities of other components of this show also lead us also to classify it as a magazine. In fact, according to the definition of this television genre provided by the international consultant company Kantar Media, these type of programmes are created with the main objective of entertaining the audience, and they combine interviews, quizzes and games, spectacle, talks and chats as well as information and humour, along with sections that foster the participation of the audience, both in the studio and from their homes. The variety of content is, indeed, one of the main features of the magazine genre, which is also among the main characteristics of *Sorginen Laratza*. In fact, the definition of Kantar Media encompasses some of the main features of this night show, which can therefore be also classified as a magazine (cf. Arana, 2011, pp. 93-143).

In addition, we can affirm that some of the video reports and other sections included in this programme can be considered as factual-entertainment content. Both

factual and fictional genres can be found in *Sorginen Laratza*, where fiction and reality often intertwine.

Having said that, it has to be mentioned that most programmes classified within the magazine genre in Spain are normally broadcast during the morning and afternoon slots and they are normally scheduled on a Monday to Friday basis. Scholars Patricia Diego and Enrique Guerrero (2006) note these aspects when referring to this genre.

This genre [the magazine] is scheduled in stripping, that is to say scheduling the programme at the same hour every working day (Cortés, 1999, p. 232). In Spain, the magazine is broadcast mainly in the morning and afternoon slots. This entertainment genre has three principal features: daytime scheduling, long duration, and compose of a wide range of different content (quiz shows, talk shows, music, humour, reports, celebrities, etc.). (Diego & Guerrero, 2006, pp. 13, 14)

Sorginen Laratza has certainly the characteristics of a magazine but it also differs from some of the features commonplace in day time magazines. That is why I have labelled it as night magazine. I would say that all these arguments back up my definition of *Sorginen Laratza* as a night show magazine, a format that includes both factual and fictional forms, scripted and non-scripted, within the great variety of content and forms of presenting them that can be observed when watching and analysing all the episodes that were produced.

2.4.1.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: an entertainment programme.

Besides the different aspects previously mentioned and the various terms used to describe and label this programme, it can be observed that I have classified *Sorginen Laratza* as an entertainment television programme. Entertainment is surely a core

characteristic of this show and, bearing in mind the objective of this research work, a feature that is essential for my selecting it as a case study for this last part. Hence, at this stage I take a final step and present an empirical case where I apply the information, conclusions and, consequently, the epistemology posed and the theoretical framework established in the first and main part.

With regard to this key feature, that is to say entertainment, the programme selected presents different aspects that, from my perspective, make it especially suitable for this analysis.

- The programme as a whole can be categorised within the television entertainment genre.
- It includes a great variety of different types of television content that can also be classified as entertainment.
- It is formed by a considerable amount of different sections which, on their side, are representative of different genres and subgenres within the macro-genre of television entertainment.
- Combination and hybridisation of genres can be observed both in the general structure of the programme as well as in the different parts and sections included.
- The programme responds to the various meanings, characteristics and activities associated to entertainment that we have mentioned in previous sections of this work, such as: to grab attention, enjoyment, amusement, pleasure, delight, to have a good time, humour, play, story-telling, not-boring, communication, external stimuli, etc.

- Humour is an important ingredient of *Sorginen Laratza* too. Comedy and humour, in various forms, are essential in this programme. Needless to say that humour and comedy are relevant genres and elements of television entertainment.

In addition to these characteristics we can state that the manner the programme is structured and presented in, as well as other aspects associated to the way in which both content as well as the team members that appear on the screen (talents, artists, etc.) and guests are shown, arranged and treated, permit finding some resemblance with a more social and at the same time domestic meaning of entertainment or entertaining, that is to say, the act of receiving people as guests.

It can be said that this act of inviting people around and trying to make them have a pleasant, enjoyable time has many similarities with the situations that can be observed in the programme although, obviously, they take place in a different and let's say, 'peculiar', space, a place somehow physical (the TV studios) and immaterial, intangible, (the television programme as such) at the same time.

From my perspective, the 'space' that a programme offers in this respect has to be analysed in various senses. On the one hand the show is an event that is created and produced specifically to be broadcast and, therefore, to entertain the TV audience. However, it also aims to entertain the programme's guests and the studio audience, who can also be considered as guests in some regard. Having said that, we could refer to the television audience as guests, too, as they are people who are invited to watch and share that 'virtual' space and time and, when doing so, they are entertained. Consequently we are referring to 'entertainment' in its broad sense, that is to say, taking into account its

various meanings mentioned previously, including this one just noted which refers to the act of inviting people, guests, around.

2.4.1.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: professionals and critics.

Some of these characteristics and the description of *Sorginen Laratza* as an entertainment television programme as well as its classification as a ‘late show’ are also noted by most professionals and critics that wrote and commented about this programme. (e.g. Basterretxea, 1999; Intxausti, 1999; Martinez, 1999, 2000; Zupiria, 2000 (López, *El Diario Vasco*; Ordóñez, *Gara*); Solana, 2000; Urkizu, 2001; Urdangarin, 2001; GECA, 2001d; Aldalur, 2002; Urkizu, 2002; Formula TV, 2004; Ezquiaga, 2004; Urkizu, 2005; Ezquiaga, 2005, etc.)

The article about *Sorginen Laratza* published in GECA’s Television book of the year in its edition of 2001 (*El anuario de la television*, 2001), which corresponds to the analysis of the television business in Spain during the season 1999-2000, is a good reference in this regard. The above mentioned aspects are already highlighted in the first paragraphs of this text, an article where a description of this show, as well as comments by managing directors of both the programme and the Basque public television channel are also included (GECA, 2001, p. 207).

La actualidad, el humor, la música, la ficción e incluso el deporte centran los contenidos de *Sorginen Laratza* (...) un late show que con un equipo de más de 50 profesionales y un plató calificado como el más grande del País Vasco acoge a invitados conocidos y no tan famosos que tienen grandes historias que contar.(...) es el programa más relevante de ETB1 de la temporada 1999/2000 por ser la primera vez que esta cadena emite en directo un late show diario durante hora y media en horario nocturno y porque supone la apertura hacia un nuevo modelo de programación en euskera. (...) el programa se transforma cada noche en “un lugar ficticio en el que entra todo aquello que pueda provocar

cierta sonrisa y que permita pasar un rato agradable”, explica la artífice de *Sorginen Laratza*, Itziar Azpeitia. El late show, en opinión de Azpeitia, pretende que la gente se evada de sus problemas, se ría y goce de la noche. Un deseo que su máxima responsable ve cumplido con el juego entrelazado de realidad y ficción.

In fact, the mentioned GECA’s annual of television presents an analysis about the genre of the late shows in Spain during the season of reference (pp. 204-207), where *Sorginen Laratza* is included as one of the examples of this type of programmes within the Autonomic televisions. This Basque entertainment show is described as a night magazine that combines current affairs, music, fiction, and sport (p. 206): ‘ETB1 apuesta por *Sorginen Laratza*, un magacín nocturno presentado por Xabier Euzkitze, que combina la actualidad, la música, la ficción y el deporte. Obtiene un 3,3% de share y 25.000 espectadores.’ *La Cosa Nostra* is also mentioned in this report as a popular late show that was aired at the time on TV3, the Catalanian autonomous television channel.

Crónicas Marcianas, broadcast in the whole of Spain, is also highlighted because, besides being very much watched, at that time it was the most veteran of this type of shows in that country (GECA, 2001, p. 206). This late show, which started being aired on the Spanish private, commercial channel Telecinco in 1997, was on air until 2005. During those years *Crónicas Marcianas* was considered the most relevant and best exponent of this type of show in Spain. This programme was very popular, and attracted a lot of viewers among those who were watching television after midnight. (cf. GECA, 2001, pp. 191,192; GECA, 2001, pp. 204-207; GECA, 2002, pp. 196-198; Pérez & Gómez, 2003, pp. 38-40; Pérez & Gómez, 2005, pp. 30, 36; Sánchez, Ortega et al, 2006, pp. 49-52; Sánchez, De Zubiaurre et al., 2006, pp. 77-78).

This late show also had a good performance in Euskadi, with good share audience figures among Basque viewers too. *Sorginen Laratza* was, in fact, often compared with *Cronicas Marcianas* (e.g. Intxausti, 1999; Martinez, 2000; Solana, 2000; Zabalik, 2000; Elizaran, 2001; Urdangarin, 2001; Ezquiaga, 2004, 2005; *Formula TV*, 2004). In this respect I quote here some opinions reflected by journalist Ines Intxausti, in its regular section devoted to television criticism, ‘txoritxoari mokoka’, published in the Basque newspaper *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* (1999, October 5). In her text, entitled ‘Laratza eta sarda’, written just a few weeks after *Sorginen Laratza* was launched, she refers to the similarities between *Crónicas Marcianas (CM)* and *Sorginen Laratza*. However, in opposition to some commentaries in this regard by other television critics, she not only doesn’t consider this resemblance as a negative feature, but assesses it positively. Intxausti values the fact that this Basque entertainment show follows, and adapts successfully, television trends that are appealing to the audience, and highlights the general output of *Sorginen Laratza* after just a few episodes from its premiere (Intxausti, 1999, October 5):

Sorginen Laratza-ren 11. zatia ikusita, lana guztiz finkatuta dutela esango nuke. Ustekabe galanta eta itxaropentsua niretzat. Beno, nire lanarentzat, noski. (...). *CM* eta *Sorginen Laratza* patroï bereko produktuak dira. Eta? Halako *pellokeriak* esatea eta entzutea eguneroko ogia dira gizarte honetan. Azken finean, eta zoritxarrez, humanoak ere patroï berekoak izan nahi dute. *Top model* eskusiboak. Eta hemen ez da inor salbatzen; denok gara berdinak, telebistako ekoizpenak bezalaxe. Eta oso ondo dago onartzea *CM*-ren errebisio euskalduna egiten saiatu direla *Sorginen Laratza* saioko lankideak. Beren lana, zalantzarik gabe, ETBk orain arte egindako duinena eta interesanteena baita egungo telebistaren proposamenei dagokienez. Momentu honetako telebista hortik doa. (...). ... saioaren lehen jarraitzaileen kluba antolatzekotan nabil. (...). *Sorginen Laratza*, esker 10 aldiz.

Actually, many similarities can be identified among these three television programmes just mentioned, which were on air in different territories of Spain at that

time. Hence, they share many features that define this type of shows, the best exponents of which were, and still are, the already classic American late shows. They, certainly, gave name to this kind of television format, a name that, we could say, still defines a television genre as such.

This having been said, significant differences can be observed when comparing *Sorginen Laratza* with *Crónicas Marcianas* regarding form, mise-en-scene and content. They are not similar in many aspects, due to the resources they have, the scope and the features of the public they aim to address and, most important, the fact that the former is produced by, and broadcast on, a specific public autonomous television company, whilst the latter is a product of a big, private, commercial firm. Consequently, both the objectives as well as the premises that determine the production framework and the final output of these two television shows are indeed entirely different in many respects.

This aspect was also commented in the press, mainly after the programme was consolidated, as can be read in this short review written in *Zabalik* to highlight, and assessed as excellent, this programme. In the paragraph quoted below it is mentioned that when the programme started, it was often referred to as the Basque version of *Crónicas Marcianas* but that as time passed it was shown that those critics were wrong. This review remarks that the personal involved in *Sorginen Laratza* make a dynamic and enriching programme and that, through developing a wide range of topics they reach many different people (*Zabalik*, 2000, June 17-18):

Euskal Telebistaren saiorik ospetsuena bilakatu da Xabier Euskitzek aurkeztu duena. Hasiera batean *Crónicas marcianas*en euskal bertsioa zela entzun behar izan zuten behin eta berriz. Denborarekin arrazoirik ez zutela erakutsi diete kritikari guztiei. Langile guztiek programa dinamiko eta aberasgarria egiten dute eta gai ugari lantzean, jende mota desberdinetara iristen dira.

Therefore, we can observe that, although there were different opinions about the resemblance between *Sorginen Laratza* and *Crónicas Marcianas*, the presence of elements and features of the late show genre was generally accepted by professionals and critics. This having been said, it can be seen that there was a unanimous opinion about the entertaining nature of this programme, a feature that, in general terms, was very much highlighted and valued, especially because it was produced and broadcast in Basque. The fact that *Sorginen Laratza* enabled the Basque audience access to a type of format and of television entertainment in Basque language and from a local Basque's perspective, that hitherto had not been available for them, was valued.

Actually, after reviewing the great amount of texts published about this programme, and despite the contradictory positions in many cases, we can perceive a broad acknowledgment and approval of some of the contributions of this programme to Basque television. Among them we could mention the new narrative ways for television production in Basque that it developed, as well as the fact that it helped to change the traditional and classical image of the first channel of Euskal Telebista. Likewise, its ability to connect with, and entertain, the Basque audience was also valued. Moreover, its participation in identifying and training professionals with most varied skills, that could, and indeed did, develop a career in television in Basque language, was acknowledged and highlighted by many media critics and professionals of various fields.

I also refer to these aspects further in this work, in the chapter dedicated to the impact of *Sorginen Laratza* and its presence in the media, where I mention and quote some texts that back up these arguments exposed here.

2.4.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: content.

Following the reasoning expressed until now, we can assert that *Sorginen Laratza* is indeed an entertainment programme that, on its side, includes a great amount of different content that represents various subgenres of this macro-genre. In fact, *Sorginen Laratza* comprises a great variety of forms of television output. I will not go into detail of each one, as more than 100 different sections can be identified within the episodes of this television entertainment show during the 6 years it was aired. Each one of these segments ran for different periods of time and they were either modified or substituted for new ones as the programme went along. As noted previously, those items can be categorised within the different and varied genres and subgenres of the macro-genre of television entertainment. Likewise, most of them are hybrid forms.

Actually, we could say that most of the existing subgenres of television entertainment content can be found in one way or another in *Sorginen Laratza*. If we take into account the multi-dimensional and detailed classification provided by the European Broadcasting Union, that is, the EBU System of Classification of Radio and Television Programmes, and the information presented in the report named ESCORT 2007, it can be observed that many examples of the different categories of the macro-genre of entertainment outlined in that whitepaper are present in this programme, both regarding format and content. Likewise *Sorginen Laratza* responds to the definition of entertainment programme that appears in this document, that is, ‘programme intended primarily to evoke relaxation, feelings of pleasure and/or awareness of beauty’ (EBU, 2007, p. 35)

Therefore, taking into account the ESCORT 2007 whitepaper as a reference, and the different categorisations of television programmes that it presents, within *Sorginen*

Laratza we can identify numerous examples of most of the different types of entertainment television forms included in this report.

As they explain, the 'ESCORT 2007' report is organised as a series of dimensions, in order to help users identify a minimum set of features to describe their programme/service' (EBU, 2007, p. 8). Consequently, it presents different levels of detail, according to the different fields used for their classification (i.e. intention, format, content, participation, intended audience/target group, origination and content alert), (EBU, 2007, p. 8).

2.4.2.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: intention.

As far as intention is concerned, two main categories are differentiated within entertainment, 'pure entertainment' and 'informative entertainment' (EBU, 2007, p. 11). We could say that content included in both categories can be found within *Sorginen Laratza*. In fact we have defined this show as an entertainment programme, and, actually, some of its parts and sections can be assessed as essentially entertaining, however, at the same time, the informative content of most sections of this show and of the programme as a whole cannot be denied. This show provided, indeed, numerous and varied information in a broad range of topics and fields. Although the way this information is presented differs from genuine news programmes and from most of those that can be classified as purely informational in general, we can assert that the fact that *Sorginen Laratza* informed at the same time as it entertained is quite evident. The information already posited as well as the analysis of content, whose results I reflect further on, back up this statement.

2.4.2.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: format.

When referring to format, in this report, they explain that ‘this dimension is used to classify programmes as to their formal structure, in other words, what does the programme look like, regardless of the subject with which the programme is dealing’ (EBU, 2007, p. 35). Within the various categories they establish regarding this aspect (EBU, 2007, p. 12), we can say that elements of ‘structured/non-fiction’ content can be identified in this programme. Actually, in this report they define as ‘structured’: ‘All programmes dealing with facts, situations, opinions, theories and forecast’ (EBU, 2007, p. 35). This is, indeed, one of the characteristics of *Sorginen Laratza*.

Moreover, among the different formats of this group which are present in this programme we can mention those classified in this report as ‘Magazine’, as well as those included in a broader group where they mention the following: ‘Discussion/Talk show/ Interview/Debate’. Likewise, although sporadically, even content that is categorised as ‘Commented Event’ can be seen in *Sorginen Laratza*. In addition, this document adds the ‘Other/Mixed’ category, in which some of the sections of this programme should be included (EBU, 2007, p. 12).

A second big category regarding format, according to this classification scheme, corresponds to the ‘Show/Entertainment’ genre (EBU, 2007, p. 12). With regard to the different subgenres that this report presents as part of this category we can observe that characteristics of the following also exist in *Sorginen Laratza*: ‘Simple game show, Stand-up comedian(s), Hosted show and Panel-show’. Likewise, this programme contains various types of ‘Artistic Performances’, which is another category mentioned in this report, referring to music, dance, as well as theatrical performances, among others (EBU, 2007, p. 12).

Hosted Show is defined in this whitepaper as: ‘Programme that can be regarded neither as non-fiction nor as drama or music/dance in which one or more persons fulfil the role of presenter, host, quiz or games master, announcer, chairperson or speaker and where the rest of the participants are generally members of the public’ (EBU, 2007, p. 35). A Panel show is described as: ‘A programme of a light entertainment nature which is presented by a more or less fixed group of people (panel). Programme, that can be regarded neither as non-fiction nor a drama or music/dance in which no one fulfils the role of presenter, host, quiz-or games-master, announcer, chairperson or speaker’ (EBU, 2007, p. 35).

According to these definitions, we can state that *Sorginen Laratza* is a ‘Hosted Show’, although characteristics of panel-shows are also found. Actually, even though there is a main host, a presenter who remained from the launch of the show in 1999 until the last episode in 2005, the presence of various co-presenters gained importance as the programme went on and in many episodes some of the sections were indeed hosted by a fixed group of people formed by various co-presenters, along with the main host.

2.4.2.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: subject.

With regard to the subject television programmes deal with, the ESCORT 2017 scheme groups them in several categories (EBU, 2007, pp. 13-30), among which, in relation to the programme studied, *Sorginen Laratza*, I would mention the following: Information; Leisure/Hobby/Lifestyle; Sports; Amusement/Entertainment and Music. In fact, we can observe that most of the topics listed and classified within those categories appear in *Sorginen Laratza*, such as: News and current affairs; Consumer affairs;

Politics, Economy and Society; Religion/ Philosophy; Education; Arts & Media; Humanities & history; Science and technology; Medicine / health; Nature & Environment; Human interest; Cookery, food, drink; Hobbies; Personal/lifestyle/family; and Travel / tourism, as well as different type of sports, music and dance performances, along with a great amount of events of different type.

This having been said, I would also note that, among the categories defined within the 'Amusement/Entertainment' group in this document (EBU, 2007, p. 25), we can observe that most of them also respond to the type of content which is part of *Sorginen Laratza*. Actually, some of the sections that formed this programme as well as the diverse content included, even sporadically, can be classified according to the ESCORT 2007 scheme as: Quiz/contest; Variety; Chat; Comedy (including various forms of Satire and Humour), Surprise (including Circus) and Magic/hypnotism.

Music is another category that is outlined in this report, where an extensive and detailed classification of the different types of music that can be found in television programmes is presented. Music is also an important element in *Sorginen Laratza* as, along with the presence in the studio of a DJ who was in charge of live musical setting, a great variety of musical performances were offered.

After analysing in detail both the form and content of this programme and taking in consideration the information presented until now, we can affirm that *Sorginen Laratza* has indeed the characteristics of a genuine television entertainment programme that deals with a great variety of topics, which are presented in numerous and diverse audio-visual narrative forms. Features of talk shows as well as of the purely entertainment variety shows are essential in this programme, and humour is also relevant. Likewise, fictional and reality-factual sections and elements are mixed into

Sorginen Laratza, where current affairs and information have a place in combination with spectacle, comedy and artistic performances of different kind.

Hence, we can affirm that the combination of fiction and reality, the fact that they deal with a great variety of topics, with a high attachment to current affairs, the importance of entertainment resources and among them a great variety of entertainment and artistic performances, the centrality of comedy and humour along with the numerous, varied and renewed narrative forms used to show all these elements are indeed core features of this programme. We can also remark that all these aspects, in addition to others that I will comment later on, contributed to the popularity and success of this television programme, both in terms of its acceptance among the public it was aimed at, and also as a means to fulfil the objectives of the company that produced and broadcast it, that is, the Basque Public Television, Euskal Telebista.

2.4.2.4. *Sorginen Laratza*'s content: description.

In relation to the varied content included and the great amount of different sections identified within this programme, for my purpose I will arrange them within the following main groups:

2.4.2.4.1. 'Talk' sections: Those parts of the programme which are based on conversation in its various forms: talks, chats, debates and round-table discussions, interviews ... A great amount and variety of topics and events were presented in these sections, as local and global issues had a place in *Sorginen Laratza*. Most of them were, to a great extent, current issues, current affairs, and their proximity to and interest for

Basque citizens were essential for their selection and development. A great variety of local events, which are indeed representative of Basque culture in its various senses and expressions, were a matter of conversation in this programme too.

The list of guests is long, as during the 6 years *Sorginen Laratza* was on air more than 1,200 persons took part in the programme, at the TV studio, either to be interviewed or to talk and give their opinion about different matters. In addition, various groups of collaborators came periodically to participate in debates and round-table conversations about topics that were recurrent in different periods.

These guests' profiles are indeed varied and we could say that they covered the broad spectrum of Basque society in different fields, including either celebrities or more or less anonymous people who had an interest for varied reasons. Their presence in the programme could be due to their professional or personal experiences, or associated to their knowledge or prominence in relation to a certain topic or event, or because of being representative of a certain group, community or association, etc. In any case, we can say that most Basque celebrities in different fields, in addition to well-known professional and artists of different disciplines, alongside many anonymous Basque citizens who had an interest for different reasons had a place in this programme. All of the guests in the studio spoke Basque, Euskara, which is the language in which *Sorginen Laratza* was produced and broadcast. It can be said that, generally, this varied type of conversation took place in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, avoiding aggression and tension.

I would like to remark that the presence of so many and such different guests represented not only different areas, disciplines, experiences, opinions, etc. of Basque society and Basque people. Actually, they also represented the different areas of the

territory of the Basque country and the diverse dialects spoken in them. In fact, although the hosts of the programme spoke *Euskara batua*, the Basque official standardised language, guests would, in most cases, express themselves in their own Basque dialect, as the diverse varieties of Euskara spoken in different areas and provinces of the Basque Country, and even in different towns, have their own characteristics.

2.4.2.4.2. Video reports: Audio-visual material created to report about different topics and events. They differ in style, being more or less formal or informal, serious or humorous depending on the topic and event covered. Likewise, varied narrative resources are used. The presence of co-presenters of the programme, of different profile, is common in these video reports. In many cases even actors, characters, take part in them, interacting with real persons.

A great amount of this type of short form audio-visual material was produced, covering a wide spectrum of topics and events. Most of them were recorded on location, mainly within the Basque Country, although some places in Spain and Europe were also visited in order to report on different issues, places or events which were regarded as interesting for *Sorginen Laratza*'s audience.

2.4.2.4.3. Other audio-visual pieces of different type: I am referring to diverse material produced to illustrate and complement different parts of the programme such as interviews, round-tables, chats, etc. including witty videos of varied kind and style created for different comic sections of this show.

2.4.2.4.4. Entertainment performances: This group would include various artistic outputs such as music and dancing, circus representations and magic shows, as well as different types of parades. Likewise varied games and contests which were also arranged in the studio with an entertainment purpose are included in this group.

Among the artistic performances I would highlight the importance of music in *Sorginen Laratza*, as almost each episode contains a musical show of some type. Some of them are played by professional groups or singers, but others are musical displays of different kind created and performed by members of the team of this programme. Actually, the two singers and the group of dancers who were part of the crew of *Sorginen Laratza* performed a great variety of songs and music shows, of different style and in different languages, although mainly in Basque.

The main host of this programme also often took part in these musical shows, singing. Sporadically other members of the hosts team, and even actors, performed musical pieces created ad-hoc for the occasion, which in most cases were impersonations or parodies of well-known musical groups and songs (e.g. Village People, The Blues Brothers - cf. *Sorginen Laratza*- Compilations - 2 - P.Z. 996288-167/09-12-2000). In addition, popular characters of the programme would sometimes take part in some of these musical shows too.

Varied songs were therefore interpreted by various members of the team. In some cases they were genuine songs, both music and lyrics, being mostly Basque well-known songs of different styles. Occasionally, though, they also sang Spanish or English ones. On other occasions lyrics would be translated and they would sing a Basque version of the original work. Other times the original music would remain, but original Basque lyrics would be created. Finally, totally original musical pieces, both

music and lyrics, were also composed specifically for the programme, in this case always in Basque. This is also the case of the two musical video-clips that were produced within *Sorginen Laratza* by its creative and production crew, although with additional promotional intentions after being firstly broadcast as part of the programme. CDs of both songs were published and distributed free ('Azpitiki', 2000; 'Sorgin Beltzarana', 2001).

This having been said, alongside the varied musical displays created and performed by *Sorginen Laratza*'s crew, the importance of the presence in the programme of Basque musical singers and groups of different style, must be highlighted. A wide range of artistic performances, mainly musical, by Basque artists can be watched in this programme. In addition, other musical singers and groups, mostly Spanish, also performed their music songs and shows in *Sorginen Laratza*'s TV studio. Some international artistic outputs also had a place, sporadically, in the programme, as was the case of the pieces represented by artists of the famous Chinese Circus and the Cirque Du Soleil (cf. *Sorginen Laratza* – Compilations -19 – P.Z. 46519-2/ 29-03-2005; *Sorginen Laratza* – Compilations - 11 – P.Z. 26323-30/17-04-2003).

The variety of the type and the origin of the artistic performances shown is, indeed, one of the features of this programme. Equally, a blend of different styles, genres and even cultures can be noticed in many of them. This is the case of the performances created and represented by the crew of *Sorginen Laratza*, as we have explained above, but this hybridity can also be observed in many of the outputs by different artists that the programme hosted. Examples of this kind are performances of Basque contemporary dancing (*Aukeran Dance Company*), new forms of presenting *bertsolaris*'- Basque poets, improvisers - outputs (e.g. in the companion of a *txistu* player and dancers), the combination of Basque popular songs and Andalusian

flamenco, and Brazilian *capoeira* danced to the sound of the Basque traditional music instrument *txalaparta*, just to mention a few (cf. *Sorginen Laratza* 1 – P.Z. 996288-1/ 17-09-1999; *Sorginen Laratza* - Compilations – 2 – P.Z. 996288-167/ 09-12-2000; *Sorginen Laratza*-Compilations - 19 – P.Z. 46519-2/ 29-03-2005).

2.4.2.4.5. Humour and comedy is a broad category which comprises different kind of content created with a humorous, comic, purpose. Therefore, the varied witty video pieces as well as the different types of humorous performances and parades mentioned previously can also fit into this group. Other items such as jokes, satirical pieces and parodies (of diverse celebrities and personalities, fictional characters, situations, TV programmes, varied events, musical shows, etc.) and even some types of funny games and contests, played both in *Sorginen Laratza*'s set and on location, can also be included. This having been said, within this group I would highlight the importance of the various types of short form fictional, sketch comedy which were created as part of this show.

In fact, a great amount of comedy sketches were produced during the 6 seasons the programme was on air, as each episode included an average of three or four at least. Some of them were closed, sketch series, which were pre-recorded both in a TV studio or outdoors - *Mendavia*, *Ireneren misioak*, *EHko kondaira*, *Ez gaude konforme*, *Goierrri airlines*, *Linea Lizuna*, *Superagirre*, *JJ Altuna*, etc. However, most of them were performed live within the programme, where characters interacted with guests and hosts. This type of comedy was most popular indeed and became one of the essential features of this programme (c.f. *Sorginen Laratza* – Compilations, 1999-2005 - Bildumak 1-19 – ETB - [video files]).

A wide range of characters were created for this purpose. Some of them were genuine ones, as they were originated especially for this show. Others were impersonations of personalities and celebrities, either Spanish, international or Basque. Although mainly real persons were parodied, some fictional characters were also imitated.

Among the original characters, we can observe that some of them are universal. Nevertheless, they are identified as Basque due to the cultural identity elements used in the construction of both the characters and the sketches as such. Their outfit and appearance, their names, the way they act and talk and, of course, the language they speak, Euskara, are essential to regard these characters as Basque. This is the case of children Maddi and Manu, the old lady Bittori, the waitresses Dolox and Nekane, Otxoto Doctor, Bixente the fireman, the Elvis Presley fan J.J. Altuna, the detective of classic police films Mendavia, etc.

Other characters can be considered genuine Basque, and their look is sufficient to be identified as such since in many cases they respond to stereotypes. Among them, the one that depicts a Basque nationalist old man, Jose Antonio Arana, can be highlighted. This character became very popular, his costume, wearing the traditional checkered jacket, a Basque beret and a ribbon with the colours of the Basque national flag- the *ikurrina*- ; the way he talks, with continuous comments on the year of the Spanish civil war, to which he refers with the word '*treintaiseisen*' as Basque people of his age often do, mixing the Spanish word with the Basque declension; the expressions he uses, and so on are just some of the details on the construction of this genuine Basque character. It can be said that this fictional personality was indeed taken to the audience's heart, as could be observed when he interacted with real persons either in the studio or on location.

This is the case of his numerous performances with real celebrities and personalities of most varied fields, the president of the Basque Government among them (cf. *Sorginen Laratza* - Compilations – 6 – P.Z. 996288-268/ 01-11-2001). Equally, his interactions with anonymous people and his participations in popular events were well-received both by the public attending them as well as by the TV audience (e.g. Behobia-Donostia popular race, *Sorginen Laratza* - Compilations – 7 – P.Z. 996288-291/ 13-12-2001). The character himself was also often imitated in different events around the Basque country, such as carnival parades.

Impersonations were also performed by the actors of *Sorginen Laratza*, and even by some of the hosts of the programme. Basque, Spanish and international personalities of most varied fields were parodied. The imitation of the Basque celebrity chef Argiñano was among the most popular ones, the interactions of this character with the guest and hosts of the programme were very much liked and commented by the public. In fact, this is an impersonation that the same comedian has kept performing for many years in different programmes of Euskal Telebista since then. He has done so either on his own or along with the character of another well-known Basque chef, Juan Mari Arzak. This fictional couple has its origin in *Sorginen Laratza*, where they became recurrent and very popular among the audience. Actually the real Arzak visited the programme several times and even interacted with Argiñano's character, in a peculiar mixture of fiction and reality, of interaction between real persons and fictional characters, which was indeed one of the most noticeable features of the use of sketched comedy within the programme (cf. *Sorginen Laratza* - Compilations – 5 – P.Z. 996288-249/ 14-06-2001).

Spanish politicians, such as the president of Spain at the time and that country's king, were also parodied successfully with this purpose, along with various popular

sportspersons and celebrities of Spanish show-business among others. All these characters would normally interact with real persons, too. Furthermore, international figures and artists were also imitated. Actually, British singer Elton John was the protagonist of many musical sketches and brilliant comedy pieces where a combination of narrative resources of sketch comedy and musical show, manifestations of interplay in various forms, with hosts, guests and the studio audience, as well as a mixture of international, global references and elements of Basque identity and culture had as a result hilarious pieces of entertainment audio-visual content that were greatly appreciated by the public (c.f. *Sorginen Laratza* – Compilations – 6 – P.Z. 996288-268/01-11-2001; *Sorginen Laratza* 2002-2003/6, P.Z. 026323-6).

Sorginen Laratza's actors also portrayed fictional characters, international ones (e.g. Superman, Asterix, Homer Simpson, etc.) as well as Spanish and Basque ones (e.g. the protagonists of some Basque traditional tales, such as Olentzero, Celedón, etc.). Furthermore, the programme made use of puppets for impersonations. Puppet caricatures of celebrities - of the kind used in programmes of the type of *Spitting Image* - were mainly utilised to interact with the real person portrayed by the puppet. Puppet-actors were also a device employed in short comedy pieces of various types, as was the case of the sketch depicting a press conference given by two barnacles and a mussel (e.g. *Prestige's spill* – 'press conference'). (cf. *Sorginen Laratza* – Compilations – 18 – P.Z. 46519-1/ 04-01-2005; *Sorginen Laratza* 2001-2002, P.Z. 996288-342; *Sorginen Laratza* – Compilations – 1 – P.Z. 996288-101/ 01-05-2000).

In summary, we can say that humour and comedy are essential features of this programme, for which global, universal, narrative resources, characters and topics used in television comedy are combined with local, Basque, ones. Equally, a great variety of formats that can be classified as television comedy at present were developed in the

creation and production of humorous content in *Sorginen Laratza*, both factual and fictional. Among the most noticeable features of the comedy content of this programme we could mention the following: intertextuality; interaction between fiction and reality; combination of global and local aspects -with the inclusion of international references and the permanent presence of expressions of Basque culture and elements of Basque cultural identity-; mixture of subgenres, formats and outputs of varied forms of television comedy; the use of universal narrative resources in combination with the cultural specificities of local, Basque, humour; the combination of tradition and modernity regarding topics and outputs, form and content and, finally, proximity as well as attachment to current issues. The various modes used to integrate, to embed, this comedy content into the structure of the whole programme, already mentioned, are also aspects to be highlighted, as it can be said that they became essential, and distinctive, features of this programme (c.f. *Sorginen Laratza – Compilations, 1999-2005 – Bildumak 1-19 – ETB - [video files]*).

2.4.2.4.6. Others: There are other segments and items of this television show that are difficult to categorise clearly within any of these groups, because of their particular features and, in many cases, due to the mixture of formats, genres, narrative resources and production modes that they represent. A broad category of ‘others’ would cover them, among which is the so called *Berri Motzak* (Short News) section, in which ironic revisions of different type of news were made, using different and varied narrative audio-visual resources when doing so. This segment of *Sorginen Laratza* can be also categorised within the humour and comedy group. Varied situations created in the programme to interact with the guests, as well as with the studio and home audiences, can be equally included in this group too.

2.4.2.5. *Sorginen Laratza*'s content: other aspects.

In this previous section we have presented information about this television programme which back up the classification of *Sorginen Laratza* as an entertainment show with varied content regarding topics, narrative and visual forms, as well as in relation to the genres and subgenres included.

After analysing in detail all the episodes of *Sorginen Laratza*, we can identify several features which are common to all of them and that define the essence of this programme. I would say that those characteristics were certainly relevant in the creation and production process of this programme and, at the same time, became fundamental for its popularity and success. I am referring to various aspects that I have already defined as fundamental when assessing television and television entertainment in particular, from a positive perspective. Equally, these aspects will help up us to identify the contribution of this television show to the public company that produced and broadcast it. I outline and comment on them in these following sections.

2.4.2.5.1. Basque culture and Basque cultural identity.

One of the main features of this programme is the high presence of numerous and varied expressions and elements of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity, contemporary and traditional, rural and urban. We are referring to these concepts, namely culture and cultural identity, in a broad sense, as mentioned in previous sections.

These aspects are present in a great variety of forms. On the one hand this diversity is due to the specific features of each particular cultural expression, to the

characteristics of each element of cultural identity, and it is very much associated with how they are reflected, presented and used in each specific case. On the other hand, this variety is a result of the different ways in which these expressions and elements are adapted to the varied narrative audio-visual resources used in this television show.

Moreover, it has to be noticed that the programme acted both as a creator of audio-visual texts which are expressions of Basque culture, as well as a broadcaster, a disseminator, of the most diverse cultural expressions and events created and arranged by others. We can assert that many different members of Basque society were either creators and/or protagonists of this great amount of cultural expressions which were presented in, and echoed by, *Sorginen Laratza*. All of them were different in form and content and they included varied and numerous elements of Basque cultural identity, elements which were reflected, and even used, in very different manners.

In line with the definitions of culture and cultural identity provided throughout this work, I am referring here to Basque cultural and artistic activities, to expressions of the Basque ‘way of life’ and to those aspects that define and reflect the process of development and the present stage of Basque culture as such. All these aspects are widely and deeply represented in *Sorginen Laratza*, in its ‘talk’ sections, in its video reports and audio-visual pieces of different kind, in its entertainment performances, in its varied humour and comedy content as well as in all the other sections, segments and items that form it, according to their definitions and the description of their content which I have commented about in previous sections of this work.

2.4.2.5.1.1. The Basque language: Euskara.

Language is not only commonly regarded as a core element of cultural identity but, paraphrasing Heinderyckx's words (1994), it is even considered the most important and most powerful component of national culture (Heinderyckx, 1994, mentioned by Moran, 1998). We can affirm that this is indeed the case of Basque language, Euskara, with regard to Basque culture and Basque cultural identity. As Professor of the University of the Basque Country Ramón Zallo remarks, the Basque language, Euskara, is 'the language and the specific heritage of the Basques and it is their most marked sign of identity' (Zallo, 2016, p. 127)

The permanent presence and use of Euskara, the Basque language, is also one of the main features of *Sorginen Laratza*, and a sign of its identity too, as this programme was produced and broadcast entirely in Basque. Basque language is present in the whole programme, in many different ways, due to the great variety of audio-visual forms and content that *Sorginen Laratza* includes. This implies that Euskara is used in many different registers and modes, since language is adapted, adjusted, to the characteristics of each genre and of each type of audio-visual content. Thus, different registers, speaking modes and linguistic resources are used during the programme. Furthermore, the different dialects of Euskara are also reflected.

Therefore, during the programme the main host speaks in *Euskara Batua*, the official standardised Basque language, in a formal mode. Actually, he uses a very rich Euskara, which often includes terms, words and expressions that are closer to specific dialects or local modes. Equally, he adapts the register he uses to the different circumstances, as is the case of when he interacts with fictional characters or with certain guests or collaborators. In fact, when it is appropriate he also uses the informal

mode of Euskara, *hitanoa*. The main co-presenters and collaborators also speak the official unified language, but some of them use it in a less formal way, according to their profile and the characteristics of the sections or items they are conducting in each case.

The presence of different dialects of Basque language in the programme is also relevant. In fact, although some guests speak *Euskara Batua*, most of them use dialects or different varieties of the Basque language, according to local characteristics. Equally, participants in different manners in the varied video reports included in this TV show speak and use the Basque language in different ways, regarding their age, territory, context, etc. Hence, different modes, registers, and dialects are used and, therefore, heard in *Sorginen Laratza*. Consequently, in this sense it can be said that the programme acted as a loudspeaker for the Basque language in the great variety of modes it is spoken by Basque people.

Having said that, I would also like to focus on the texts which were created specifically for the programme and that were reflected in the script. Hence, the host and co-presenters, as well as the actors, followed a text that had been previously written, although, in some cases, due to the features of each type of section, there was some place for improvisation. This script, for its part, used language in different manners, due to the specific characteristics of the varied sections and types of genres it was written for.

In this regard I would like to underline the varied fictional scripts produced within the programme. Actually, language is a key tool for the construction of characters. The varied fictional roles created and developed within the show, either

being genuine or impersonations, permitted, and at the same time obliged, writers and actors to use the Basque language in a varied range of manners.

2.4.2.5.1.2. Euskara: comedy and humour.

As said, humour and comedy were important features of *Sorginen Laratza*, which entailed a big challenge regarding language. Indeed, at that time there was little tradition of writing television comedy in Basque. The development of this genre until then was mostly limited to a few comedy series, although they were very successful among Basque audience (e.g. *Jaun eta Jabe*, *Bi eta Bat*). With regard to sketch comedy, however, very few examples of this genre can be found in Basque television programmes previously to *Sorginen Laratza*. Although sketches were included in entertainment shows such as *Funtzioa* and *Sikofonia*, they were indeed very few altogether. Furthermore, it can be said that these comedy pieces were quite traditional regarding content, aesthetic and style. This having been said, the contribution of these programmes in the field of Basque television shows that integrated humour outputs must be acknowledged, as they were, indeed, pioneers in this area in Euskal Telebista.

The development of sketch comedy in a wide range of forms is one of the features of *Sorginen Laratza*. This entailed a great challenge in various fields, including language, and a great effort was made in this sense due to the lack of references in this regard. Consequently, the creation of so many different situations and such a wide range of characters for their performance in *Sorginen Laratza*, within so varied comedy pieces, entailed both a challenge and an opportunity for the creators and scriptwriters of this television show.

The contribution of this programme in this field to Basque television, to the Basque audio-visual sector and to Basque language must, therefore, be highlighted. Hence, the almost 500 episodes of *Sorginen Laratza* produced provided an important corpus of both written and spoken material of the use of Basque language in comedy and humour and, more specifically in sketch comedy. Actually, its contribution in this regard was acknowledged by the head of the Basque language department of this public television company who, some years later, highlighted the work done by *Sorginen Laratza* in this field (Larrinaga, 2011, p. 41). In fact, the case of *Sorginen Laratza* has been taken as a template for the use of Basque language in television sketch comedies (Larrinaga, 2011, p. 41; EITB, 2005)

2.4.2.5.1.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: Basque language.

Special care about the use of Basque language was taken in this programme's production. Texts were written in Basque by journalists and scriptwriters but, afterwards, they were carefully revised by a philologist in Basque language, attached to the programme, according to previously established professional criteria. Moreover, if needed, this expert in Basque language also adapted these texts to the different registers used either by the host and co-presenters, as well as by the varied characters created for the fictional pieces. That was also the case in which certain fictional characters expressed themselves in a particular Basque dialect, that being a characteristic and part of their 'personality'. This was, for example, the case of Bittori, the character that represents an old lady, who always spoke in the dialect of the Bizkaia province, whereas J.A. Arana, who we have already referred to throughout this work, used a dialect of the province of Gipuzkoa.

Therefore, this professional reviewed the texts from the language perspective and, in addition, she provided advice to writers, presenters, collaborators and actors, both regarding the written texts and their oral expression, making sure that the language used in the programme, both written and spoken, was not only correct, but also appropriate to the characteristics of the varied content included in *Sorginen Laratza*.

Consequently, we can affirm that this television programme provided a broad compilation of Basque language and its different expressions. This broad corpus of Basque language's use is the result of the specific professional needs of this entertainment format but, besides that, it also reflects the use of this language by a broad spectrum of Basque people, of different ages and profiles and in different situations and contexts, during that period of time (1999-2005). Therefore, it can be said that the presence of Basque language in such different manners during 6 years and within around 5,000 hours of such varied television content produced and broadcast in this minority language, helped indeed to foster and disseminate Basque language during the period this show was broadcast live.

Moreover, it has to be noticed that beyond the people it reached, and in addition to the use of the programme made by the public during those years, the gathered corpus still exists and can, hence, still be used, due to the existing audio-visual and written material related to this programme, that is to say, both the programme's recordings and written scripts. The documental value of this material regarding Basque language should, therefore, be taken into consideration. In fact, it not only reflects the state of Basque language in several fields in a certain period of time, but in addition, that material helped, and still can help, in the promotion and normalisation of this minority language, because it can be used and disseminated in several and varied forms if wanted, both at present as well as in the future.

2.4.2.5.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: the global and the local.

In these previous sections we have referred to the broad presence of elements of Basque cultural identity in *Sorginen Laratza*, and to the importance of Basque language among them. We have highlighted their relevance, both regarding their prominent presence in this programme as well as in relation to how this show's production and broadcasting contributed to fostering and disseminating Basque culture and Basque language.

This having been said, we have to add that global elements and references are also essential in *Sorginen Laratza*, regarding both this programme's form and content. In fact, this aspect, this global approach, is observed when analysing the topics they tackle in its various sections, but it is also evident when we examine the manner in which they are shown. Global references, modes and trends can be identified within the different forms and formats of television content included in *Sorginen Laratza*. Equally, narrative resources used globally in the creation of television texts of different types are also employed in this Basque television programme, where, as said, a great variety of television audio-visual content, representative of different genres, subgenres and formats, was developed.

These global elements, references, narrative resources and audio-visual formats and forms are combined with local ones though. The result is a genuine Basque television entertainment programme whose form and content respond both to global television narratives and trends as well as to the characteristics of Basque television, Basque culture and Basque cultural identity.

This combination of global and local trends, ideas, models and content can be defined as a kind of glocalisation, a term that, as we have already commented, refers to

the interaction of the global and the local. In this regard, we can assert that the principle of ‘Think global, act local’ was applied, since a mixture of global, local and hybrid, ‘glocal’, aspects and elements can be identified in *Sorginen Laratza*.

The term glocalisation in television is often used to refer to global programme formats, to define a way, a procedure, to adapt them to local demands and, consequently, to the specific cultural features of different markets and communities. In this case I also use this concept to label the mixture of global and local aspects, but applying that idea to an original local product instead, that is to say, to a Basque, and therefore ‘local’, television programme. In this regard the expression ‘think global-act local’ would refer to the fact that global, international, trends, ideas, forms and content are taken into account for the creation and production of this television magazine-show which is produced within, and for, a particular audience that belong to a community with a specific and strong cultural identity, and, that can therefore be defined as ‘local’.

Consequently, this is not the case of the adaptation of an existing global format to local specific features for its commercialisation in different markets. On the contrary, here, glocalisation is applied in the creation and production of an original, genuine, Basque television programme, with no intention of further distribution outside its broadcasting area. We can affirm that the use of this term is correct though, since, in that ‘local’ creative and production process global references are used, and the result of that combination is reflected in *Sorginen Laratza*’s form and content, in which, as we have already explained, many features that can be labelled as ‘glocal’ can be identified.

Moreover, we can affirm that, when doing so, the programme meets some of the demands of Basque society, that of television audiences who, consciously or unconsciously, seek television entertainment which is in line with the trends and

standards of global television. We are referring to those television viewers that, at the same time, want a product that is felt close, a programme they can identify with, due to its Basque cultural and Basque cultural identity elements, among which the fact that it is produced and broadcast in Basque language is relevant indeed.

Consequently we would say that the presence of elements of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity is crucial but, equally, the inclusion and integration of global references and narrative resources must be regarded as essential too. This is so because this aspect has become a feature of the television medium as such due, in fact, to its globalisation. As a consequence, audiences, global audiences, are used to that when consuming audio-visual products and therefore, demand it, whether aware of it or not, because, actually, these global references, narratives and television forms have become part of their audio-visual culture. This reflection can, therefore, be applied to Basque viewers too.

2.4.2.5.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: diversity and mixture.

In addition to the characteristics of *Sorginen Laratza* noted so far, we can assert that diversity is a core feature of this television show. Actually, we have already noted the great variety of content included, the varied forms in which it is presented and the diverse profile of the guests who participated in it. Alongside with that, it can be affirmed that, equally, mixture and hybridisation are also key characteristics of this television programme, both regarding form and content.

According to the information provided until now, it can be observed that this mixture takes place in many areas, in many forms and at different levels and extent. In addition to those we have previously commented on: combination of different formats,

genres, styles, topics, guests, events, cultural expressions and cultural identity elements, of fiction and reality, of seriousness and humour, of formal and informal approaches, of trivial and more relevant issues, and so on, I would also like to note the mixture of domesticity and spectacle that can be noticed in this programme which is, actually, one of the characteristics of this type of shows and which is regarded as a factor that contributes to their popularity and success.

The mixed profile of *Sorginen Laratza*'s team of hosts is worth mentioning in this regard, because besides conducting the show and/or its various sections, they sang, danced, acted and participated in different performances and parades within the programme. Furthermore, two of them were Basque poetry improvisers ('*bertsolariak*') and they occasionally did some poetry improvisation, live, in the studio ('*bertsoak*'). Likewise, hosts, co-presenters, comedians, collaborators and even characters interacted among them, as well as with the guests and the public (both in the TV studio and on location) in a fresh, natural, friendly and, sometimes even 'familiar' way. These aspects, in the end, contributed to this mixed feeling of domesticity and spectacle reflected in the programme and perceived by the audience.

Consequently, we can affirm that the presence and interaction between fiction and reality, the combination of seriousness and humour, of formal and informal approaches, of trivial and more profound issues, of spectacle and domesticity, of tradition and modernity, of global and local elements, of different profiles both of guests as well as of hosts and collaborators, etc. in the programme, reflect these features, namely diversity, mixture, and hybridisation, which can be regarded as key characteristics of this night-show magazine.

It has to be said, though, that the combination of the different items that form the show, is not a chaotic amalgam of different content, as the varied components of this programme are presented in a perfectly structured manner, following the schedule and the script written previously. This having been said, a sense of spontaneity is also reflected, which, along with other aspects mentioned previously, helps to create a fresh, informal, friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

2.4.2.5.4. *Sorginen Laratza*: proximity, identification.

We have previously mentioned the importance of ‘proximate television’, whose main characteristic is indeed its proximity to its audience and, consequently, to the society where it is embedded. This is the case of the Basque public television, Euskal Telebista. There are several factors that help to make a certain channel and a certain programme feel close for its targeted audience. In this case, the high presence of Basque cultural expressions and varied elements of Basque cultural identity in *Sorginen Laratza* do undoubtedly influence in this regard. Among them, the fact that it was produced and broadcast in Basque language is very significant indeed. In addition, proximity, closeness, of the topics they dealt with, of the guests that participated, of the events shown and, in summary, of the content presented did, obviously, contribute to create a sense of nearness towards this programme by the public.

Having said that, the profile of the programme’s team of hosts and collaborators, and their participation in it in so many different ways, previously explained, also help to feel them close, and consequently the show as such, by the audience. These aspects (the mixture of profiles and roles of *Sorginen Laratza*’s main host, co-hosts and various collaborators), in combination with the general informal and friendly tone employed in

conducting the programme and in the manner they interact with the guests, the studio audience and other collaborators and participants in the show, help to create a feeling of proximity on their side. As said, these features also contributed to developing a sensation of a mixture of domesticity and spectacle, which is also regarded as a reason for the audience to feel a TV show close to them.

Moreover, according to the theories and arguments commented throughout this work, the varied profile of the hosts, collaborators, guests and different participants in the programme and even of the varied fictional characters created, would help the public to identify with them and, thus, we can think that this fact would help the audience to perceive this show as closer to them. In fact, as we have mentioned in other sections of this work the presence in a television programme of people who viewers know or who represent others that the audience feel near to, and even of characters who resemble persons that can be recognised as familiar and even close, help the audience to identify with those persons and characters that appear on screen. This identification would make them have the impression of a programme as closer and, hence, more appealing.

2.4.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: production and production management.

2.4.3.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: production.

Regarding the production of *Sorginen Laratza* I will focus on those aspects which I find relevant for the purpose of this work, that is to say, to identify the contributions of this entertainment television programme to the Basque public television, Euskal Telebista.

Sorginen Laratza was produced at the headquarters of Euskal Telebista in Donostia-San Sebastian, which is the programmes production centre of this public television company. The set occupied a TV Studio of 650 m², the 22 Studio, and the show was produced and broadcast live from there using this multi-camera studio's facilities. 4 or 5 fixed cameras, one steady-cam and a crane hothead camera were employed for the production of each programme.

473 regular episodes of *Sorginen Laratza* were produced and broadcast live. In addition, special programmes were recorded to be broadcast on New Year's Eve. Five special programmes of this type were produced. Moreover, *Sorginen Laratza* also hosted Euskal Telebista's Iparragirre TV Awards Ceremony in 2000, for which a special programme *Sorginen Laratza* was made, which was pre-recorded as live (*Sorginen Laratza - Iparragirre Sariak* 2000). We have listed these special programmes as well as their airing dates and identification numbers (production numbers) in this following chart:

| SORGINEN LARATZA – SPECIAL PROGRAMMES – 1999-2005 | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | Airing dates (starting –ending) | Prod. Number |
| Sorginen Laratza-Kaixo 2000 | 31/12/1999 – 01/01/2000 | 996288 – 46 |
| SL - Iparragirre Sariak 2000 | 11/01/2000 | 996288 – 47 |
| Sorginen Laratza-Kaixo 2001 | 31/12/2000 – 01/01/2001 | 996288 – 168 |
| Sorginen Laratza-Kaixo 2002 | 31/12/2001 – 01/01/2002 | 996288 – 293 |
| Sorginen Laratza-Kaixo 2003 | 31/12/2002 – 01/01/2003 | 026510 – 1 |
| Sorginen Laratza-Kaixo 2004 | 31/12/2003 – 01/01/2004 | 036492 – 1 |

Figure 2: *Sorginen Laratza*. Special programmes, 1999-2005.

Finally, compilation programmes, gathering some of the best moments of *Sorginen Laratza* previously aired, were edited and afterwards broadcast within this show's usual time slot, and with similar duration, every season (19 episodes altogether). Some of them were made using studio facilities, and even included some new content, whereas most were just proper compilations formed of previously aired programmes segments only.

Therefore, 498 episodes of *Sorginen Laratza* were made altogether: 473 genuine, regular ones, produced and broadcast live; 5 special New Year's Eve shows, recorded in previous days to their airing; one ETB'S TV Award Ceremony, also pre-recorded, and 19 compilation programmes. Besides those episodes, shorter summary pieces were edited too, 77, which were aired in the early afternoon (15:00) during the two first quarters of year 2002. We have included a table with general data of all the programmes produced and broadcast at the beginning of chapter 2.4., and the special programmes have been listed just above. This chart below, which refers to all *Sorginen Laratza*'s compilation programmes, completes the information in this regard.

| SORGINEN LARATZA – COMPILATIONS 1999 – 2005 – (Ordinary slot) | | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------|
| | SEASON | AIRING DATE | Prod. number |
| 1 | 1999 – 2000 | 01/05/2000 | 996288 - 101 |
| 2 | 2000 – 2001 | 09/12/2000 | 996288 - 167 |
| 3 | 2000 – 2001 | 06/02/2001 | 996288 – 187 |
| 4 | 2000 – 2001 | 13/06/2001 | 996288 – 248 |
| 5 | 2000 – 2001 | 14/06/2001 | 996288 – 249 |
| 6 | 2001 – 2002 | 01/11/2001 | 996288 – 268 |
| 7 | 2001 – 2002 | 13/12/2001 | 996288 – 291 |
| 8 | 2001 – 2002 | 20/06/2002 | 026053 – 78 |
| 9 | 2001 – 2002 | 27/06/2002 | 026053 – 79 |
| 10 | 2002 – 2003 | 19/12/2002 | 026323 – 15 |
| 11 | 2002 – 2003 | 17/04/2003 | 026323 – 30 |
| 12 | 2002 – 2003 | 17/07/2003 | 026323 – 42 |
| 13 | 2002 – 2003 | 29/07/2003 | 026323 – 43 |
| 14 | 2003 – 2004 | 18/12/2003 | 036284 – 15 |
| 15 | 2003 – 2004 | 08/04/2004 | 036284 – 28 |
| 16 | 2003 – 2004 | 19/07/2004 | 046323 – 1 |
| 17 | 2003 – 2004 | 26/07/2004 | 046323 – 2 |
| 18 | 2004 – 2005 | 04/01/2005 | 046519 – 01 |
| 19 | 2004 – 2005 | 29/03/2005 | 046519 – 02 |
| SORGINEN LARATZA – OTHER COMPILATIONS (15:00 – 15:30 slot) – 2002 | | | |
| Episodes | Frequency | Airing dates | Prod. numbers |
| 1 – 77 | Daily (Monday - Friday) | From 28/01/2002 To 10/06/2002 | 026053 – 1/77 |

Figure 3: Sorginen Laratza – Compilations, 1999-2005.

2.4.3.1.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: types of production.

When defining *Sorginen Laratza* from a production's perspective I will take into account the classification of television programmes provided by the EUR, described in the ESCORT 2007 document, which categorises them regarding three aspects (ESCORT, p. 37): The editorial control, that is to say 'the extent to which the broadcaster has control of the programme content and the production stage', the production mode and the output mode. When analysing *Sorginen Laratza* from these

perspectives we can observe that this programme includes different types of production. Thus, this variety that we have already noted in *Sorginen Laratza* with regard to form and content can be also observed when studying the production features of this programme.

To start with we have to say that *Sorginen Laratza* is an ‘own production’. This is indeed a genuine case of ‘in-house production’, as *Sorginen Laratza* was entirely produced by Euskal Telebista, by this company’s initiative and with its own resources. The company’s facilities were used for the production and broadcast of this show and the needed external equipment, services and extra personnel were contracted directly by this public entity.

This programme also included a case of associated production as the 51 episodes of the short comedy series (of 6 minutes length) *Ez gaude konforme*, were produced following this formula. This production system implied an agreement, a contract, with an independent company for the production of these episodes, for which that company was in charge of the creative process, although using the facilities and working under the supervision of Euskal Telebista. In this particular case, being a production included in *Sorginen Laratza* it was supervised by the controllers of the different areas of this programme as well as by its managing directors. Likewise, this short comedy series was integrated in *Sorginen Laratza*’s production system and financed within its budget. Finally, I will just mention that international acquisitions were also included in *Sorginen Laratza*, although very sporadically.

This having been said, various production modes can be identified when analysing the way this programme was produced, according to the type of facilities used. Actually we have commented above that *Sorginen Laratza* was produced and

broadcast live in/from a 650 m² TV studio, and this applies to the programme as a whole. Nevertheless, the production of some of the different segments and items included in this show present other production modes. Thus, in addition to the main big studio, smaller multi-camera studios (80 m²), with three cameras at the most, were utilised for recording several fictional pieces.

Moreover, ENG (Electronic News Gathering), single camera - Betacam SP - units, were also employed for recordings made on location, either factual or fictional pieces, which in both cases were edited previously to be included live in the final programme. Big OB, outside broadcasting multicamera units, were used sporadically too, mainly for the production of special episodes, as it was the case of the occasion on which *Sorginen Laratza*'s was produced and broadcast from a traditional Basque cider house, using the facilities of an OB unit of Euskal Telebista.

With regard to the output mode, we have already commented that *Sorginen Laratza* was produced and broadcast live, nevertheless the varied elements included in the programme present other outputs too. In fact most of the video reports and some of the fictional comedy pieces were pre-recorded, edited and post-produced afterwards. Thus, these items were recorded segments included in the live programme. In addition, occasionally some artistic performances were recorded as live in *Sorginen Laratza*'s set, previously to their airing within the programme, due to their complexity or specific production needs.

Finally, it has to be said that some live connexions with either Euskal Telebista's EFP (electronic field production) or OB (outside broadcasting) multicamera units covering special events were made in certain episodes of *Sorginen Laratza*, such as in

the case of the traditional drum parades in San Sebastian's day local festivals, from Azpeitia and Donostia.

2.4.3.1.2. *Sorginen Laratza*, production: other aspects.

Some of the reasons for the launching of *Sorginen Laratza* were associated with production factors. Actually, at that time Euskal Telebista's programme's production headquarters facilities included four television studios of different sizes. Two of them were fairly big ones, of 650 m² (Studios 21 and 22) whereas the other two were a good deal smaller, 80 m². In those years Studio 21 was entirely and permanently used for the recording of a soap opera, *Goenkale*, consequently all the rest of Euskal Telebista's television shows produced in Miramon's programmes production centre, which needed a big studio shared the facilities of Studio 22. Due to that, a production system that implied setting up and dismantling each programme's set almost every day was established. The dismantling and setting up processes took place during the night, whereas lighting and various final touching and technical adjustments were carried out during the morning and early afternoon. Late afternoon and evening would be for rehearsals, recording and broadcasting, if live, of each different show. This process was essential to respond to the production needs but, at the same time, the impossibility of keeping the programmes settings fixed entailed certain limitations on their output and content as well as extra effort and cost for the company.

This was one of the reasons that led the direction board of Euskal Telebista to consider the possibility of covering the whole late evening-early night programming slot of its first channel (ETB1) with only one programme from Monday to Thursday. Thus, following this plan, different episodes of the same format would be produced and

broadcast during four days a week, a formula that would permit having a fixed set every day, avoiding the effort and cost of constantly dismantling and setting up different scenarios.

In addition, having just one team producing the same programme on a Monday to Thursday basis was cheaper than having four different teams (and even four different independent production companies, as could have been the case) involved in the production of four different programmes to be broadcast on four different days of the week. In fact, although finally *Sorginen Laratza* was produced totally in house, that is to say in and by Euskal Telebista, at that time most entertainment programmes broadcast on this public television channel were produced in association with independent production companies, under an ‘associated production’ scheme.

The established production premises for the new programme affected not only the production modes and processes, but they also influenced the type and the content of the television show to be produced. In fact, having to cover that broad programming slot for so many days a week, the need to include different content, genres and formats became essential, in order to respond to the different expectations of the Basque audience for four nights a week. Equally, genres that traditionally had occupied some of those slots, such as talk shows and debates, as well as ‘classic’ light entertainment outputs, needed to be integrated somehow into this new programme.

In the end, this great variety of content, of genres and formats became an essential feature of the programme designed to fulfil these requirements, that is to say the entertainment magazine show *Sorginen Laratza*, and this variety was also reflected in the diversity of types and modes of production developed. It was indeed the first time that this public television company faced such a complex production, due to the special

features of this show regarding form, content, duration, frequency, and types of production modes and outputs. In fact *Sorginen Laratza*'s production implied a big challenge for Euskal Telebista and particularly for the multidisciplinary team involved, a great challenge from creative, production and management perspectives.

2.4.3.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: production management.

2.4.3.2.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: a multidisciplinary team.

Amongst the difficulties faced in the production of this entertainment show was the scarcity of Basque professionals in some fields, and mainly of script writers and communicators of various profiles. In fact, at that time there were not many writers with the skills required to create and write in Basque all the different type of scripts needed in this programme, due to the great variety of content included and the diversity of genres and subgenres developed within it.

At Euskal Telebista, traditionally, scriptwriters of both news and most entertainment programmes are journalists or have a journalistic background. The programmes these professionals work on are generally factual or factual entertainment outputs, features programmes mainly. Actually, purely entertainment shows broadcast on Euskal Telebista have generally been produced by independent production companies, although in association with Euskal Telebista. They are normally catalogued as 'in-house productions' which are developed within an 'associated production' formula, as is also the case of fictional series.

Although the lack of Basque television journalists was very much pronounced when this public television channel was launched, in 1982, the situation has changed

significantly since then. By the time *Sorginen Laratza* started (1999) there were already a considerable amount of television journalists who could develop their work in Basque language (cf. Zupiria, 2004). Within Euskal Telebista, most journalists were then working at the news department, and just a few of them had previous experience in entertainment programmes which, as said, were mainly factual or factual entertainment ones, features programmes in particular.

However, *Sorginen Laratza*'s characteristics required professionals who were capable of writing scripts for a great variety of sections, either factual or not. Furthermore, in many cases factual and non-factual content would be combined. For that, Basque journalists with previous experience in news and features programmes were recruited, although just a very few of them had worked previously in entertainment shows. Some of these professionals were part of Euskal Telebista's personnel and others were contracted specifically for the production of this night magazine show.

In addition, presenters and communicators of varied profile fluent in Basque were needed too, so as to host, conduct and take part in various ways in the different sections of the programme. For some of these jobs journalist skills were also essential, whilst for others communication competences were sufficient. Consequently, professionals from different backgrounds were selected and new talent was also identified and taken on for this purpose.

Among the professionals needed for the production of this show specialists in television comedy in particular became essential and Basque writers, actors, and comedians, were required. The scarcity of these types of experts and artists in the Basque audio-visual sector at the time was evident. To fill this gap, the most suitable

professionals in these fields who could develop their work in Basque were called up. Likewise, new talent was identified and recruited.

This having been said, it has to be added that one of the characteristics of *Sorginen Laratza* is indeed the need for and existence of a multidisciplinary team, not only on the side of writers, communicators and actors of varied profiles, but also in relation to the different fields involved in the production of a television show of this kind. I have highlighted those roles that I have identified as especially important because both their need and scarcity at the time were most prominent. Nevertheless, it has to be remarked that the work developed by professionals in the most varied fields, creative, artistic, or technical, was essential for the development and success of this popular programme. Even though professionals with a career in their field were part of the team, some of them also took their first steps in new areas due to both the needs and opportunities that this programme offered them for doing so. Furthermore, some new talent was identified, nurtured and boosted, too.

In any case both sides, namely professionals and the programme, and so Euskal Telebista as such, gained from that work. On the one hand, the programme benefited from these professionals' talent and work, while on the other, the production of *Sorginen Laratza* provided those professionals an adequate framework to show their outputs, to put into practice their skills as well as to improve their abilities and even to develop new ones, in addition to, obviously, being paid for their work. This can, indeed, be considered as a symbiotic relationship from which both agents, television professionals of various fields as well as the mentioned television show, and ultimately, the television company, Euskal Telebista, obtained some kind of benefit.

Actually, *Sorginen Laratza* was also a suitable scenario for finding, identifying and fostering talent, and many professionals who have developed a fruitful and successful career in several fields within the Basque audio-visual sector either started or gained essential experience in their area due to their work in this programme. In fact, *Sorginen Laratza* acted as a testing ground for new talent, new audio-visual content and varied production types and modes within Euskal Telebista. It can be affirmed that constant trial and error experimental work was developed as part of the creative and production processes, and that both these actions as well as their results benefited not only the aforementioned Basque public television company but also the Basque audio-visual sector as a whole.

Consequently, we can affirm that all these aspects not only contributed to the achievement of this show's goals, but also helped to accomplish the objectives of Euskal Telebista and its function as the Basque public television company of the Basque Country. We can also assert that, when doing so, both this television show and this public entity contributed to Basque society in various manners.

2.4.3.2.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: management.

The particular features of *Sorginen Laratza* and its diversity and complexity regarding form, content and production entailed the formation of a multidisciplinary team. Due to that a production management system was designed *ad hoc*, specifically, to manage it and to arrange their work.

The way the team was organised enabled them to respond in an effective way to such varied needs the production of this programme entailed, combining the work of so many people, of so many different profiles in so many different areas. For that, several

working units were created, regarding type of content, area of work, mode of production and timing. Personnel of different fields would be integrated into each production unit which, at the same time, were interrelated. Whereas some professionals were attached just to one specific production unit, others worked for different working groups at the same time.

Hence, the variety of content and the mixture and interplay between different sections that we have commented previously, as well as the combination of different production modes and outputs that we have referred to throughout this work, were reflected in the organisation of the team. Equally, internal information management and communication procedures were developed, and a computer network system was created *ad hoc* in order to share and manage adequately the information and the great amount and variety of files generated.

One of the novelties of this production management mode was the introduction of the executive producer figure who was, after all, the professional in charge of designing the production management system and the processes and procedures that it implied. This was the first, and only, occasion in which a staff executive producer has been in charge of a totally in-house produced programme at Euskal Telebista, as this figure doesn't exist within this company's structure.

This arrangement mode implied that this professional was in charge of the whole programme as such, directing and coordinating the three main areas involved in its production, that is to say: content, aesthetics and mise-en-scene, as well as production management, an area which includes resources and budget administration. This was possible due to the professional and academic background of this television practitioner in those three areas. Likewise, a specialist in each one of these fields, working closely

with the executive producer, was in charge of that particular division within the programme. Those professionals, on their side, directed and coordinated on a daily basis both the outputs and the personnel working on each area. This structure enabled a rapid and effective way of decision making as well as of putting those resolutions into practice, which is fundamental in a programme of these characteristics.

In fact, in many aspects the programme worked as an independent production unit within the company regarding content, production and production management. This having been said, it must be added that this production unit did also depend and rely on other departments, personnel and services which were common to the whole company, either internal or external. Likewise, it worked under the watch of the direction board of the company, and most directly of the direction of the television unit, the direction of programmes and the direction of production.

Once the programme was initially launched, it was constantly revised. Equally, reports of various types were compiled and analysed periodically. These revisions in various fields determined the decisions about its continuity on the side of the managing directors of the company. End of season reports were written every year within the programme and a project with new proposals presented for the new season, responding both to the results of the analysis and review of the previous season's shows, as well as to the objectives and aims set by the company, including the economic framework established in this regard (cf. Azpeitia, 1999; Azpeitia, 2000; Azpeitia, 2001; Azpeitia, 2002; Azpeitia, 2003; Azpeitia, 2004).

2.4.3.2.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: research, development and innovation.

This having been said, other aspects related to this programme's production, although not so much linked to its everyday needs, were also taken into account when arranging the duties of the different members of the team. In this regard, I want to highlight the procedure that was put into practice to analyse each episode of this programme as well as to research on new television forms and items that would permit the creation, production, testing and, finally, development of innovative content.

This aspect was certainly essential for the survival and the success of this television show, as constant renewal as well as updating in form, aesthetics and content were regarded as fundamental. For this, procedures for the detailed analysis of each episode as well as for the knowledge of its audience, both of its real viewers and its potential watchers, were developed. Furthermore, search for global and international trends in television genres and formats was systematised. The research and innovation process continued with the creation and production of new segments, sections and various audio-visual, television, items which were integrated within the programme and broadcast as part of it to be tested.

Consequently their performance was analysed afterwards in the same terms, under the same parameters, as explained above. Likewise, they were kept, modified or even removed from the final programme after a certain period, according to the conclusions of the analysis conducted. Therefore, we can define this professional research process as a combination of documental (written and audio-visual) and experimental analysis that entailed trial and error procedures.

This research, development and innovation process wasn't so easy to carry out at a time when most of the facilities that are so common at present, due to digitalisation

(cf. Bennet & Strange, 2011) and to the great and rapid technical developments that this medium has undergone during recent years, weren't easily available or didn't even exist. A great effort was made in this sense on the part of this programme's direction board and this analysis, research and innovation system, designed and developed within *Sorginen Laratza* did indeed settle the basis for the PDCA innovation system of television programmes that was afterwards implemented in Euskal Telebista. In fact, PDCA is an international four stage model for continuous improvement in business process management.

This PDCA process was established for all television programmes of this firm as part of the new general management system that this entity developed from the year 2000, within the EFQM - European Foundation for Quality Management- procedures that were set up in the whole company. This business excellence model (EFQM) is a very well-known quality management tool in Europe, widespread among all sorts of companies to improve performance.

As said, in the case of the 'Television Programmes PDCA' (an acronym that stands for the words that define the main steps of this type of procedures, i.e. Plan-Do-Check-Adjust), it was designed and defined taking as a basis the procedure already set up in *Sorginen Laratza*. Actually, the executive producer of this programme took an active part in the definition and development of this system for its implementation in all the television programmes of this public entity (cf. EITB, 2009a; EITB, 2009b; Idigoras, Jauregui-Arraburu & Mendizabal, 2004).

In fact, EITB was acknowledged as a case of 'advanced business management' in a study developed by the Cluster of Knowledge (Cluster Conocimiento) of the Basque Country, in collaboration with the Faculty of Business Studies of The Public

University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU), developed during 2004 (Idigoras, Jauregui-Arraburu & Mendizabal, 2004). The resulting paper starts, in fact, by mentioning the case of *Sorginen Laratza* (Idigoras et al 2004, p. 3) and, further on, the authors highlight the PDCA process of continuous improvement for television programme production designed and implemented in this company, that we have just mentioned, dedicating various pages to describing and explaining it (pp. 14-18).

2.4.3.2.4. Euskal Telebista: management.

In those years, the public entity Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB), of which Euskal Telebista is the television brand, established a new management system for the whole company, as in the year 2000 the EITB group started carrying through Management Excellence policies, based on the EFQM reference model. The development of this model and its implementation within the company gave rise to improvements in management and to external recognition, thus, in 2004 this public entity was awarded the Silver Q, by Euskalit-Basque Government; in 2006, the Iberoamerican Excellence Award and the Iberoamerican Summit of Heads of State, and in 2007 the Gold Q, by Euskalit-Basque Government. This management model was based on the promotion of six basic competences (activities, resources, people, communication, innovation and continuous improvement) and a set of strategic, relational and operational abilities as part of a project that included both training and individual assessment. (EITB, 2009b)

That new management scheme affected the production of television programmes, and so *Sorginen Laratza* participated in the various procedures and processes that were set up with this purpose. Among them, in addition to the PDCA process already commented, I would mention the implementation of Business Plans

within the different programmes, which were considered as business units. Due to that, different parameters were defined to set the objectives and assess the performance of a particular programme with regard to the specific aims required as well as in relation to its contribution to the general goals of the whole company.

As a consequence, *Sorginen Laratza*'s objectives were set and assessed regarding these parameters, according to the indicators defined for this purpose. Indicators to measure the programme's performance regarding content, production, audience as well as communication and innovation results were set up and assessed periodically. Furthermore, action plans were defined and developed within *Sorginen Laratza*'s team by the executive producer, to establish each one's role, functions and specific tasks for the achievements of the objectives set within the business plan. These action plans also included formative schemes and the development of specific activities in this regard (Azpeitia, 2003a; Azpeitia, 2004b). In this respect it is worth mentioning the attendance of members of *Sorginen Laratza*'s team of writers to the script-writing seminar given by prestigious American script writer Robert McKee in Iruña - Pamplona from the 20th to the 23th of November, 2003.

At that time *Sorginen Laratza* was the most important television programme totally produced in-house in Euskal Telebista and due to its size and characteristics, which we have extensively described in previous sections, as well as regarding other aspects just noted, we can indeed affirm that the contribution of this programme to the Basque public television company in terms of production, production management and general management was relevant.

2.4.3.3. *Sorginen Laratza*'s production: key factors.

Finally, I want to note some of the aspects highlighted in *Sorginen Laratza*'s EFQM report of 2003 (Azpeitia, 2003b), as in this document the assessment of this programme with regard to the fulfilment of its objectives is reflected. The information included in this paper also shows the way in which this television programme contributes both to the fulfilment of the whole company's goals as well as to the implementation and development of the management system set up in this Basque public entity (EITB, 2009b). I further on outline and summarise some information in this regard included in this document, a report that, in fact, I wrote at the time, and that reflects some of the results of the analysis conducted then about this programme as part of my professional work.

The survival of this television show in such a competitive programming slot for so many years (four at the time that the EFQM report was written, in 2003) is valued as a success as such, underscoring that not even most optimistic predictions would foresee that the programme would be running for so long. Hence, it is commented that even a one year run would have been considered a success at the time it started. Actually, members of the direction board of Euskal Telebista commented on this fact on several occasions, such as the director of programmes, Pello Sarasola (e.g. GECA, 2001d, p. 207) and the director of Euskal Telebista, Bingen Zupiria (e.g. Zupiria, 2002).

In the above mentioned report (Azpeitia, 2003b), it is also mentioned the fact that similar formats that were launched in various Spanish television channels at the time, presented by well-known television hosts, didn't last long, such as *La sonrisa del Pelicano* (A3, Pepe Navarro), *Fent Amics* (TV3, Sergi Mas), *La Última Noche* (T5, Andreu Bonafuente), *Maldita La Hora* (A3, Máximo Pradera), *La escalera mecánica*

(TVE1, Jordi Gonzáles), *El Show de Flo* (TVE1, Florentino Fernández), *La Central* (A3, Jesús Vázquez), *Ya es Viernes, o no* (A3, Javier Capitán).

Furthermore, this document indicates the evolution of the audience figures since the programme was launched, in October 1999, noting that hitherto an increment of 38.4% and 36% could be seen in the rating and share numbers respectively, the high increment from the previous year (2002), that is to say, a 20% in the rating numbers and a 25.6% in share figures is also underlined.

Moreover, this paper refers to the different areas that are defined as essential with regard to the effort made, and which had a direct effect in the results obtained, indicating that the combination of them made it possible to reach the goals established and the longevity of *Sorginen Laratza* as an important part of the Basque Television late evening prime time schedule:

- Output: Modernity and freshness.
- Rhythm: Dynamism, energy.
- Content: current. Constant renewal of sections. Genuine, distinguishing elements.
- Premises: Humour and entertainment linked to current issues. Combination of fiction and reality.
- Communicators: Stability of consolidated talents and discovering of new ones.
- Renewal: Constant and continuous analysis and quick implementation of changes.

Following the reflections, arguments and information, posed in this report (Azpeitia, 2003b) we can affirm that the positive contribution of *Sorginen Laratza* to

the fulfilment of the objectives of the firm is noticeable. It is concluded that the programme responded to the expectations of the audience and that was appealing for them. Equally, it remarks that the programme managed to adapt rapidly to the changes and requirements that happened in an especially difficult scenario and in a programming slot particularly complicated. The data and information provided in that report back up those statements (Azpeitia, 2003b).

The opportunities for success identified are hence linked to those abilities. Moreover, the profound knowledge of the potential audience of the programme and the possibility of offering them something that the rest of the competition, the big TV channels, could not, are identified as key factors. Consequently, it is asserted, the potential business niche lies in the capacity of the programme to provide Basque television viewers with distinguishing and genuine elements, although without leaving aside the shared demands of the whole audience who are watching television at that time of the day (Azpeitia, 2003b).

Having said that, this report also refers to the extensive difficulties for the fulfilment of the programme's objectives, especially regarding audience figures. In this respect, the fierce competition that the slot in which the programme is broadcast is subject to is pointed out, noting that this programme competes at a clear disadvantage with other shows aired in that slot, regarding resources (the enormous difference in budget terms is very significant), suppliers (of ideas, content, communicators and talents) and potential audience target (due to language limitations, because Basque is a minority language and it is not spoken and/or understood even by many citizens of the Basque country). The existence of a wide range of external elements which cannot be controlled but directly influence the audience figures are also pointed out among the difficulties the team that produces *Sorginen Laratza* had to face (Azpeitia, 2003b).

2.4.4. *Sorginen Laratza*: audience and reception; impact and response.

In previous sections we have presented the information and results of the analysis of *Sorginen Laratza* in relation to content and production. In addition to these two approaches there is a third axis, which is also important for the study of this night magazine show's contribution to the Basque public television, Euskal Telebista. I am referring to the analysis of its results from audience and reception perspectives. When researching *Sorginen Laratza*'s performance in these fields, both qualitative and quantitative approaches as well as other parameters of analysis have been taken into account.

2.4.4.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: audience.

With regard to this programme's potential audience there are several aspects that must be considered, and Euskal Telebista's broadcasting area is relevant in this sense. It is indeed most significant, too, the fact that this programme was totally broadcast in Basque.

At that time ETB was a free-to-air, linear, analogue television channel which broadcast mainly for Euskadi, although its signal in fact reached the whole territory of the Basque country, that is to say, the seven provinces (four in Spain and three in the South of France) which form it. Consequently, in those years ETB broadcast beyond the geopolitical area of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, to which government this public entity belongs, and reached a scope of viewers that responded to the socio-linguistic reality of the Basque speaking audience, beyond geo-political boundaries. In fact ETB's signal was also captured in other boarding areas and its

channels could be seen in some parts of surrounding territories such as Cantabria, La Rioja and Burgos.

In this respect we must also note that the existence at that time of the international television brands ETBSat and Canal Vasco enabled access to a selection of programmes of the main channels of Euskal Telebista, namely ETB1 and ETB2, in various countries of Europe and America (both north and south) through satellite. Among the programmes offered in the programming schedule of these international channels were many episodes of *Sorginen Laratza*.

However, as mentioned above, in addition to the area where it was aired, it is essential the fact that this programme was totally broadcast in Basque. Therefore, we can say that *Sorginen Laratza*'s potential audience was formed by those persons who could, at least, understand this minority language and who, as said, were within the broadcasting area of this public television channel. Furthermore, viewers would be mostly adults due to this show's airing time and the type of content included. Consequently, children and youngsters under 16 at least, cannot be regarded as possible viewers. Furthermore, among that population around 16 there is a high spectrum that cannot be really taken as potential audience either, as is the case of those youngsters who would not be in front of television until late at night on week days. These aspects define the potential audience of this show, among which would be the real viewers; those people who, in fact, watched this programme.

This having been said, we have to add that the whole of this programme's audience was never totally measured because, due to economic and bureaucratic reasons, data gathered only corresponded to the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, that is to say, to those viewers living in just three of the four Basque speaking

provinces of the Spanish territory, for which those of the Basque speaking area of Navarra were not included. Likewise, the number of those viewers living in *Iparralde*, as the area of the Basque Country that belongs to France is commonly named in Basque, did not appear in the existing data about Euskal Telebista's regular audience.

2.4.4.1.1. Quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Concerning audience quantitative and qualitative analysis, there are several aspects I will comment on further on. In this regard, though, there is some additional information that is essential for an adequate understanding of the data I will refer to.

First of all, as we have just mentioned, it is a fact that the existing quantitative data about viewers only refer to the inhabitants of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. Furthermore, the profile of Basque citizens regarding their knowledge and use of Basque language should be also taken into account for an adequate assessment of the figures we will mention further on. Moreover, as previously commented, the age of this population is also important, because only viewers within a certain range of age can be counted as potential audience of this television show. Consequently, the final rating and absolute audience figures of this programme should be assessed according to these parameters.

In this respect, we can find illuminating the data gathered in the survey of the system of sociolinguistic indicators published in 2005 by the Department of Culture of the Basque Government, and mentioned by professor Zallo in his essay about Basques (Zallo 2006, p. 134). Hence, the report about this research, published by the Vice Ministry for Language Policy of the Basque Government in 2005, includes information

about the whole territory of the Basque Country (Euskal Herria), in addition to that of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (Euskadi).

Among the data included I will focus on those people over 16 years old who did, at least, understand the Basque language, due to the reasons already commented. It has to be noticed that for the last decades Basque speakers are at least bilingual, that is to say, they speak Spanish or French in addition to Euskara. Among them, this survey also differentiates between 'bilingual', 'passive bilinguals' and monolingual *erdaldunes*, aspects which are also important when analysing the audience of those programmes broadcast in Basque language. Zallo explains the use of these terms in the mentioned report:

Linguistic competence refers to the command of basic language skills in Euskara (comprehension, reading, writing and speaking). Bilingual people are those who speak Euskara well or quite well; passive bilinguals are those who, at the least, understand it well; monolingual *erdaldunes* are those who do not speak it or understand it'. (Zallo, 2006, p. 133)

The data of year 2001 grouped according to those parameters gives us the following information: regarding the figures of the whole of the Basque Country (Euskal Herria), 2,497,016 inhabitants were over 16 years old, among which 633,934 were bilinguals and 263,498 passive bilinguals. Focusing only on Euskadi, though, the number of bilinguals was 530,946 whereas there were 206,133 passive bilinguals, within a total population of 1,806,690 over 16.

| Year 2001 | EUSKAL HERRIA | EUSKADI |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| Total inhabitants over 16 | 2,497,016 | 1,806,690 |
| Bilinguals | 633,934 | 530,946 |
| Passive bilinguals | 263,498 | 206,133 |
| <i>Erdaldunes</i> monolinguals (Speakers of only Spanish or French) | 1,599,584 | 1,069,611 |

Source: Vice Ministry for Language Policy of the Basque Government. 2005 (As in Zallo, 2006)

Figure 4: Knowledge of Basque language. Year 2001 - (1).

Consequently, we can say that the real, genuine, potential audience of *Sorginen Laratza* in the whole of the Basque Country was around 897,882 in total, with almost one third of them passive bilinguals. Having said that, we have to recognise that the existing audience figures about Euskal Telebista at that time, and hence of *Sorginen Laratza*, only referred to Euskadi, where, according to this survey, the total amount of persons older than 16 who could understand Basque language numbered 737,079 of which 530,946 could both understand and speak Euskara, whereas 206,133, although they understood it, were not used to, or were not capable of, speaking it.

Therefore, we can assert that this data reflects the number of those Basques who could be potentially viewers of this programme due to their profile. It also shows their proportion in relation to the total population of the Basque Country, Euskal Herria. Likewise, the information provided also differentiates between those living in Euskadi. This clarification is indeed important, because it shows that the existing *Sorginen Larantza's* audience data (limited to the area of Euskadi) does not reflect the real

scenario as far as the amount of people who could potentially see this television programme is concerned.

Furthermore, we must also take into account the fact that, following the common procedure of the audience measuring system by the company that provides that service (Kantar Media), the analysis of the amount and profile of viewers of *Sorginen Laratza* - as to the rest of the programmes broadcast in Euskal Telebista- was made taking the total population over 4 years old of the Autonomous Community of the Basque country as a whole. Consequently, when we mention the general rating and share figures of the programme, we have to bear in mind that these percentages have been calculated with reference to the total population of Euskadi over four years old. Consequently, it can be observed that when measuring the audience rating figures, those persons who are under 16 are included as part of the total universe of viewers, although they cannot really be regarded as real potential viewers of this programme.

Moreover, as the existing data corresponds only to Euskadi, we have to say that the real number of *Sorginen Laratza*'s viewers and their proportion in relation to the total population of the whole area where it was in fact watched, as well as regarding the average quantity of Basque viewers (either bilingual or passive bilingual), who used to view it, is not reflected in those numbers.

Finally, we have to explain that the data used by the audience measuring company that provides that service to Euskal Telebista, Kantar Media, corresponds to the population data released by *Eustat* The Basque Agency for Statistics, (*Euskal Estatistika Erakundea/Instituto Vasco de Estadística*) which is not exactly the same as the information gathered and the profile division established by the survey focusing on sociolinguistic parameters published by the Department of Culture, to which we have

referred above. Although the final figures are quite similar, I understand it is important to clarify these aspects.

Therefore, we must say that the audience figures about *Sorginen Laratza* that we will reflect further on were calculated in relation to the numbers and profiles of the population of the Basque Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, as published by the *Eustat*'s report of year 2001, were as follows.

According to that survey the total amount of individuals over 4 years old in Euskadi, which is the reference universe for measuring Euskal Telebista's overall audience by Sofres AM/Kantar Media, was 2,051,949. Among them, 662,780 were Basque language speakers (classified as 'speak'); 474,000 persons understood Euskara, although didn't speak it (categorised as 'understand'), and 996,191 didn't understand this language (grouped as 'do not understand').

| <i>Eustat</i> 2001 | EUSKADI (Basque Autonomous Community) |
|--------------------------|--|
| Total inhabitants over 4 | 2,051,949 |
| Speak | 662,780 |
| Understand | 474,000 |
| Do not understand | 996,191 |

Source *Eustat*, 2001 (As provided by ETB-Audience Department)

Figure 5: Knowledge of Basque language. Year 2001 – (2).

In this regard, when referring to the knowledge and use of Basque language in this classification by *Eustat*, we have to clarify the terminology used by this entity in comparison to the survey of the system of sociolinguistic indicators published by the Department of Culture of the Basque Government that we have previously commented on. Actually, we can observe that the term ‘bilinguals’ would correspond to ‘Basque speakers/speak’ (those who understand and speak Basque), ‘passive bilinguals’ would be those who, despite understanding Basque, do not speak it, labelled in the *Eustat* survey as ‘understand’. Finally, those classified by this entity as ‘don’t understand’ would comprise the population named as ‘monolingual *erdaldunes*’ in the sociolinguistic study published by the Basque Government.

Moreover, we must also reflect the way population and viewers’ groups are classified in the existing audience reports (Sofres AM) used in this research. As pointed out previously, regarding age the overall general data is calculated among that population over 4 years old people (4+), who are those considered as potential television viewers. Different companies and surveys organise them in different ways; in the case of Kantar Media, and the surveys about Euskal Telebista’s audience we refer to, the main categories regarding age are as follow: 4 - 12; 13 -24; 25- 44; 45-64 and, finally, ‘65 and more’.

In the case of *Sorginen Laratza*, this audience’s grouping is relevant for its final results as, according to the explanations posited previously, the potential audience of this night entertainment show would include those people over 16 at least, a group whose performance is not measured as such in the general results regularly presented by this audience consultancy. Due to that, this age’s classification does not allow the comparison of these results accurately with the real potential audience of this programme even within Euskadi, the area in which audience data is obtained.

As a consequence, we can assert that the data about the population over 16 years old, both in the whole of the Basque Country (Euskal Herria) and in Euskadi, and their classification according to their knowledge and use of the Basque language provided previously, cannot be compared accurately with the audience data gathered, due to the age grouping mode of this survey. This is, indeed, a relevant aspect because, as said, that age group (over 16) would in fact correspond to the real potential audience of this programme.

Therefore we would say that the data and information I will present further on must be assessed taking into account all these aspects and explanations I have just noted, and also being aware that an accurate and direct comparison cannot be made when it comes to analysing some measurement parameters.

Consequently, the absolute numbers with regard to the quantity of people that watched *Sorginen Laratza* that I will point out here should be evaluated taking into account the real potential audience in the territory where it was measured. Equally, the fact that both the potential audience and the real average figures of the people who really watched this television programme is higher than that offered by the existing audience reports must also be considered.

In summary, according to the explanations just offered, and for an adequate evaluation of the information and data that I will present further on, I understand that the following parameters should be taken into consideration:

- The area, and therefore, the population Euskal Telebista's signal reached.
- Among that population, the number and profile of people who could either understand and/or speak Euskara.

- Amongst those, the viewers who could be considered as real potential audience for *Sorginen Laratza*, due to the characteristics of this show, besides language, i.e. type of content included and airing time slot.
- The scope to which the gathered, existing, audience data refers to.
- The way this collected audience data is classified, according to various profiles, among them: age, knowledge and use of Basque language as well as the size, population figures, of the places where these viewers live.

2.4.4.1.2. Audience figures and profiles.

For the purpose of this work and in line with the information and explanations noted previously, I will focus on the general data, both with regard to rating and share figures, as well as in relation to absolute general audience numbers. Furthermore, I will also highlight this programme's performance according to the audience's profile, mainly referring to their knowledge and use of Basque language.

If we only focus on the absolute average number of viewers we can say that each episode of *Sorginen Laratza* was watched in its entirety by around thirty thousand people (cf. ETB, 2005). This number reflects the average quantity of persons who watched the whole of each one of the episodes of this show, taking into account all the seasons that it was on air (1999-2005), that is to say, the 498 programmes of about 80 minutes length that were produced and broadcast during those six years. This absolute number of viewers varies among different seasons, within a range of 25,000 in the first and final seasons and the 38,000 average viewers of the 2002-2003 period.

Nevertheless, beyond these general average numbers there are other analyses that must be born in mind if we want to have a broader and more detailed picture of this

show's viewers both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In addition to the aspects already noted, other factors need to be considered in order to get an adequate assessment of the audience of this television show.

In fact, rating and share figures varied a lot from some programmes to others. There are different reasons for that, and although at a first sight there seems to be a tendency to establish a direct and almost unique relationship between content and general audience figures, that is not always the case. Hence, most varied factors such as the airing day and frequency, the starting and finishing time of each episode, the offer of other television channels in that slot, the amount, duration and positioning of the commercials pieces within the programme and within its competitors' outputs, are among the determinant variables that do indeed affect the rating and share figures not only of a whole episode as such but also of the different parts and sections included in each one.

Thus, the detailed study of all the episodes produced, and the minute by minute analyses on the quantity of viewers of the different parts and sections of each one (Azpeitia, 1999-2005) provide additional information which is relevant to assess this television programme's behaviour concerning the amount and type of audience it reached. In this regard, we can observe that a lot of programmes well surpassed the average figures mentioned previously, with numbers that vary between 50,000 and 60,000 when counting the viewers that, in many cases, watched an entire episode. I have listed a few examples in this table below.

SORGINEN LARATZA – WHOLE EPISODES TOTAL VIEWERS –

Some average figures

| Airing dates | Total viewers (whole episode) |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 08/02/2001 | 60,000 |
| 20/03/2003 | 60,000 |
| 13/03/2003 | 56,000 |
| 19/01/2000 | 55,000 |
| 09/01/2002 | 54,000 |
| 12/09/2002 | 54,000 |
| 29/03/2001 | 53,000 |
| 18/03/2002 | 53,000 |

Source: ETB - Audience department/SOFRES

Figure 6: Sorginen Laratza - Whole episodes total viewers.

Furthermore if we take into account the minute by minute analyses we can observe that, often, audience numbers of specific parts and sections of each episode are far higher than those showed by the average data referring to them as a whole. This analysis is indeed important due to the length of each episode and because of the great amount and variety of sections, segments and audio-visual elements included in this show. Actually, we can observe that some of them were followed by up to 80,000 viewers.

Equally, if we bear in mind other measuring parameters such as the programme reach (ESCORT, 2007), namely the accumulative audience figures, as well as this show's performance regarding the specific target of those people who understand and speak Basque, we can have a more complete view of *Sorginen Laratza*'s audience in quantitative terms. Moreover, this information helps to evaluate the contribution of this

programme to the Basque public television channel in this field. This having been said, those viewers who not being Basque speakers but did watch this entertainment show should also be born in mind in this sense.

With respect to the accumulative audience figures, we can observe that the average *Sorginen Laratza*'s reach of the programmes broadcast from 1999 to 2005 was around 180,000 viewers (179,333) per episode, a sum that varies from the 154,000 estimated in the first season to the 205,000 accumulated in each one during the 2003-2004 broadcasting period. When focusing on specific programmes, many cases in which around 250,000 viewers, or even more, connected with this show at some point can be found. We have included some of those examples in the following chart.

SORGINEN LARATZA – AUDIENCE REACH – Some average figures

| Accumulative audience per episode | Airing dates |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 179,000 | 1999 – 2005 - whole seasons average |
| 154,000 | 1999 – 2000 - first season average |
| 205,000 | 2003 – 2004 season average |
| 314,000 | 26/02/2001 |
| 276,000 | 12/06/2003 |
| 275,000 | 13/12/1999 |
| 264,000 | 28/06/2004 |
| 263,000 | 31/01/2001 |

Source: ETB, Audience department/SOFRES

Figure 7: *Sorginen Laratza* - Audience reach.

In addition, the programme's performance among Basque speaking viewers is a significant parameter when assessing its contribution to this Basque public entity. In this regard the value of an average rating of more than 3 points, and a share over 10 among

Basque audience, namely amongst those persons who speak the Basque language (and, hence, also understand it), during a six years' period has to be taken into account. Other figures such as the average absolute number of Basque speaking viewers during these years are also significant. Hence, it started with 21,000 in the first season and increased gradually until its highest point, in the 2002-2003 period, with an average of 33,000 Basque speaking viewers at that time. Likewise the rating and share figures, of 4.1 % and 13.5 % respectively, and the programme reach data, which numbered an average of 123,000 people per episode, help to show a broad picture of the amount of Basque speakers who watched this entertainment show.

Furthermore, whereas those numbers refer to the six years' broadcasting period as a whole, when focusing in more detail we observe that the average amount of Basque speaking viewers concerning particular programmes is obviously much higher. I will just mention a few, whose total average viewers as well as rating and share figures respectively are as shown in the following table:

SORGINEN LARATZA – BASQUE SPEAKING VIEWERS – Some figures

| Rating | Share | Number of viewers (Whole episode) | Airing dates |
|--------|-------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 6.4 | 20.6 | 50,000 | 20/03/2003 |
| 6.4 | 18.7 | 50,000 | 24/04/2003 |
| 6.2 | 21.3 | 49,000 | 18/03/2002 |
| 6.1 | 18.9 | 48,000 | 19/01/2000 |
| 6.0 | 18.1 | 48,000 | 09/01/2002 |
| 5.7 | 18.3 | 46,000 | 29/03/2001 |
| 5.9 | 18.4 | 46,000 | 26/06/2003 |
| 5.2 | 19.5 | 44,000 | 12/09/2002 |
| 5.7 | 18.5 | 45,000 | 27/02/2003 |
| 5.7 | 18.7 | 44,000 | 17/09/1999 |

Source: ETB, Audience department /SOFRES

Figure 8: SorGINen Laratza - Basque speaking viewers.

We have previously mentioned that the amount of people who despite not speaking Basque followed the programme is an aspect that is also interesting. In fact, one of the aims of this public television entity is to attract this profile of citizen in the Basque Autonomous Community, and in the whole of the Basque country in the end, to its first channel, in order to promote and disseminate the Basque language among them, and so as to help in its normalisation. In this regard, if we compare the total audience figures and those of Basque speaking viewers we can observe that an average of 5.000 persons of this profile – non Basque speakers - watched each episode, and that this programme reached around 73,000 non Basque speakers every time. These would be the number of them who connected to this show at some stage every evening it was broadcast, which would be the accumulative audience, programme reach, average data. We are referring to both non-Basque speakers categories, namely ‘passive bilinguals/understand’ and ‘*erdaldunes*/don’t understand’.

Finally if we analyse the audience groups concerning their age and observe their evolution, an increase in younger profiles is perceived. The proportion of viewers of a 25-44 years old range is worth mentioning in this regard, because those figures almost doubled the initial ones within the first four years of airing. Equally, the evolution of the 13-24 year-old category is indeed significant too, as its numbers increased gradually every season. Actually, the final season’s figures (2004-2005) show that the proportion of viewers of this age group exceeded by about 50% those of the same category who watched this show during its first airing period (1999-2000).

Taking all this into consideration and with regard to the analysis on the contribution of this entertainment magazine show to Euskal Telebista, concerning its audience in quantitative and qualitative terms, we can highlight the following aspects.

- *Sorginen Laratza* contributed positively to ETB1's general audience figures as this show's numbers were considerably higher than the average of Euskal Telebista's first channel's in most fields already commented in this section. If we take into account the following aspects, that is to say: around 4,000 hours were broadcast (counting just the first airing of each episode, although most of them were broadcast twice at least); during three years it was aired on a Monday to Thursday basis with an average length of 80 minutes per episode; this programme filled up the 90 minutes prime time/second prime time evening slot for almost 500 days in six years, we can state that its influence in both the general audience data and the viewers' profile of the Basque television first channel, ETB1, and more prominently in its late evening/night slot is considerable.
- The amount of viewers that watched the whole show every night is also relevant, mainly taking into account that *Sorginen Laratza* was broadcast on working days and went on until midnight.
- Likewise, the accumulative audience of many programmes is worth highlighting as it reveals that this show reached a great part of the Basque television audience, including a considerable amount of non-Basque speakers.
- Moreover, the fact that some parts and sections of many programmes were followed by a much higher number of people than the whole episodes' average, reaching very significant numbers, is worth mentioning too.

- The quantity of Basque speaking people who followed the programme is also an interesting figure but, equally, the amount of those viewers who even though they did not speak this language, did watch the show, offers interesting data. Hence, the fact that this entertainment show attracted so many people of this profile to the first channel of this public entity has to be highlighted. Thus, when doing so it helped to fulfil not only the audience objectives of this channel but also the missions of this public television company regarding the promotion and dissemination of Basque language and Basque culture among those who are not fluent in this language or don't even know it.
- Other goals established for this programme when it was launched regarding audience aspects were also achieved. Thus the objective of maintaining Basque viewers watching the first channel of Euskal Telebista after 22:30 and even later than 23:15 at night was satisfactorily attained. Moreover, a younger audience than the usual viewer profile of ETB1 before this programme was launched was attracted to this channel thanks to this show, which was, indeed, one of the objectives of this programme. Equally, according to the quantitative data analysed it could be asserted that the ambition of engaging a more urban audience without losing the traditional and most loyal viewers of smaller towns and rural areas was also accomplished.

Finally, the audience numbers, whether regarding the total average of viewers or in relation to the different profile and fields, indicate that *Sorginen Laratza* contributed to the choice of Basque audiences on the first channel of this public television company in such a competitive slot. In addition, other important programming niches of ETB1 were also satisfactorily filled by this show, as is the case of New Year's Eve schedule,

for which especial editions of *Sorginen Laratza* were produced (*Sorginen Laratza: Kaixo 2000, Kaixo 2001, Kaixo 2002, Kaixo 2003, Kaixo 2004*). The performance of these special programmes is indeed interesting to be mentioned as all the figures regarding audience, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, show that they attracted a very significant and varied amount of Basque population to the Basque television channel on such a special and competitive night, bringing the first channel of Euskal Telebista to a good position among the television offer of that night, and amongst the Basque speaking audience in particular (cf. ETB, 2005).

2.4.4.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: reception.

The information presented in this previous part refers to the amount and profile of this programme's audience, of the quantity and type of people it reached; aspects which are most commonly analysed when conducting audience studies in quantitative and qualitative terms.

According to what we have mentioned throughout this work, reception studies take a wider scope though, as this discipline analyses audiences from both perspectives, that is to say, it focuses on how television influences viewers as well as on what people do to and with television, which is their point of view, what they take out of it, what they use it for. Consequently, audience perspective is taken into consideration in reception studies. In this regard, and referring to *Sorginen Laratza*, we will point out some aspects in relation to the general perception that this programme's viewers had of it, mentioned by them throughout its various seasons. This information was provided at the time by the audience department of Euskal Telebista, and it was obtained from different surveys periodically conducted by specialised consultancies for this company.

(ETB 2005b) . In line with the purpose of this work, I will focus on the positive aspects mentioned by those who watched it, among which are the following:

- The role of this show as a means to contributing to a renewed appeal of the first channel of Euskal Telebista and its entertainment offering, which is highly valued.
- Its contribution to the perception of the Basque channel as ‘fresh, current, modern and entertaining’ is very much highlighted.
- For various years *Sorginen Laratza* was considered as the flag ship show of this Basque channel, mainly among the entertainment output.
- This programme is viewed as a driving force in attracting viewers to the channel and to its programming output/offering.
- The great variety of possibilities that it offers for being an open space where a lot of different types of content is included, is mentioned.
- *Sorginen Laratza*’s presence within the ETB1 programming schedule is very much appreciated. Likewise, this show is taken as a ‘front door’ for the entrance of new, diverse, heterogeneous public to the channel.
- This show is regarded as an appealing product, important for the channel and with a great symbolic value for the audience of Basque television.

In addition to those assessments, the following features of this programme were also highlighted by those people who used to view it. We can note that these opinions are linked to the appeal of this show and to its positive consideration by those who watched and enjoyed it:

- The balance between tradition and modernity.

- The adaptation for the Basque audience of a television formula which is successful in television.
- The great variety of content.
- The amount and diversity of sections within the programme.
- The permanent presence of many varied guests.
- A good team of talents: hosts and co-presenters, as well as actors and comedians, together with talent behind the camera; the existence of a professional creative and production team.
- Humour, imagination and ability to surprise.

Further comments by this programme's followers also help to have a broad idea of the positive perception of this show by a great part of the audience. Hence, with regard to those sections which dealt with different topics and which included varied guests, it was commented that they connected with the potential, the capacity, of ETB1 as an information medium. The fact that those topics and persons were linked to current issues and that they were presented in an informal, relaxed way and with even a humorous tone, was pointed out as attractive by this show's viewers.

Some of this programme's features mentioned by the audience are: pleasant, enjoyable, dynamic, irreverent, modern, competitive and accessible. The informal style, but respectful at the same time, was also valued. Equally, the transgressive tone sometimes used, which surprised ETB1's audience and that they enjoyed, is also noted when commenting about this programme. Furthermore, *Sorginen Laratza* was assessed as a risky but successful programme for ETB1 by some of the public.

The high presence of humour is regarded as an essential feature of this show. The perception that its creative team knew and developed the comic codes of Basque viewers was commented. The facts that it was the first time that transgressive humour could be seen on Basque television and that political content was also included were underscored by the audience. In this regard, the presence of new Basque actors of varied profile, and especially of comedians, was valued by this programme's viewers. Among other aspects, the great variety and high quality of impersonations was noted.

The ability of the programme to entertain, to make the audience have a good time, to enjoy themselves and laugh, are features that were often commented and very much appreciated about this show.

2.4.4.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: response.

This programme's viewers expressed their opinions in most different ways, and among them the use of emails must also be noted. In this manner they either congratulated the programme, or criticised it, both as a whole or over specific content, as well as concerning its hosts and actors. Furthermore, they made suggestions and asked for additional information, while they also addressed their disagreements and complaints. Email communication was also used to ask for invitations to attend the programme as part of the studio audience.

The use of email enabled direct communication between the programme and its audience, as can be observed in the varied content of the messages as well as in their writing style, the different dialects of Basque language used and the different profile of their senders. Various emails were written in Spanish and some viewers even mentioned

that although they didn't understand Basque, they followed the programme, due to its entertaining content and atmosphere, for which they had a good time watching it.

Additional data gives us information about the public's response over the programme. Besides the above mentioned emails, varied types of opinions were expressed by the audience in the form of traditional letters or, more directly, on the phone, even live, while the programme was broadcast. Furthermore, SMS phone messages were used to respond to the programme's requests and questions, especially regarding the public's participation in quizzes and raffles that were launched when the show was on air. This participation was indeed significant, counting more than 5,000 messages received in certain episodes.

When referring to the audience response to the programme, the two Iparragirre prizes that *Sorginen Laratza* won need to be mentioned. In fact, at that time, the Iparragirre Awards rewarded those programmes and professionals of Euskal Telebista chosen as best by the audience, and this show was selected, and therefore rewarded, as the best programme on the first channel of this public television company in 1999 and 2000 (Iparragirre Saria 2000, 2001).

The reaction of the public to the presence in different social events of the programme's collaborators and even of those *Sorginen Laratza* characters and impersonations performed by its comedians and actors, also indicate the popularity of this Basque television show. The way people often got involved in these recordings reflect this programme's acceptance by the public and their good response. Furthermore, the *Sorginen Laratza* comedians and actors not only participated in these events, but they were even imitated by the public, as happened during popular carnival parades and other social happenings. In addition, some genuine *Sorginen Laratza*

characters also took part in other television programmes within Euskal Telebista while this show was not on air, during summer seasons.

We have commented that the audience expressed their opinion about this Basque entertainment show in various forms. In addition to that, there are other aspects that reflect the position on the part of the public, and by Basque society, about this television programme. Among them I would mention the willingness of many people to participate in it, either as part of the studio audience or as guests to be interviewed and to interact with the show's hosts and actors. The positive attitude in this regard by both famous and anonymous Basque people is particularly relevant, mainly bearing in mind that, traditionally, it hadn't been easy to get Basques involved in television programmes, and even less in those of the entertainment genre in particular. As we have noted previously, more than 1,200 guests took part in this show. In addition, the presence of around 25,000 people in the studio to watch the programme live and, in many cases, to interact and participate in the show in different manners, is worth mentioning too.

The special editions of *Sorginen Laratza* for New Year's Eve during various years are a good example in this regard, as they gathered in their recording a broad and varied representation of Basque society. Among them we could find guests of such diverse profile as, for example, the president of the Basque Country at the time or a young well known Basque weight-lifter who, in fact, chose the studio of *Sorginen Laratza* and, therefore, the broadcasting of the programme on such a special night, to attempt various record breakings in this traditional Basque sport, which he did over 4 consecutive years (*Sorginen Laratza: Kaixo 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003*).

Consequently, we can say that *Sorginen Laratza* was used as a public space, both physical (the television studio) and immaterial, non physical, (the aired television

programme) where Basque people participated. It can be indeed considered a sort of public place, a public square, open to Basque society, which members could act and get involved in either as participants or as observers, or as both.

2.4.4.4 *Sorginen Laratza*: impact.

In addition to these aspects, there are other factors that help to know and assess the impact of this programme among the public, the Basque society, as well about their response. We can say that this additional information completes an overview of this programme's influence and contributions both to the Basque public television channel as well as to Basque society in general.

2.4.4.4.1. Presence in the media: written press.

The presence of *Sorginen Laratza* in the media gives us an idea of the impact of this programme, and about how it was embedded in Basque society, among Basque television viewers in particular. In this regard, it can be observed that information about this show and comments related to it were very often disclosed in the written press. The best known newspapers in the Basque country included a great amount of comments and reviews, either to highlight specific content or to gather the opinion of television critics about this show. Furthermore, numerous interviews with the hosts, actors and various co-presenters and collaborators of the programme, as well as with other members of this show's creative, production and management team, were published (*Berria, Deia, Egunkaria, El Correo, EL Diario Vasco, Gara, Zazpika*, 1999-2005). Moreover, various reports about the show of greater extent were also published, as is

the case of the week-end magazine, *Zazpika*, which dedicated the front page/cover of its 92 issue and a great part of its content to information and comment about this programme (Solana, 2000).

In fact, we have counted more than 600 texts related to this programme that were published in the main newspapers of the Basque Country. A great amount and variety of articles, reviews, interviews, comments, reports, etc. and multiple references of varied size were published in the press during the years *Sorginen Laratza* was on air. In addition to those texts, regular short mentions of the programme were included in the television programming schedule page of those papers each day this show was broadcast. Actually, it can be seen that mentions about the programme were still made several years after it finished, as different members of the team still referred positively to it when were interviewed in the media, mostly with regard to their participation in later programmes and projects (e.g. Peña, 2013).

Information and opinions about this Basque entertainment show could also be read in certain publications and media specialised in television with a reach outside the Basque Country too (e.g. GECA, 2001; Formula TV, 2004). Likewise, varied information in relation to the content and the intentions of the programme were also expressed throughout the various seasons by the managing directors of Euskal Telebista in several publications, including assessments of the programme which highlighted the importance of this show for the Basque public television company (e.g. Ortuzar, 2001, GECA, pp., 86-87; Sarasola, 2001, GECA, p. 207; Zupiria, 2000, October 5, *Gara*. p. 69 & *EL Diario Vasco*, p. 78; EITB, 2000, Telebista - Balance 1999ko Txostena - p. 6)

Sorginen Laratza was also pointed out in EITB's Annual Report publications during several seasons (EITB 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003) and regular information about

the programme was disseminated by Euskal Telebista in the various press conferences held and numerous press releases published throughout the six seasons this programme was part of ETB's first channel output.

In an interview published in GECA's Television book of the year, 2001, (*El anuario de la television*, 2001) the director general of EITB (Euskal Irrati Telebista) at the time, Andoni Ortuzar, highlighted the launching of this programme as among the most prominent outputs of Euskal Telebista during the season 1999-2000. Moreover, he noted that the direction board of this public television channel was very proud of it (GECA, 2001a, p. 87). He also emphasised its contribution to the programming of the first channel of Euskal Telebista, ETB1, with regard to the consolidation of a regular prime time on this channel's programming, the strengthening of a loyal relationship with Basque audience and the ability to attract the attention and interest of the youngest viewers (GECA, 2001a, p. 86).

Other professionals and executives of Euskal Telebista involved in the programme also expressed their reflections in this regard. This quote below, drawn from the article devoted to this show in that well known publication about television just mentioned (GECA 2001), reflects some assessments commented by them. Among the aspects they point out is the fact that the programme fulfilled the expectations set the day it was launched, noting that it had consolidated its place as a reference among the audience that didn't previously exist in ETB. Furthermore, it is stated that the programme provided an additional contribution to the image of the channel, becoming one of the most important references of ETB's perception by Basque society (GECA, 2001d, p. 207).

El espacio cumple las expectativas marcadas el día de su estreno. "Ha consolidado una referencia entre la audiencia que antes no teníamos. Asimismo

se ha aportado ese plus de imagen a la cadena. Se ha convertido en uno de los más importantes referentes de la imagen de ETB en la sociedad vasca”, coinciden en afirmar los responsables del programa.

Various statements expressed by the director of programmes of Euskal Telebista at the time, Pello Sarasola, in the already mentioned article, highlight some of the goals and achievements of this programme after its first year on air, as can be read in these two paragraphs quoted below (GECA, 2001d, p. 207):

Según el director de Programación del ente, Pello Sarasola, “se quería dar un salto de imagen a ETB1. Demostrar a los propios profesionales del medio y a la sociedad que también se podía hacer un ambicioso *show* que incluyese todas las referencias que la audiencia busca mayoritariamente en ese intervalo de tiempo”.

El primer canal de Euskal Telebista, ligado fundamentalmente al deporte, folclore y a contenidos infantiles, logra con esta producción cambiar la imagen externa de la cadena. ETB1 pasa a ser una referencia muy viva entre el público euskaldun durante la franja horaria de la noche (de 23:00 a 00:00), cuando antes gran parte de esos televidentes cambiaban de canal después de Goenkale, la serie estrella y más fiel de la televisión vasca (...).

Focusing on a positive perspective, we can observe that most of the comments about this programme pointed out previously in this work were expressed in many of these varied types of texts noted here. Regarding television critics, a great amount of both negative and positive opinions about the programme could be read in the press during the six seasons this show was on air. This having been said, it can be noticed that most of the information provided and the positive comments and analyses expressed by media writers of different publications, reflect many of the aspects we have already mentioned in this chapter (e.g. Intxausti, 1999; Cano, 1999; Martinez, 1999, 2000; Solana, 2000; Urdangarin, 2001; Aldalur, 2002; Etxegoien, 2004; Ezquiaga, 2004; Urkizu, 2005; Ezquiaga, 2005; Etxegoien, 2005 ...).

In this respect, I quote below some statements that could be read in well-known newspapers in the Basque country. These texts, that were written when the programme was about to finish, after six years on air, encompass some of the information, comments and opinions published during this time in different papers, written by different journalists and media critics. Mitxel Ezquiaga presents indeed a positive view of this programme in its review, that he entitled 'El agur de las brujas' (Ezquiaga, 2005). Ezquiaga, a veteran and well-known journalist of the newspaper *El Diario Vasco*, refers in his comments to many aspects we have noted throughout this work. He also mentions the similarities of this programme with the successful late show *Crónicas Marcianas* which, in fact, despite being launched two years before *Sorginen Laratza*, finished at the same time as this Basque show. Some of the features of this Basque entertainment programme, its influence in Basque society and some of its contributions to the Basque public television company are mentioned by Ezquiaga (2005) in his review.

(...) *Sorginen Laratza*, el programa nocturno que presenta Xabier Euzkitze en Euskal Telebista, abandona el próximo lunes la parrilla de la televisión vasca después de haberse convertido durante varios años en referente de una forma de ver el país un tanto festiva e irreverente (...). Es curioso que el fin de *Sorginen Laratza* coincida en el tiempo con el de *Crónicas Marcianas*. (...) fue siempre inevitable ver una relación entre ambos: *Sorginen* nació en la estela *marciana*, como programa nocturno que se emitía diariamente y trataba la actualidad de manera heterodoxa. (...) *Sorginen Laratza* fue en su día un programa que dio aire fresco a una programación criticada por exceso de txapelas y caseríos. Constituyó una apuesta de ETB que no escatimó medios (...). En sus años de historia *Sorginen* ha aportado cosas interesantes. Fue uno de los primeros programas innovadores a la hora de tomarnos menos en serio: muchas cosas que ahora se dan por habituales en *Vaya Semanita* o *Pika, pika* fueron aquí desdramatizadas por primera vez. Las parodias de sus actores (...) arrojaron nuevas dimensiones de nuestro serio panorama, y también las entrevistas a políticos reflejaron su otra cara. (...) *Sorginen Laratza* se había convertido ya en un joven clásico. Lo jubilan, pero que al menos su espíritu, de cierta rebeldía e irreverencia, permanezca en la programación de ETB1.

The other text I have selected to quote partially here is an article written by Urtzi Urkizu (2005) just a couple of weeks before this previous one, when the direction board of Euskal Telebista announced that the programme would not continue next season. Urkizu regularly informs and comments about television topics in the Basque newspaper, published in Basque language, *Berria*, and he signed many of the articles about *Sorginen Laratza* published in those years this programme was on air. In this text he includes his own comments as well as the statements of the executive producer of the show, who Urkizu interviewed for this article. This is, therefore, a summarised review of the programme and its main achievements according to the aspects highlighted by this journalist. In this case, too, we can observe that many of the features of the programme as well as some of its contributions to Euskal Telebista that we have pointed out and analysed along this work are also reflected in this article.

Gaueko magazin “moderno eta zoro” bat egiteko helburuarekin sortu zen Sorginen laratza, 1999. Urtean. (...). Sorginen laratza-ko zuzendari Itziar Azpeitia pozik dago magazinaren emaitzarekin. “500 saio inguru egin ditugu, eta horrelako programentzat hori errekor bat da, are gehiago ETB1en eta datu onak lortuz eginda”, dio Azpeitiak. ETBko zuzendaritzak programako arduradunei adierazi die Sorginen laratza-k “ekarpen izugarria” egin diola kateari. “Ordura arte erdarazko kateentzat mugatua zegoen esparru bat euskaraz betetzeko gauza ginela demostratu genuen”. (...) “Bidea ez da erraza izan. Ikuslea zorrotza da, eta lehia, oso gogorra da. Hala ere, publiko fidela izan dugu, eta hari esker egon gara programazioan, duintasunez”. Errealitatea, fikzioa eta hainbat genero programa berean uztartzen saiatu dira urteotan, eta ahalegin horren emaitzak onak izan direla uste du Azpeitiak: “Euskaraz entretenitzea ez da batzuetan oso erraza, baina hainbat gauza lortu ditugu”. Hala, errealizazio aldetik ere modu ezberdinak bilatzen ahalegindu dira urteotan. (...) Lan taldeko kide asko hasieratik egon dira saioan, (...) “Kontuan izan behar da harrobi lan handia egin dugula ETBrentzat. Egungo aurkezle asko gure saioan hezi dira”.

Thus, Urkizu mentions in this article some of the reflections expressed by the executive director of the programme, Itziar Azpeitia, regarding various aspects. Among

them, she comments on the amount of episodes produced and broadcast as well as the audience they reached, which, she assesses, is a great achievement for programmes of this type, even more so in the case of the Basque channel, ETB1.

Azpeitia acknowledges in this interview that it has been a difficult journey, as producing entertainment programmes in Basque is not easy, the audience is very demanding and that there is fierce competition between channels. She notes that the programme had a loyal audience and that this was essential for its run on Euskal Telebista's prime time schedule for so long. The effort to develop new narratives, both regarding form and content, and the mixture of fiction and reality within the programme are some of the aspects that are also commented on.

The director of *Sorginen Laratza*'s team also mentions the opinion of members of Euskal Telebista's direction board, as they assessed that this programme made a great contribution to the channel. Furthermore, they commented that this television show proved that a field that had been limited to non-Basque productions until then could be developed using the Basque language, Euskara, too.

Finally, both Urkizu and Azpeitia underline in this article the work done by the programme with regard to identifying and nurturing talent. They comment that, since the start of the show in 1999, many different professionals had taken part in it, such as numerous presenters, actresses and actors, journalists, scriptwriters and technicians. Urkizu comments that, in fact, many of these professionals that worked in *Sorginen Laratza* were already involved in new programmes, highlighting the role of this long running Basque television show in fostering talent and nurturing new television shows of different kinds. Hence, Urkizu lists some of those names in his article.

2.4.4.4.2. *Sorginen Laratza*: other uses.

We have defined *Sorginen Laratza* as an entertainment television programme, and, as such, its first objective was to present an attractive output for Basque television viewers who were looking for an offering of this genre at that time of the evening-night. In line with this intention, the programme was mainly used by its audience for entertainment and to have a good time while watching it. There is no need to say though that other parameters, objectives and missions, either attached to the show as such or with regard to the public television company where it was produced and broadcast, were also born in mind, as we have noted in previous sections of this work.

This having been said, we can also observe that the programme was used by the public in other ways once it was broadcast, beyond its merely entertainment function. Amongst them it is indeed relevant the fact that this programme's videos were used as audio-visual material to teach and learn Basque, not just on a personal basis, but in language schools too (e.g. Habe, 2003). In fact, both audio-visual pieces as well as additional written texts about the programme, such as interviews with some of its protagonists, were included within the learning material by the Basque Government's official institution for Basque language teaching (*HABE*). Likewise, similar texts were also used in some of the official exams for the assessment of Basque language knowledge (*EGA*). Equally, written texts related to this show were applied to other purposes too, such as in novel, fiction, writing lessons in Basque (e.g. Escudero, 2003). In addition, *Sorginen Laratza* was also mentioned in school texts regarding media and television topics, and it was also referred to in books that developed other types of narratives (e.g. Apalategi, 2000; Ezkiaga, 2004).

2.4.4.4.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: a popular programme.

The analysis of all this information leads us to conclude that *Sorginen Laratza* was a popular programme that influenced both the Basque public television channel, Euskal Telebista, and Basque society in different manners.

When using the term ‘popular programme’ I am referring to it regarding the two meanings it entails, as explained previously in this work. In fact, this television show can be considered ‘popular’ among Basque audiences, that is to say it was appealing, well-known, watched and followed by a considerable amount of Basque people and television viewers, even among many of them who were not fluent in that language or even had a little knowledge of it. The response of Basque viewers and various sectors of society reflected in various ways, according to the information presented in this section, are also indicators of the popularity of this programme with regard to this first meaning of ‘popular’.

‘Popular’ also means ‘made by and for the people’, though. In this respect, we have commented that regarding television, due to its special production characteristics, the ‘popularity’ of a television programme is not so much linked to the concept of ‘made by’ as to the idea of ‘representation of the people’. According to the explanations offered earlier in this work it is accepted that television programmes cannot be ‘made by the people’ as the need for a professional creative and work force is essential on their creation and production process. In line with this way of thought the popularity of a television programme would be assessed, instead, in relation to the representation of the people, of society, in it. That is to say, it would be regarded or not as ‘popular’ according to the presence of the public on the screen. This concept of the popular is particularly important when referring to public television as, in most Western European

nations at least, it is understood that this type of entity, and consequently the programmes they produce and broadcast, should represent society.

In this regard, according to the data provided throughout this work, we can affirm that there was a high representation of Basque people and Basque society within the programme we are referring to. Actually, many different people, representative of different areas of Basque society and of the territories of the Basque country; people of various disciplines and fields, of diverse profile, as well as of varied social and cultural background; people of different age and gender, with different ideas, points of view, sexual orientation, as well as religious and political belief, etc. participated in this show in many different ways.

This having been said, I would add that, in this particular case, we could assert that *Sorginen Laratza* was ‘made by the people’ in some sense, too. In fact, although ‘normal’, ordinary people, namely not television professionals of any kind, did not take part in the production process of this television programme as such, many of them had much prominence in the creation of its content, for which their participation was essential. Actually, the presence of so many and such varied guests and their participation in the programme in various ways generated content, television content indeed. Moreover, many of the varied artistic performances included within the programme, can be regarded as ‘popular’ in its genuine sense (popular music and dancing, for example) and many others can be considered as such too, because they were ‘made by the people’, as was the case in which many varied popular artists as well as not so well known people participated in the programme representing varied artistic outputs.

2.4.4.4.4. *Sorginen Laratza*: other programmes and the Basque audio-visual sector.

Finally, and regarding this programme's influence it should be mentioned that its impact can also be noticed in other programmes that were produced afterwards by and in Euskal Telebista. That is the case of successful humour, sketch comedy, programmes such as *Wazemank* in ETB1, broadcast in Basque, and even *Vaya Semanita*, in ETB2, aired in Spanish (cf. Larrea, 2012). In fact, the latter became very popular both in the Basque Country and in many regions of Spain too, where it could be watched because most of its episodes were licensed by various television channels. Actually, many of the characters and impersonations portrayed in this programme had their first appearance in *Sorginen Laratza*, whose influence could be noticed in several manners, since some members of both its creative and production team worked for *Vaya Semanita* after *Sorginen Laratza* was finished (cf. Ezquiaga, 2005). This was also the case of *Wazemank*'s creative and work force, a successful comedy show which became very popular among Basque audience.

Hence, it can be said that the skills developed both by *Sorginen Laratza*'s creative and production team during the six years it was on air, throughout the almost 500 episodes produced, certainly influenced the content and the output of later productions of Euskal Telebista, regardless of the language in which they were produced and broadcast. In fact, the impact that *Sorginen Laratza* had in Euskal Telebista's further productions, and mainly its contribution to the development of the comedy genre, both in Euskal Telebista and in the Basque humour television output in general, is acknowledged by many professionals of this medium. Actually, this aspect was also pointed out by some media journalists and critics at the time, too (e.g. Ezquiaga, 2005; Urkizu, 2005 ...).

The managing directors of Euskal Telebista also highlighted the contributions of this programme not only to this Basque public television company as such, but also to the television content produced and broadcast in this minority language, as commented by the Director General of EITB at the time, Andoni Ortuzar and the Director of Programmes, Pello Sarasola (e.g. GECA, 2001). The words of the director of ETB, Bingen Zupiria also stressed this aspect when, addressing the professionals that created and produced this television show, mentioned the fact that so many different professionals from such varied disciplines had worked as a team, and obtained excellent results. He, indeed, congratulated *Sorginen Laratza*'s personnel for an achievement that Zupiria described as 'a milestone in the journey of television made in Basque language'. (Zupiria, 2002):

(...) hainbat lagunek osatutako talde bezala jokatu duzue, arlo ezberdinetako profesionalen emaitzak bateratuz. Eta emaitza bikainak ekarri dituzue. Euskaraz egindako telebistaren joan-etorrian, mugarri bat ipintzea lortu duzue eta hori ez dau edozer gauza. (Zupiria, 2002)

Therefore, the influence of *Sorginen Laratza* in Basque television, its impact in the Cultural and Creative Industries of the Basque Country, and more precisely within the audio-visual sector, must also be taken into account, as this programme contributed to identifying and boosting talent in the different production and creative fields involved in generating audio-visual, and more specifically, television content of varied type.

The work developed by many diverse Basque professionals as part of this television show's crew, both in roles on screen and behind the camera, provided them, and by extension the Basque audio-visual sector, of the expertise needed for further development of varied audio-visual content. In this sense, it can be said that the programme acted as a training space where new skills were developed, as it allowed

experimentation with different and new narrative forms within a professional framework. It can be asserted that this programme nurtured the audio-visual sector of the Basque country as it facilitated the gaining of expertise and the incorporation of most diverse professionals in further projects within varied fields and areas of the Basque audio-visual industry.

Equally, we can state that the research, development and innovation processes conducted within the programme regarding form, content and production, helped to develop both new television narrative forms and production modes which can also be regarded as contributions of this programme to the Basque audio-visual field and, more specifically to the development of the creation and production of television content of the entertainment genre, a field which is an important part of the audio-visual sector and, consequently, of the cultural and creative industries.

2.5. *Sorginen Laratza*: its contribution to Euskal Telebista.

The thorough analysis of the Basque night magazine show *Sorginen Laratza*, the results of which have been presented in this previous chapter, permit the identification of the contributions of this programme to the television public company, Euskal Telebista, where it was produced and broadcast. We have mentioned them, and presented plenty of information and arguments in this regard, in the different sections of that part of this work.

For doing so we have taken into account the specific features of this programme in three main fields, i.e. content, production and audience/reception. Furthermore, we have borne in mind the context and the characteristics of both the public television company in charge of the production and dissemination of this television programme, as

well as of the society where it is embedded and, therefore, of its particular cultural characteristics.

In addition, when analysing this television programme and its contribution to the Basque public television channel, Euskal Telebista, we have included in the research framework defined for this purpose the information presented in the first part of this PhD dissertation text. Consequently, the final analysis and the conclusions drawn in this regard are also nurtured and framed by the results of the study conducted in that first stage, as presented in that already mentioned first part.

Therefore, in this section I will just outline and summarise those contributions extensively explained previously. This having been said, we can observe that *Sorginen Laratza* contributed to the fulfilment of the missions and goals of the Basque public television company, Euskal Telebista in various areas.

2.5.1. *Sorginen Laratza*: objectives.

Regarding the specific aims of this programme, set by the company when it was launched and periodically revised as the programme was on, we can note that all the goals set were attained, either regarding content, production premises or audience and reception objectives. Consequently, according to the information included and the results of the analysis presented in this previous chapter, we can affirm that the following main goals were achieved in each one of the areas studied:

- Content:
 - A television entertainment programme which would attract the Basque audience interest and fulfil their entertainment demands when watching

television at that time of the evening-night (prime-time and second prime-time).

- A show that would help to offer a new image of the first channel of Euskal Telebista, more in line with modern and contemporary television, to break up the perception of Basque television as a, somehow, rural and old fashioned channel.
 - A format that would include varied content, as it would take the place of the different programmes that occupied that slot of ETB1's programming schedule each day of the week until then.
- Audience/Reception:
 - To attract more audience to the first channel of Euskal Telebista, which broadcasts in Basque.
 - To catch the interest, and therefore, bring to this channel viewers of different profile than the usual ones until then, among them, younger people and audience from urban areas.
 - To keep Basque people watching ETB1 after 22:30 and even 23:15 at night.
- Production:
 - To have a unique programme, a format, on screen for several nights a week, which, being produced and broadcast live, would permit keeping the programme's set and technical facilities fixed, avoiding the extra effort and cost of setting up and dismantling them every day.
 - To arrange a multidisciplinary team in Euskal Telebista which, working within the existing production premises and the economic framework of this

public company, would produce in an effective way a complicated format, which had never been developed until then in this public television.

2.5.2. Euskal Telebista: missions.

This having been said, we can observe that, besides the specific objectives demanded of this programme by the company, *Sorginen Laratza* also contributed to the fulfilment of other missions and general objectives of the Basque public television, Euskal Telebista.

- Basque culture, Basque language, Basque diaspora: We can indeed assert that this entertainment television show contributed to the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and Basque language, which, as said, are among the main missions of this public entity since its foundation. The presence and adequate integration of so many and so different elements and expressions of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity within the programme, as well as the relevance of Basque language in its creation, production and its final output, were determinant for the achievement on the side of this programme of such important objectives of the Basque public television company. We have mentioned that this happened not only within the geographic limits of the Basque country, because many of its episodes could be watched in America too. Therefore, *Sorginen Laratza*'s contribution to the communities of the Basque diaspora in this regard must also be noted.

As explained throughout this work, we are referring to culture and its expressions according to its three common senses, that is to say, as an artistic activity, as 'way of life' and as a process of society's development (see chapter 1.6.4.1). In this respect, and in the same line as similar reflections posited as a result

of previous research work (Azpeitia, 2012; Azpeitia 2016), I would like to highlight the importance of the presence of those cultural elements and expressions within the programme. They were in fact intrinsic to the essence of the programme as such, but their inclusion, and the manner it was done, also contributed to making the programme more appealing, as well as closer, to the audience. In addition, that helped to make the public identify with the show. The presence of such elements did, likewise, contribute to the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and Basque language. Moreover, this effect was reinforced when the amount of audience who watched the programme increased, for which the inclusion of those mentioned elements was indeed essential.

We could, therefore, describe it as a symbiotic relationship, because the inclusion of elements of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity in the programme helped to promote and disseminate them, and, at the same time, the presence of those elements reinforced that spreading effect, because that made the programme closer to and appealing for Basque audience and, therefore, more people watched it.

- Cultural identity, cultural proximity: We have referred to those aspects in detail in this previous chapter (see 2.4.2.5.1). Furthermore, we have presented in this work a great deal of information and arguments that focus on the importance of cultural identity and cultural proximity factors in the selection and enjoyment of television programmes, which, therefore, contribute to their popularity and success (see chapter 1.8.4). Likewise, we have stressed their relevance in public television broadcasting and, more specifically, with regard to those ‘televisions in the regions’,

or ‘proximate television’ channels. Those companies are generally attached to communities with differentiated cultures and, in many cases, with a strong sense of cultural identity, as is the case of the Basque country, the Basque culture and Euskal Telebista (see chapter 1.8.5). Consequently, *Sorginen Laratza*’s contributions in this area must also be noted.

- Construction of cultural identity: We have observed that cultural and cultural identity aspects influence the audience’s choice of television content, and that, likewise, their presence in television programmes do contribute to the promotion and dissemination of a certain culture and cultural identity. This having been said, we must also note the influence of television entertainment programmes on building up cultural identities.

Actually, the construction of cultural identity is understood as an on-going process, a development in which in addition to rationality, feelings and emotions are also involved. Within this context, and due to the particular characteristic of societies at present, and their television consumption habits, we can acknowledge the significance of television entertainment in this field, a genre in which emotions and feelings are also core elements, as well as genuine elements of its essence.

The significance of television entertainment as a ‘story teller’, its capacity both to spread and create a common imagery, its ability to express and drive the most varied emotions, its potential to create a sense of belonging to specific cultural communities, make this genre, in its varied outputs, a relevant factor as far as construction of cultural identities is concerned. Furthermore, these arguments also reflect the role of this type of television entertainment in the production of meanings and its contribution to social cohesion.

We can observe that this reasoning can be easily applied to the case of *Sorginen Laratza* and, therefore, its contributions both to Euskal Telebista and, ultimately, to Basque society in this respect must be noted. The specific features of this programme, both regarding form and content, and its audience's response, lead us to conclude that this entertainment show contributed to the construction of meanings and of Basque cultural identity, that it helped to create a sense of belonging to the Basque community and that it contributed to social cohesion within Basque society during the time it was on air.

- Social cohesion: In addition to what has just been commented in this regard, I would add that the significance of proximity public television companies and their outputs for social cohesion is broadly accepted. In this respect, cultural and identity expressions and representations, together with any other elements that make these entities and their programming close to society are essential. The contributions of *Sorginen Laratza* in this respect must, therefore, be mentioned too, according to the arguments presented in this section and extensively commented throughout this work.
- Basque language: In this regard we must also mention the contribution of this programme to both the dissemination and normalisation of Basque language, not only due to the amount of people who watched this programme, which was broadcast in Basque, during the six years it was on air, but also as a result of the way Basque language was presented and used in the programme, which provided a

valuable corpus of this minority language. Hence, this compilation of audio-visual and written material can be used in different ways, both at present and in the future.

- The Basque audio-visual sector: Within the area of culture, and in relation to *Sorginen Laratza*'s contribution in this field, the different ways in which this programme helped in the development of the Basque audio-visual sector, which is indeed an important branch of the creative and cultural industries, must also be taken into consideration. The work done with regard to the development of new audio-visual narrative ways in Basque, and to nurturing, forming, and fostering talent and professionals in different skills and fields within the television activity and, therefore, in the Basque audio-visual sector, is commented and described throughout different sections of this text.
- Research, development and innovation: In this regard, the development of new narrative ways as well as different types and modes of production within the programme, the design and implementation of new management schemes, and the active participation of its team in the new general management system implemented in the company must also be noted. Therefore, the contribution of *Sorginen Laratza* from the perspective of television programme research, development and innovation, regarding form, content, production and management, within Basque television at the time it was produced and broadcast, must be valued as a contribution not only to Euskal Telebista, but to the Basque audio-visual sector too.

- Cultural products, production of meaning: In addition, television programmes, as such, are also considered cultural products and, therefore, the contribution of *Sorginen Laratza* - with almost 500 episodes of an average duration of one hour and a half each - to Basque culture, to the Basque audio-visual output and, consequently, to the cultural and creative industries field in the Basque country, must be valued in this respect. Furthermore, we can affirm that these episodes' creation, production and dissemination respond to the need to generate identifiable symbolic production adapted to the times, pointed out as essential by the Basque Government in its Basque Plan for Culture (2005). The role of these cultural products in the production of meaning of a certain society and culture, as highlighted by the scholarship of cultural studies and studies on popular culture, can also be applied to this programme and to all its episodes, as far as Basque society and Basque culture are concerned.
- Popular television: According to the information provided, we can assert that *Sorginen Laratza* was a popular programme in the Basque country. This can be said regarding both senses of this term when referring to television, namely, watched and liked by many viewers, and programmes with high representation of the people, of Basque people in this case. This fact also contributed to the fulfilment of the objectives set for this television show, as well as to the general missions of the Basque public television. Actually, popularity, in both senses, is also an essential aspect pursued by public television companies, which aim to reach to their public and to represent society on screen.

- Entertainment and information: Entertainment is a main feature of *Sorginen Laratza*, as this show is in essence an entertainment programme. As such, we can indeed affirm that it contributed to fulfilling the entertainment function of Euskal Telebista, which is among its objectives because, like most public television companies, it has also embraced the so called Reithian principles, that is to say, inform, form and entertain. Plenty of arguments in this regard can be read in the preceding chapter. This having been said, we can also affirm that *Sorginen Laratza* also provided much and varied information and that, therefore, it also contributed to the fulfilment of Euskal Telebista's informative function.
- Entrance to the channel, motivation: In addition, as happens with this type of popular entertainment programmes in most television channels, we can say that *Sorginen Laratza* acted as a 'front door' and as a driving force that helped to bring people to the channel, which also had an effect on other programmes' audiences, including the informative ones. The contribution of this entertainment show to Euskal Telebista in this regard must also be mentioned.
- Uses and gratifications: We can also affirm that *Sorginen Laratza* responded to most of the needs that the audience intend to fulfil, and the gratifications they obtain, when watching television, described by the most important scholarship which analyses them, i.e. The Uses and Gratifications Theory, as extensively explained in various chapters of this work. Therefore, we can say that the programme responded to people's motivations for watching television pointed out within this model, that is to say, diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance.

Furthermore, it can be observed that this show fulfilled most of the needs of individuals for using the media, and television among them, described by this school of thought, and grouped in the following main five categories: cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension release needs. In fact, if we look in detail at the long list of reasons for watching television described within the U&G model by its various theorists (see chapter 1.3.4.2.2), we can affirm that *Sorginen Laratza*'s features fit in a great deal of them.

- Reasons for watching television: In addition to these motivations that the U&G Theory presents, professional, industrial, surveys do also enquire into this matter. We can observe that *Sorginen Laratza*'s features as well as its audience's response, also coincide with most of the main reasons for watching television that some of the latest analyses of this type indicate. The British entity Thinkbox identified the following six in the research developed in 2013: unwind, comfort, connect, experience, escape and indulge; and they defined each one of them, according to the explanations presented previously in this work (see chapter 1.8.7). The same company has recently commissioned a new study of the same topic, whose results were published in November, 2018 (*The Age of Television*). In this case eight main needs states that are satisfied by watching television and video have been identified, which, in order of time spent are: Unwind, to relax and de-stress from the pressures of the day; Distract, to fill time, counter boredom and have a break; Comfort, to share time together with familiar shows; In touch, to feel aware of what is happening in the world; Experience, to watch together, or join the social conversation; Indulge, to pursue personal interests or guilty pleasures; Escape, to lose yourself in another world; Do, to seek out useful, practical information.

This recent survey, conducted in the United Kingdom also notes that, despite the expansion in various ways to watch video, live television accounts for over half of average viewing per person in that country. This aforementioned study suggests that its enduring popularity is because it satisfies the widest range of people's viewing needs for more time than any other type of video, referring to those demands we have just commented about in this previous paragraph.

We can observe that *Sorginen Laratza* responds, to a great extent, to most of these aspects outlined above, including to the importance of live television, which is also mentioned and commented about in this recent survey. This feature was even more significant at the time *Sorginen Laratza* was produced and broadcast, live, because video on demand services were not as common as at present, and streaming video viewing in any of its forms, as well as social media resources, didn't even exist.

Taking all this into consideration, we can say that this show also contributed to fulfilling many of the needs and wishes of a great deal of Basque people as far as television watching is concerned, including the additional sharing experience that live television offers.

- Basque society: Consequently, we can assert that this Basque entertainment programme contributed to the fulfilment of the missions of the public television company Euskal Telebista in different manners and in various fields. Furthermore, when doing so it also benefited Basque society, which, after all, this television company finally aims to do, due to its condition as a public entity. Moreover, if we bear in mind the reflections in this regard presented in the Whitepaper of the Basque

Audio-visual Sector (2003) and in the *Basque Plan for Culture* of the Basque Government (2005), published at the time *Sorginen Laratza* was produced, we can observe that this entertainment show contributed to the achievements of most of the goals and missions assigned to this public entity in this respect, as described and explained in the chapters devoted to this topic in this work (see chapters 2.3.2; 2.3.3).

2.5.3. *Sorginen Laratza*: key aspects.

Throughout this comprehensive text we have presented a great deal of information and arguments that back up the reasoning and conclusions just posed. In addition, we have also identified the main factors and features of this programme that were relevant for those achievements. They have been mentioned, described and explained in detail in this previous chapter, for which I will now just outline the general aspects that did, indeed, influence the final output of the programme. Actually, they became essential characteristics of this show and were, hence, determinant for those achievements and contributions previously noted.

Humour and entertainment can be considered as the main features of this programme, this, along with the high presence of elements and expressions of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity, including the participation of so many and varied people, representative of Basque society, were indeed key for its success. In addition, other aspects became relevant as well, and even essential. Thus, the combination of the global and the local, the mixture of such varied television genres and subgenres, the sense of variety, proximity and authenticity, as well as the attachment to current issues in its final output, can also be identified as core factors directly associated to *Sorginen*

Laratza's attainments and success, and, therefore, to its contributions to Euskal Telebista and to Basque society.

This having been said, and regarding the objectives of this research, we can affirm that the entertainment factor, in its multiple and varied expressions, is not only an essential feature of this programme as it also proves to be of great value for the achievement of the goals and missions of the Basque public television.

Furthermore, we would add that all the different subgenres and outputs presented in the programme, which as extensively explained can be classified as television entertainment, influenced the ultimate result. Although each one played a different role, we can assert that all of them contributed in their manner to the final output, to the achievements attained and, consequently, to the above mentioned eventual contributions of the programme to Euskal Telebista, the public television channel where it was produced and broadcast.

2.5.4. Humour and entertainment: a serious business.

Finally, and in opposition to a thought that is widespread among many people, I would like to remark that, after planning, participating in and observing carefully the team's everyday work during those six seasons of *Sorginen Laratza*, and according to the information presented throughout this work, I can affirm that the creative and production process was as serious and rigorous as when producing any other type of programme, such as the informative ones, for instance. I want to highlight this aspect, because, although this statement may seem obvious, it is often believed, even among other media professionals who have no experience in this type of formats, that, within

television, creating humour and entertainment is much easier and, of course, a less serious and ‘noble’, outstanding, task than working in the news.

This perception is even more noticeable when it comes to public television companies, as many people still think that their informative function is far more important and virtuous than the entertaining one. Furthermore, those characteristics that are often associated with television entertainment, that is to say, banality, frivolity and triviality, are in many cases, by extension, also applied to the professionals that develop that television genre, their working modes and the specific content they generate. Consequently, both those professionals and those television entertainment programmes are often dismissed and undervalued, mainly in comparison to the television professionals working in the news and the informative genre outputs.

We can say that it was also the case of the programme analysed, a feeling that, I would affirm, is far from reality. The information posed, the results of the comprehensive research already explained and the arguments presented throughout the previous chapter do, in fact, back up this statement. We can assert that the identification and description of the contributions of this entertainment programme, object of analysis, to Euskal Telebista, help to understand the role of this television genre and its relevant value as a means of attaining the missions of this proximity public television channel, and, by extension, of benefiting Basque society in many different ways.

Nonetheless, I would add that, in this particular case, *Sorginen Laratza*’s multidisciplinary team proved to be capable not only of creating and producing television content that can be classified as entertainment - although, as noticed, many features of informative television are also included within this macro-genre -, but also to respond to the needs of the news department when needed. The most prominent case in

this regard was the special news programme produced by this team in relation to the terrorist attack that took place in Madrid on the 11th of March of 2004. That evening, for obvious reasons, *Sorginen Laratza* was removed from the programming schedule, and it was substituted by a special informative programme about the 11-M attack that *Sorginen Laratza*'s team carried out.

2.6. Euskal Telebista: entertainment as a core factor.

In these previous chapters and sections we have referred to the contributions of a certain entertainment television programme to Euskal Telebista. However, the analysis conducted and the conclusions drawn help not only to assess the value of that specific show in this regard, as we can say that the information posed and the results presented also reflect the importance of entertainment programmes for the fulfilment of the missions of this public entity.

In fact, although we have taken as a case study a programme that was produced more than a decade ago, we can affirm that the results presented are equally valid for present times, and that, moreover, they can be applied not only to that type of shows and formats in particular, but also to the entertainment programmes in general. The characteristics of this night magazine show and the fact that it contains so many different types of entertainment content make it suitable for this extrapolation.

We can say that the contribution of entertainment programmes to this public channel are indeed in line with its functions as a public, regional, proximity television channel as well as, most importantly, with its particular missions as the public television of the Basque Country. Some of them are fundamental and so they remain unchanged since this company's foundation, in 1982. In fact, on the one hand, ETB responds to the

principles that the BBC established first, and which have become ‘a mantra’ for most public television companies since then, i.e. form, inform and entertain. On the other hand, those objectives related to the spreading and development of Basque culture and Basque language as well as to contributing to its normalisation, are central for Euskal Telebista.

Most documents and whitepapers produced by this company about its activity highlight the main missions and objectives of this public entity, which emphasise its condition as a public service media and include those references to Basque culture and Basque language, as well as to its programming output just mentioned.

Eginkizuna/Mision: Zerbitzu publiko bat gara. Pertsonen bizitza aberasteko egiten dugu lan, informazio, dibulgazio eta entretenimendu eskaintza erakargarri eta kalitatezko bat eginez, Euskal kultura sustatuz, eta euskararen normalizazioa bultzatuz./ Somos un Servicio Público. Trabajamos por y para las personas con una oferta de información, divulgación y entretenimiento atractiva y de calidad, promoviendo la cultura vasca y la normalización y uso del euskara. (ETB, 2017a, p. 9)

As a result of the analysis conducted, we have noticed the importance of television entertainment within Euskal Telebista in the following areas, according to the arguments and explanations presented throughout this work and summarised and outlined in this previous chapter (2.5. *Sorginen Laratza*: its contribution to Euskal Telebista):

- Basque culture: its promotion, development and dissemination, within the Basque country and outside its boundaries, including the Basque communities in the diaspora.
- Cultural identity: both in relation to the construction of Basque cultural identity as well as regarding its fostering and dissemination.

- Cultural proximity: Basque television entertainment as fundamental to get closer to the audience; Cultural proximity's relevance in the sense of belonging to the Basque community.
- Construction and production of meanings, and social cohesion: the importance of television entertainment's 'story telling', the combination of information and emotions, of ideas and feelings in this regard within Basque society and Basque culture communities.
- Basque language: development, promotion, dissemination and normalisation of Euskara.
- The Basque audio-visual sector: the production, in varied formulas and forms, of television entertainment programmes as fundamental for promoting, nurturing and fostering the Basque creative industries, and the Basque audio-visual sector in particular.
- Research, development and innovation: creation and production of television entertainment programmes as a means of research, development and innovation either regarding form, content, production or management within the Basque audio-visual field.
- Cultural products, production of meaning: The importance of television entertainment in the creation of Basque cultural products, and their contribution to Basque culture, to the Basque cultural and creative industries, as well as to the production of meaning within Basque society.
- Popular television: Entertainment as key to achieving the popularity of Basque television programmes, and popular television programmes as attractive and appealing to viewers. The importance of the representation of Basque society in popular entertainment television, and hence Basque popular entertainment

television programmes as fundamental both to reaching the public and to representing society on screen.

- Entertainment and information: Television entertainment programmes as essential in fulfilling the entertainment function of Euskal Telebista, but also as a means to achieving other purposes, including this public entity's informative mission.
- Entrance to the channel, motivation: Entertainment programmes as fundamental in bringing viewers to the Basque Public Television. Entertainment content as a vehicle to attract non Basque speakers to its first channel, which broadcasts in Basque language.
- Uses and gratifications: The relevance of television entertainment programmes to respond to most of the objectives that viewers pursue and the gratifications they obtain when watching television.
- Reasons for watching television: the main feelings and reasons that people express in relation to audio-visual content viewing are closely related to what they get from watching television entertainment outputs.
- Basque society: Television entertainment contributes to fulfilling most of the main missions and objectives of this public entity, Euskal Telebista and, consequently, Basque society also benefits in various forms of television entertainment content.

Consequently, and focusing on the main missions of this public entity, we have observed that entertainment can be an important vehicle for spreading and promoting Basque culture, as well as for fostering and disseminating Basque language and helping in its development and normalisation. This is particularly important, Basque being a

minority culture and language, and even more significantly, I would add, in the current television landscape.

2.6.1. The television ecosystem at present.

The current television scenario presents several characteristics that lead us to draw that conclusion just noted. I would highlight the following among them:

2.6.1.1. Global and local content.

One of the features of television nowadays is that an enormous amount of the most varied audio-visual footage is at hand, and that it can be watched how, where and when wanted. Television content is global at present, and both its proliferation and wide-reaching scope are evident. In this globalised world, though, local content becomes relevant, too, because in this context cultural and identity factors act as anchors for individuals and societies.

2.6.1.2. Increase in television content.

Despite the fact that the definition of ‘television’ is shifting, as new ways of consuming that audio-visual footage that can still be classified as such are appearing, we can affirm that products that can be labelled as ‘television content’ are watched more than ever. Actually, despite viewing takes place in different devices and windows, it is evident that this type of content has proliferated tremendously.

2.6.1.3. Traditional, free-to-air television still prominent.

It is also observed that ‘traditional’ television watching, namely linear and in the home, on a big screen, still remains strong. Likewise, although both premium service offers and their demand, in any of their distribution forms, are increasing, the request and high consumption of television content free of charge shouldn’t be dismissed. Actually, this is still, by far, the most consumed television type. Most public television companies do not charge extra fees for viewing, as is the case of Euskal Telebista, whose main output, on the other hand, is aired in the ‘traditional’ mode, namely free to air and linear.

2.6.1.4. Multiple distribution modes.

It must be noted that nowadays most television content presented in a linear manner even in public television channels, is also available in other distribution modes, such as not-scheduled streaming and video on demand content offering. This is the case of Euskal Telebista, too, whose main portfolio can be watched in other modes and platforms, besides its main output through DTT.

2.6.1.5. The broadening of spread and reach..

We can say that the development of new technologies has multiplied exponentially the spreading and reaching scope of audio-visual content, even of those products that are initially produced to be broadcast in a public digital terrestrial television channel, as happens with Euskal Telebista and its main programming output.

2.6.1.6. Entertainment content most demanded.

We cannot ignore the fact that among this enormous offer of audio-visual products, entertainment programmes, in any of its subgenres and forms, are most demanded and consumed by the public. Actually, we can affirm that the prominent position of this type of content is one of the main characteristics of this new television ecosystem.

2.6.1.7. The power of active audiences.

Latest viewing habits reinforce the concept of active audience. The particularities of the current television ecosystem, that permits easy access to an overwhelming amount and choice of the most diverse television/ audio-visual content, and the way it is consumed - how, when and where wanted - mark a great shift regarding the traditional dichotomy between passive and active audience.

Thus, not only television entertainment content is consumed more than ever, as more time is also spent on choosing what to watch (half an hour average a day is said to be dedicated to that task at present), and it is much commented. Moreover, often several devices are used at the same time when watching television, devices which are also used to comment on it.

Consequently, we can affirm that the way television audiences are depicted has changed considerably, from 'lean back' television watchers to 'lean forward' viewers, from inert 'couch potatoes' to 'hyperactive octopuses' with all their arms occupied with different devices on which they watch, comment and share the most diverse television content. Thus, audiences can now be portrayed as busy creatures that consume and

comment on television in many ways and at different times and places, and who, following the current trends, do so both on social media as well as, for instance, around the watercooler dispenser, at work, and even both at the same time. In fact, the term ‘watercooler television’ has become most used recently to define those programmes which are most watched and commented.

In this context it is crucial to attract the audience, not only to grab their attention, but also to keep their interest and, ultimately, to get their engagement. There is little doubt about the significant role of the entertainment genre in this respect, according to what has been extensively argued in this work.

2.6.1.8. Online content and social media.

There is an additional aspect that in this new ecosystem is worth mentioning too. I am referring to the high presence that entertainment television programmes have among the audio-visual entertainment content viewed on line, on the internet, either on the ‘world wide web’ or on social media. Amongst them, I would like to focus more specifically on that labelled ‘User Generated Content’, that is to say, that content that users generate.

It has to be noted that among those videos that are ‘user’ generated’, we must differentiate between those that users have recorded themselves - ‘User Recorded Content’ - and those pieces that despite having been uploaded by web users, they are not the genuine authors - ‘User Uploaded Content’- . Surveys in this regard indicate that most of this ‘user’ generated’ audio-visual output that is watched on the web is, hence, user uploaded content, but not user recorded precisely. This research also indicates that the most watched are those videos that can be classified as

‘entertainment’. Moreover, it is noticed that most popular and viewed pieces are, in fact, television entertainment programmes, either in the form of different segments and pieces taken from them or even episodes entirely uploaded. (cf. Cabrera, Capello, Fontaine and Valais, 2016 - European Audiovisual Observatory - ; Azpeitia, 2016)

Therefore, regarding social media, social networks, we can observe that videos associated with television entertainment programmes are generally on the top of YouTube’s most viewed ranking, as is shown in the list for 2018 in Spain. Actually, according to the information recently released in this regard, the most watched videos on YouTube in that country in 2018 are segments of two popular television entertainment shows, *Factor X* and *Operación Triunfo*, well surpassing the number of viewers of most popular you-tubers’ videos, as is the case of those created and uploaded by the so called ‘El Rubius’ (*El Diario Vasco*, 7 December 2018).

Consequently, we can assert that the high presence of this television entertainment content on social media must be valued, but also, I would add, should be the comments they generate on them, which produce a great deal of media buzz.

All these aspects just mentioned are particularly important in the case of Basque culture and Basque language, because we can observe that ETB’s job in this field not only allows having television content in Basque in such varied windows and devices, as it also facilitates the use of this language on social media when commenting on them. This helps in its normalisation and in extending its use to new communication modes and, consequently, to its promotion, development, dissemination and revitalisation too.

2.6.2. Euskal Telebista: entertainment in the current television scenario.

These features of the new television landscape outlined in the preceding section can be deduced from the numerous reports, whitepapers and varied documents that analyse these aspects worldwide, some of which we have mentioned throughout this work, but similar conclusions can also be drawn from equivalent studies conducted in Spain. This is observed when analysing the latest surveys published in that country associated both with the television activity as such as well as about the public television field in particular, which are, ultimately, the two main areas related to the activity of Euskal Telebista, the Basque public, proximity television, company.

I am referring to the information included in the analysis of the television business in Spain during 2018, carried out and published by the Spanish media consultancy Barlovento, (Barlovento, 2019) as well as that presented in the thorough research document about public broadcasting in Europe (*Panorama actual y tendencias de la radiotelevisión pública en Europa*), a study conducted by academics of the University of Santiago de Compostela, in which the Association of Autonomous Public Television Companies in Spain, FORTA, has collaborated (Campos Freire et al., 2018). I have also reflected on these matters in various reports that I wrote during that year, 2018, focusing specifically on those aspects that have special influence on Euskal Telebista (Azpeitia, 2018a; Azpeitia, 2018b)

2.6.2.1. Euskal Telebista: entertainment programmes in Basque.

Therefore, taking into account both the features and the missions of this public entity as well as the characteristics of the new television ecosystem at present, we can say that, in this context, the creation, production and dissemination of Basque

entertainment programmes on the side of this public television company becomes particularly relevant. We can identify various arguments that back up this statement. I will list below some of them which, from my perspective, are fundamental in this respect:

- This activity and output of Euskal Telebista enable Basque people to have access to such a demanded type of content, but in their own language and according to their cultural requirements. A content that, we can say, if not having been produced and broadcast by a company publicly financed –or commissioned in any other altruistic way- would hardly exist because, due to the size of its potential audience (those persons who can, at least, understand Basque language), it is not interesting commercially. In fact, it is most difficult to obtain economic profit out of most of television products with these characteristics, and, almost impossible, we could say, from a television channel of this type.
- In this way, Euskal Telebista also contributes to fostering Basque culture and Basque language, as television entertainment is an important vehicle both to disseminate them and to reach the public, the people, in the end. Furthermore, the new distribution modes, platforms and devices facilitate this task, as they significantly broaden these products' reach scope.
- It is obvious that, among such a big global offer, the proportion of the existing television content in Basque among the global output accessible to Basque audiences diminishes. Consequently we would say that it is important not only to keep, at least, the present production rate of these products but that it is also

necessary to increase their amount, so as to have a higher presence of this type of content in the different media and platforms where it is distributed and consumed. This having been said, it is equally important that these programmes are attractive, appealing for Basque audience, so that they choose them among such a great and diverse, easily accessible, global offer. Moreover, they should be adapted to the different narrative languages and styles and to the varied output modes that these diverse devices and platforms entail.

- I would add that these arguments are especially relevant in the current situation, due to the data gathered in the latest survey about the use of the Basque language released by the Department of Language Policy of the Basque country, in 2016. According to that research, although the knowledge and use of Euskara have increased considerably in these last years, this has happened mainly in more formal spaces and environments, such as education, public institutions and in the professional field, whereas the need to improve its use in not so formal areas, in leisure and everyday life activities, is observed.

In this respect, the role that television entertainment programmes in Basque play can be regarded as very significant, due to the amount of leisure time dedicated to television entertainment consumption, in its various forms and screens, by Basque people too. Furthermore, the influence that this television content has on the buzz generated on social media also counts in this regard. All this helps to increase the presence of this minority language in the varied sources, devices and outputs that the new television ecosystem entails, including the very significant platforms and expressions of new and social media.

There is no need to say that, ETB being as it is a public entity, special care must be taken both in the form and content of its entertainment output, so that this company's principles and values are always preserved. This having been said, however, it goes without saying that these programmes must obviously be entertaining, as the name suggests, and according to the various definitions of the term presented in this respect throughout this work. The combination of both aspects is essential in the creation of adequate and effective entertainment output, so as to attain its final objectives.

Likewise, present global trends must be also taken into account in the creation and production of television entertainment programmes, although without leaving aside the fact that they should also maintain their genuine cultural essence. Hence, this feature makes them distinctive from other television channels' offerings and, ultimately, valuable, fundamental, I would say, for the achievement of those other missions that Euskal Telebista has beyond, but at the same time as, the merely entertaining one.

2.6.2.2. The importance of original television formats.

We have referred to some of the particular characteristics of the television ecosystem at present. Among them I would also like to mention the importance of television formats as far as television entertainment content distribution and trading is concerned. We have commented throughout this work on the importance of television formats with regard to the commercialisation of television programmes, especially outside their initial production and broadcasting area. Furthermore, we have noted that television formats trading has highly influenced both the globalisation and glocalisation

of television content and very noticeably of entertainment programmes of different kinds and genres.

In the so called ‘formats era’ the creation, production and dissemination of Basque television entertainment programmes on Euskal Telebista’s side, gain special relevance. Actually, it enables the creation and development of new, genuine, original formats and permits the avoidance of the dependency on either national or transnational, global, ones. Moreover, Basque entertainment formats can be commercialised outside the boundaries of the Basque country much more easily than finished programmes, something which would ultimately generate extra revenues. We can say that in the current scenario these aspects are, definitely, most significant for the development of the Basque creative industries and for the audio-visual sector in particular.

In fact, we can observe that it is extremely difficult for Euskal Telebista to have access to the main international formats, both due to geographical-geopolitical and economic reasons. Actually, big, prominent and popular transnational formats are acquired in Spain by the main television companies of this country, either public (RTVE) or private (Mediaset, Atresmedia) which cover the whole territory of this State. Due to that, while their license is in force, those formats cannot be adapted by any other company in that broadcasting area. In addition, their expensive fees and the high cost of their production processes in most cases, make them prohibitive, unreachable, for this Basque public entity which, after all, has a very limited budget in comparison to those big national television companies.

It can be said that, in this context, the creation, development and production of original formats within Euskal Telebista has become particularly significant due to various reasons:

- If these formats are generated in origin in, and for, this company, it is assured not only that they respond to the cultural requirements of Basque society, but also that they can be developed within its production framework and under its current economic premises and possibilities. In addition, as owners of the IP (Intellectual Property) of the format, and unique controllers of the whole of the production process, no license fees or any other expenses have to be paid to those external companies, which are normally big international entities or at least, firms from outside the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. This fact is very important, as we must not forget that Euskal Telebista is the public television of that Autonomous Community and that it is mainly financed by the Basque Government.
- While producing and broadcasting its own, genuine, entertainment programmes, Euskal Telebista acts as an ‘experimenting lab’, where these products are both developed and tested. Thus, they can eventually become formats that can be licensed outside the Basque Country. This fact is particularly significant, because the capacity of formats to be adapted to different markets helps to overcome the spreading limitations that television entertainment programmes created specifically for the Basque audience have, especially those produced in Basque language. Due to that, the business scope of this Basque television output broadens significantly, beyond cultural and language limitations that finished programmes have and that television formats, instead, lack. This permits both their globalisation and glocalisation and, consequently, expands significantly their commercial possibilities and consequent revenues.

- Those finished programmes act as an adequate showcase, an audio-visual portfolio of those formats. This facilitates commercial relationships and eventual agreements because it is proved that proper show-reels are much more effective than paper-formats for that. These final programmes would, therefore, become essential as pilots to be shown for commercial purposes, which are easy to view and access rapidly, even on line, if requested.
- If these formats are generated within this Basque public television, whether as a result of a totally in-house production, or in association with independent production companies of the Basque Autonomous Community, it is guaranteed that the public money employed in those processes reverts to Basque society, to its professionals and companies. Actually, we can affirm that in this way Euskal Telebista contributes to the fostering of creativity, benefits the audio-visual sector of the Basque Country, and, ultimately, promotes the development of the Basque smart creative industries, objectives that, in the end, are among the main missions of this Basque public entity and that are core to assessing its contribution to Basque society and its value as a public service.

We have so far analysed the contribution of entertainment programmes to Euskal Telebista, but in these further lines, I would like to take another step, so as to reflect on the importance of this public television company, and the entertainment genre in particular, in the complicated present television global scenario, and to comment on ETB's role as a public entity that offers a public service in this particular environment.

2.6.2.3. New technologies, new agents.

The traditional television business has changed noticeably these last years and new agents, such as telecommunication companies and other technology driven firms have entered the television, audio-visual content arena. Hence, the emergence of the Internet Protocol (IP) has changed the way video content is distributed across the globe, which, alongside other digital innovations have radically transformed the TV industry. Actually, great advances in digital compression permit high-quality audio-visual material to be distributed over the internet and the proliferation of portable devices with bigger and better screens enables users to view the most varied content adequately anywhere.

Television sets are also getting more sophisticated, the development of new digital technologies not only entails a higher image quality and resolution on the screen, but Smart TV sets also permit the reception of images from different resources and distribution ways, including those disseminated on streaming modes. Furthermore, different devices also facilitate watching online content on a HD standard digital television set, a service which has also started being offered by some premium television brands, as is the case, for example, of Movistar, Orange and Euskaltel in Spain. In addition, hybrid broadcast and broadband distribution and reception technologies have been developed, which enable the delivery and receiving of digital content from both sources, traditional broadcast TV and the internet, at the same time.

These developments have paved the way for the irruption and great success of new companies that operate online, which has modified this audio-visual/television ecosystem considerably. Among them, it is most noticeable the high presence and great activity of the companies known as 'FAANG' (and acronym for Facebook, Amazon,

Apple, Netflix and Google), which are perceived as a threat for traditional television companies and content suppliers.

In fact, although these fairly new brands started their business models within the audio-visual, television ground essentially as entertainment content curators and distributors, their activities are gradually including television content production of varied type. Furthermore, despite the fact that most of them initially only offered fiction content and that their business model was centred in the acquisition and online distribution of television series, they are now involved both in the production of those television fictional series as well as of other fiction, entertainment content, that has started even competing with traditional film, big screen, productions.

Moreover, beyond their initial offer, mostly American produced, these brands now include in their portfolio worldwide content. In addition, and in relation with this work, it can be observed that most of these companies have started showing interest in non-fiction, television unscripted programmes, too. And, finally, it is also significant that they are also seeking local content. Actually, some of these firms have even announced that they will shortly start producing locally, as is the case of Amazon and Netflix, which alongside HBO, for example, are setting up production studios in some European countries, Spain among them.

There is another aspect I would also like to focus on, as we can observe that traditional television companies are reacting in different ways to the transformation that the new ways of producing, distributing and consuming television content entails, the big changes that this activity is undergoing and the disruption that the entrance of the new agents and their business models has created.

2.6.2.4. Business strategies.

Among the strategies that can be recently observed on the side of television companies in order to face these new challenges, I would highlight the two following schemes that are being developed, as they also influence the activity of Euskal Telebista.

On the one hand, alliances between different companies are taking place, so as to reinforce their products' presence in the international, global, online arena. In this respect, it is indeed significant that those associations are happening between companies of different type, and that even both public and private entities are gathering together with this purpose. This is also the case of the recently launched online channel in Spain, namely LOVEStv, formed by the Spanish Public Television, RTVE and the commercial companies Mediaset and Atresmedia, and that eventually may be opened to new partners, the Autonomous Television Companies of that country among them. Similar behaviour can be observed in other associations that have been set up in other European countries, such as the UK (*BritBox*) and the Nordic nations (*The Nordic 12*). (Azpeitia, 2018b).

A big shift has also happened regarding the role of the different companies within the creative, production and distribution chain. Until recently often different companies would run the various processes involved in the television entertainment business, but it can be observed that, at present, the distinctions between agency, producer and distributor have become blurred. In this new scenario it is acknowledged as fundamental to be in charge of the whole value chain, and to control the whole process, from the original idea to its development and production, in different modes and for different platforms and devices, as well as its distribution for the multiple

windows, worldwide. Therefore it is essential to own the entire intellectual property, IP, rights but also to control the talent management, the whole cast, either that on or behind the screen (presenters, actors and actresses, producers, directors, scriptwriters, showrunners, etc.). Furthermore, it is also necessary to be in charge of the whole of the development process, including its production and, of course, its distribution in all the existing different modes and windows, and in a global scope.

All this, as well as other characteristics of the current TV business already mentioned, can be deduced from the information taken from the conferences offered by very prominent professionals and executives of the television business worldwide, during the MipFormats, MipTV and MipCom markets, in Cannes, France, in April and October 2018 respectively, which I attended. I have also reflected previously in this regard, focusing mainly on Euskal Telebista's perspective, in some professional reports written for this company at that time (cf. Azpeitia, 2018a; Azpeitia 2018b).

2.6.2.5. Euskal Telebista in the current television entertainment ecosystem.

I would say that, in this context, Euskal Telebista and Basque entertainment programmes take a significant role, both in cultural and economic terms. Hence, we can assert that this entity's activity in this field in particular, is essential to securing a position of Basque television content in the present, complicated, quick changing, global, television scenario. Actually, this presence is fundamental to guarantee that Basque audiences have access to television entertainment content according to their cultural and linguistic needs, but it is also relevant for assuring an adequate position of these products and, consequently, of this brand, in such a complex environment.

This is, obviously, not an easy task but Euskal Telebista's role as a public entity of the Basque Country and its specific features, lead us to think that this is not only a suitable company to take over this duty, but that this job is closely in line with its mission and with its essence as a public service. In this respect, I would like to note the following features of this company that, in addition to those already pointed out throughout this chapter, I understand are central for the fulfilment of its objectives in this particular context.

- In line with the arguments previously posed, it is important to note that Euskal Telebista is both a production and broadcasting company, with its own studios. This enables it to be in charge of the whole process (creative, production and distribution/dissemination) which, as commented, is a strategic factor in the present entertainment television business arena. In addition, it is also significant that Euskal Telebista works in association with Basque independent production companies, which, on their side, contract Basque professionals. Furthermore, ETB is part of the EITB group, which includes radio and internet brands too.
- Euskal Telebista is a public company, and, as such, it has control mechanisms that assure that both its activity and content respond to this entity's principles and values, and that they contribute to fulfilling its objectives and missions. Thus, its Council Board is formed by representatives of the Basque Parliament, as well as of different civil and public institutions. In addition, Euskal Telebista's activity and output are under the scrutiny of several public entities alongside the Basque audience and Basque society in general. Likewise, equally to other organisations dependant on the Basque Government, ETB must also respond to its law of transparency and, therefore, fulfil the requirements in this

regard. Reports about governance and transparency are also produced periodically within the company, and assessed by the organisations appointed for that purpose. (e.g. EITB, 2007b)

- Furthermore, ETB has implemented policies of social responsibility, and as part of this public company's accountability procedures EITB publishes biannual reports that assess this entity's performance in this field, which it has been doing since 2009 (EITB, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 , 2017a). These reports are validated by independent monitoring bodies, and, ultimately, by the international organisation Global Reporting Initiative, whose standards are followed by EITB in this field. Therefore, this procedure entails an additional, external, formal control of this company's activity. In fact, these whitepapers inform about the different schemes and activities developed by this public media entity in various areas in each period assessed, which, among others, include those closely related to the fulfilment of its main mission and, consequently, of Euskal Telebista's programming output.
- Euskal Telebista is a well-known brand in the Basque Country but also outside it. Founded in 1982, it is the pioneer of the Autonomous Television Public Companies of Spain, and it has now been running for 37 years. We can affirm that within the different autonomous public television companies of that country it is considered as a serious, solid, reliable brand. In addition, many well known professionals of different disciplines that started their career in this public television channel work now regularly for the main television companies of Spain, whereas many others combine their work in some of these national channels with their presence in Euskal Telebista.

- Euskal Telebista also contributes to the development of the film industry in the Basque Country, not only because part of its budget is devoted to financing and enhancing independent film productions, but also because most professionals that take part in Basque films have started and developed their career in ETB. That is also the case of most actors, actresses and a great part of the crew of the latest films which have had a successful projection both within the Basque Country and outside its boundaries, films which, in fact, have been produced originally in Basque, such as *Loreak* (selected by the Spanish Film Academy to represent this country in the non-English film category for the 2016 Oscars Awards) and *Handia* (awarded 10 Goya prizes in 2018).
- ETB is known abroad too, not only by those viewers that have access to its programming outside the boundaries of the Basque Country, but also by prestigious companies such as the BBC, as for many years Euskal Telebista has done business with the British Broadcasting Corporation (cf. Donders and Van den Bulck, 2016), acquiring some of its programmes (documentaries and children's programmes, mainly) to be dubbed and broadcast either in Spanish or Basque as part of ETB's programming offer.
- In addition, as extensively commented throughout this work, Euskal Telebista is a proximity television company, close and recognizable to Basque people, and distinct for the Basque audience and Basque society. This fact is particularly important in this new landscape, where among so many different agents and such an enormous content of such varied provenance the need to count on

brands that are felt as close and can be trusted becomes relevant for people and communities.

Consequently, we can affirm that the role that Euskal Telebista plays, and that can play in the future, is very significant for Basque society, and even most relevant in the current television/audio-visual scenario. Moreover, we can assert that due to the importance of television entertainment at present, on a global scale, the presence of Basque television entertainment programmes is essential for the fulfilment of this company's missions as the Basque public television entity. Furthermore, we would say, it is also fundamental for providing a public service to the society it represents and works for.

Although in this work, and more precisely in the case of that show of Euskal Telebista studied in its second part, we have focused on those entertainment programmes that are classified as non-scripted, if we analyse the information and the main arguments presented throughout this thorough text, we can undoubtedly affirm that most reflections are valid for fiction programmes too. Therefore, we can say that the arguments posed are also adequate to assess the contribution of the entertainment genre, in its broad sense, to this public television.

In addition, we cannot leave aside that, besides that entertainment content that Euskal Telebista produces, this television channel also broadcasts entertainment events of different kinds. This can be done in various forms, and they can be integrated in this television channel's programming schedule as independent assets or embedded in specific programmes in different ways. Furthermore, they can be pre-recorded or broadcast live. Therefore, many entertainment outputs, created and produced by varied

people of Basque society, are disseminated by Euskal Telebista in different modes. This is a task that must also be valued when assessing the contribution of this public television and of its entertainment programming to Basque society, within the parameters we have explained throughout this work.

Finally, we can add that the final conclusions about these issues can be equally applied to other public television companies, and most prominently to those channels that respond to the needs of small communities with their own cultural identity and their own language.

2.6.2.6. Public television's mission in the present landscape.

I would, therefore, like to end this part by highlighting the importance of public television and their programming, of those companies that serve a particular community and that, therefore, have other aims beyond commercial and economic profits. For that, in line with the information posed so far, I will paraphrase the words of Tony Hall, Director General of the British Broadcasting Corporation, who, in the latest annual report of that public company mentions the importance of reflecting the UK, its culture and its value in its programming and, referring to the current times and the particular features of the television ecosystem, he affirms that 'Never has the BBC been more vital as the cornerstone of the UK's creative and cultural strength', and adds that 'Home-grown shows that reflect the whole of the nation, and resonate directly with the British audiences have never been more important' (Hall, 2018, p. 14).

Moreover, I would like to add to these affirmations some words of prestigious British media columnist and journalist Jonathan Freedland, taken from the paragraph I have quoted previously in this work. I think that his following statement perfectly

summarises a perspective that I, indeed share, even more after the research work conducted during these years, the results of which I have reflected in this PhD dissertation work. Thus, Freedland, when referring to the main missions of the BBC, comments that: ‘Lord Reith wanted the BBC to inform, educate and entertain –but he surely understood that you earn the chance to do the first two only if you also do the third’ (Freedland, 2015, *The Guardian*, December 18).

I want to highlight these final words, as they reflect the importance of the objectives of informing and forming for a public company such as the BBC, but also indicate the relevance of the entertainment genre in achieving them. I couldn’t agree more with this affirmation, a reflection that, I think, can equally be applied to other public television companies, and certainly to the Basque Public Television, Euskal Telebista, according to the information and explanations posed throughout this work. Moreover, I would add that the entertainment function is not only an adequate vehicle to attain the informative and educational objectives, as the importance of entertaining people, the positive effects of entertainment, should not only not be dismissed, but properly assessed and valued instead.

These arguments are particularly relevant in the case of regional public television, and more precisely, in respect to the Autonomous Public Television Companies in Spain. In this regard, it can be noticed that although the entertainment function of these public broadcasters is included among their objectives, it is their informative mission which is often mostly highlighted (i.e. Europa Press. *Noticias de Gipuzkoa*, 2019, January 3; Kintana, 2019, *GARA*, March 30). Moreover, we can observe that arguments in favour of focusing only on informative programmes, dropping completely the entertainment output, arise from time to time too (cf. *Berria*, 2015, September 13; cf. Azpeitia, 2016).

In opposition to these perspectives, I would like to bring to the fore the importance of the entertainment genre for public television and, especially for those local, regional companies that offer a public service to those communities with their own cultural requirements and, even more, to those that have their own distinct language.

2.6.2.7. Proximity, regional, public television in the actual context.

In addition to what I have just commented, I would also remark that the function of those public regional channels is even more relevant in the current context, both social and political, as well as regarding the present, complex and shifting television/audio-visual scenario. Some of the latest strategies and business plans developed by public broadcasters in the United Kingdom so as to reinforce the role and the prominence of their channels in the nations and the regions of that Country are in line with these reflections.

In fact, the announcement, in February 2017, of extra investments of several million of pounds in the BBC television brands of Northern Ireland (£11m), Wales (£8,5m) and Scotland (£20m) by the authorities of the British Broadcast Corporation responded to the intentions of better meeting the needs and demands of these communities, to reflect them better on screen, to benefit local audiences, and to boost television content and services made in and for those regions (bbc.com/news, 2017, February 22; Franks, *C21Media*, 2017, February 22; BBC, Media Center, 2017, April 5; bbc.com/news, 2018, May 15).

In the same media release the director-general of the BBC also informed of £1.2m for Gaelic channel BBC Alba. However, the additional economic injection to

BBC Scotland so as to set up a new television channel also announced then, and which has already been launched, in February 2019, is surely among the main decisions taken by this British public entity in this regard. Director-general, Tony Hall, described it as the biggest single investment in broadcast content in Scotland for more than 20 years. In his statement, Lord Hall remarked his belief that Scotland is best reflected in a channel where its own creative and entertainment content, alongside the news, are present. He also stated that these extra investments would be ‘a huge boost for BBC Scotland and for the creative industries in Scotland’ (bbc.com/news, 2017, February 22). In the same line, in further information released about this matter, Regulator Ofcom said its aim was to see Scottish audiences well served, both by the BBC and the broadcasting sector as a whole (bbc.com/news, 2018, May 15).

These schemes reflect the commitment of the British Broadcasting Corporation to the requirements of those communities, to satisfying the needs and demands of the television audience in those territories and to promoting local content and its production.

In this regard, it is also most significant that a year after these statements by BBC’s chief representatives, British public service broadcaster Channel 4 announced that it would increase its commissioning spend in the UK regions by more than 250 million pounds. In March 2018 this company’s CEO unveiled their plans to open three permanent hubs in cities around the UK as well as to move their national headquarters outside London. We can assert that these projects are surely part of a strategy to be closer to the nations and regions of the United Kingdom, to represent these communities better and to foster the audio-visual industry in those areas. Alex Mahon, C4’s chief executive’s words, pronounced when she informed about this ambitious plans, reflect their intention in this regard:

Programme commissioning editors overseeing significant budget and with responsibility for some of Channel 4's biggest shows will be based across the three new creative hubs –alongside a variety of other creative and business functions. (...) As a public service broadcaster with diversity in its DNA, Channel 4 has a unique ability to reflect our society. This is a significant and exciting moment of change for Channel 4 as we evolve to ensure we are best suited to serve all of the UK. With this new strategy we will go even further to make sure that people right across the UK are represented on screen and in the make-up of our own organisation –and it will also build on what we already do to support creative business, jobs and economies in the nations and the regions. (Mahon, in Whittingham, *C21Media*, 2018, March 8)

As commented by Mahon, this scheme was regarded as particularly important for the development of the creative industries in the nations and the regions because, after all, this channel has a public service remit to commission from the UK indie community. In fact, PACT, the association of independent production companies, welcomed Channel 4 plans and noted that:

Our members overwhelmingly see commissioning spend to be the most important way to achieve regional economic growth, build creative clusters and help serve audiences. The certainty of business is what allows companies to invest in talent, grow businesses and attract the talent needed to make programmes. (Whittingham, *C21Media*, 2018, March 8)

These plans presented last year have gone ahead, and the locations of the new general headquarters as well as of the two extra creative hubs have already been confirmed (Leeds, Bristol and Glasgow respectively). Among the strategic decisions made within this public company is also the appointment of a managing director for the nations and regions. These plans show this brand's commitment to the audiences of these territories and to the development of the audio-visual and creative sectors in these areas; factors that are regarded as key for responding better to their responsibility as a British public service company.

We can state that this rearrangement, which is described as the biggest structural change in this organisation's history, reflect the significance of proximity to public television as public service. Actually, we could say that had this fact not been identified as essential by the executives of this British public broadcaster, this restructuring would hardly have taken place, due to the enormous effort that implies.

Channel 4 is poised to embark on the biggest shake-up in its 36-year history, as it prepares to relocate up to one-third of staff outside the capital. In September, the broadcast will begin moving people into its new national headquarters in Leeds and creative hubs in Bristol and Glasgow, which were selected after a seven-month bidding process last year. (...) The yet-to-be appointed nations and regions managing director will play a crucial role as he or she oversees developments at the out-of-London hubs. (Goodfellow, 2019, January 9)

In fact, the implementation of such ambitious plans among public television companies in the United Kingdom in recent years has not happened by chance. It can be affirmed that those strategies are closely related to the particular political and social situation of Great Britain, which has entailed politicians, authorities and social leaders taking steps in order to get nearer to the people of the different regions and nations of that country, to better understand and respond to their reality and particular situations. The development of local television is certainly part of this plan, for which we can state that proximity has been regarded as a key factor not only as far as the presence of that type of content in television schedules is concerned but also in terms of its creation, production and distribution.

2.6.3. Conclusion.

According to all the information and arguments presented in this chapter we can affirm that television entertainment programmes benefit Euskal Telebista in many ways, and that they definitely contribute to the fulfilment of the main missions of this Basque public entity. Although we have focused mainly on those objectives related to the promotion of Basque culture and Basque language, we have seen that these types of programmes also have positive effects on other fields too, such as the development of the smart creative industries. In addition to these three main areas, several other relevant aspects have been identified in this regard, which have been listed and explained throughout this chapter.

Therefore, we can state that the presence of Basque television entertainment programmes is fundamental in Euskal Telebista so as to attain its objectives and to offer an adequate public service to Basque society, which is, ultimately, the essence of this public television company's identity. This having been said, we must add that the existence of Euskal Telebista is also central for the production and dissemination of Basque television entertainment, a type of content that is most demanded in the current television ecosystem and whose significance in society at present, due to both cultural and economic reasons, should not be undervalued.

Therefore, we could say that it is certainly a symbiotic relationship because, on the one hand, television entertainment content contributes to the fulfilment of the main missions that Euskal Telebista as a Basque public entity has, but, on the other hand, the job that Euskal Telebista develops in this field can also be considered as public service, among other reasons because it gives Basque people access to entertainment content in Basque. This task is even more complicated, and at the same time most relevant, due to

the specific features of present societies and because of the current complex audio-visual/television scenario.

I would also add that both Euskal Telebista and Basque society nurture each other in this respect. Thus, the public, Basque people, participate in this television channel's programming in different manners, a varied participation which responds to the several uses, gratifications and demands which are part of the relationship established between this public entity and the community it serves. When doing so, they contribute to the achievement of this public television's goals. Euskal Telebista, for its part, when creating, producing and delivering Basque television content, benefits Basque society in many and various ways too, as already described in detail in this PhD dissertation.

Euskal Telebista's role is particularly important in this regard because, although we have already noted that it is the public television company of The Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, both its reference framework and its area of reach comprise the whole of the Basque country, i.e. the seven provinces which are in fact the land of the Basques, which, regardless of geopolitical delimitations, share common elements of cultural identity, among them, the language that identifies them as such, Basque, Euskara.

In fact, we can indeed affirm that Euskal Telebista is THE Basque public television, as it is currently the only media company of these characteristics, that is to say, the unique television brand that responds to its essence as a public broadcasting entity that can fulfil the specific needs and demands of Basque people regarding television, and which includes among its main missions the promotion and dissemination of Basque culture and Basque language. We have referred in detail

throughout this text to this matter, and to the role of Basque entertainment content in this respect.

Therefore, in this context, and considering the special features of Basque culture, Basque language, Basque society and Basque television, I would affirm that the creation, production and distribution of television entertainment content is not only a significant task, but that it can also be regarded as a relevant public service as such.

Consequently, we can affirm that Basque television entertainment programmes are not only important, but essential, for the fulfilment of the missions of Euskal Telebista as the Basque Public Television Company of the Basque Country, and for the provision of a public service to Basque society.

Finally, we can also state that most conclusions regarding the contribution of entertainment programmes and entertainment content to this specific public television company presented here can be easily extrapolated to other public television stations of similar characteristics, but also to public television in general. In fact, regardless of the specific particularities of each one, they all share a common ground in respect to their essence as public companies that offer a public service through television. Therefore, we can say that they all respond to the main principles, missions and values of public television and that they are all attached to the communities they work for, communities that, no matter their size, have their own cultural characteristics and at the same time are part of this global world.

PART III

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

3. FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH.

3.1. Final conclusions.

I started this research work posing two opposing premises, initially based on two personal perceptions. On the one hand the bad reputation of television entertainment, the widespread negative perception of it by many people and within different sectors of society, a negative feeling which is even more profound in respect to public television, the idea that this genre is often not only dismissed but also considered as an obstacle, a threat for the fulfilment of the main mission of those public entities.

On the other hand, a more positive perspective of television, the impression, originally based on my professional experience, that television entertainment can have a positive impact in society in different areas. The idea that it does not interfere in the public service objectives of public companies but that, on the contrary, this genre can definitely contribute to the attainment of their missions as public entities and, consequently, benefit society in many ways.

Taking those two premises as a starting point I have conducted a thorough piece of research, with a holistic approach, the results of which have been presented in this extensive text. Having concluded it, and according to the information, reflections and arguments posed throughout this PhD dissertation, I can finally present the following statements that summarise the main ideas and conclusions taken from it:

1. - Negative feelings towards, and criticism of television have existed since its advent, ongoing until current times, and this happens within different sectors of society. A great deal of evidence in this regard can be found throughout this text. We have identified the following recurrent and relevant aspects related to this negativity and bad reputation of

television and television entertainment in particular, aspects which are ultimately interrelated:

1.1. - Fears and worries, about the negative effects of television, and mainly over its negative influence on people's behaviour and attitudes. This approach corresponds to the early critical studies carried out within the discipline of sociology, within *the effects theory*, but also to the main analyses conducted within the study of effects, a field that is most prolific regarding the analysis of mass media and of television as part of it.

1.2. - The concept of passive audience, a perception of television audiences as a passive mass of people, highly and negatively influenced by what is considered an all-powerful medium.

1.3. - The relationship often established between television entertainment and popular, low culture. From this perspective, both television programmes and their viewing are considered as expressions and habits of popular culture. Popular culture is understood as 'low culture', in opposition to 'high culture' and its expressions, such as those considered as arts, among which television is not included. Consequently, a dichotomy between highbrow and lowbrow culture is established from the beginning regarding television, which, as further argued by television studies academics, implies an assessment of cultural expressions and products based on hierarchies of taste.

2. - Criticism and negative feelings and comments of television, based on these three perceptions just noted, can be observed, even at present, in various fields and sectors of society including academia and media critics, but also amongst professionals of varied fields, and even among those practitioners of areas related to this activity. The study of television has also been dismissed for many years as an academic field, for not being

considered sufficiently relevant to be taken as such. The study of entertainment within academia has not been considered significant until recently, either.

3. - These negative perspectives were omnipresent for many years, mainly with respect to academia, as most research regarding television was carried out within the sociology field and mainly by that scholarship that focused on the study of the effects of mass media.

4. - Since those early studies about television, and the negative approach to it by sociology critics, important changes have taken place in the academic field, which have posed new and more positive perspectives of television. We have identified the following:

4.1. - The development of cultural studies, starting in Great Britain around the 60s - 70s and with great development in the 80s and onwards. Within this scholarship, television is evaluated as an aspect of contemporary culture, and the following aspects are highlighted: the importance of culture and cultural influence in television and its viewing; the social and cultural value of television; the relevance of television programmes as cultural products; the different levels of reading, of decoding, television texts; the importance of television in the ideas and emotions, in the 'structure of feeling', of society and in the production of meaning. It is argued that watching television influences viewers in different ways, beyond those initial wholly negative effects considered hitherto. Benefits and positive contributions of television on society are accepted, and less influence of television acknowledged which, from this approach, is not considered all-powerful.

4.2. - Popular culture studies is recognised as a field of research within academia and popular culture is valued, overcoming elitist concepts and assessments about culture, and popular culture in particular. Television is studied as part of popular culture, and it is appreciated as such. The significance of popular television in society is acknowledged. Although in general terms popular culture is understood as ‘made by the people and for the people’, as far as television is concerned, concepts of representation of the people on screen are also associated to the popular in recent years. An additional meaning is also considered, as popular programmes are defined as those that viewers like and watch most. Therefore, the concept of ‘popular’ in current television is closely related to both the representation of the people on the screen and audience figures. These meanings present new parameters to assess the value of television as expressions and products of popular culture, as cultural products which are appealing, attractive, for audiences, and that represent ‘the people’.

4.3. - Active audiences: In addition to initial passive audience approaches, theories that focus on active audience have gradually gained importance. The concept of active audience becomes very significant for the analysis of television from a positive perspective. According to active audience theories, television viewers are regarded as active in the different parts of the process of watching television: previous to; during; and after the actual viewing, and in different modes. Although different levels of activity are acknowledged, audiences are considered active when choosing, decoding, commenting on and reacting to the programmes they watch. Concepts of hegemony and

resistance, fans and fandom phenomena and the capacity of creating communities are also regarded as reflections of audience activity and as positive effects of television.

4.4. - Reception studies: Gradually, a big shift in the study of audiences takes place, and a new discipline, reception studies gains relevance. Based on the concept of active audience, from this perspective the focus is placed not only on the influence of television on viewers, because the relationship that audiences have with television, how they use it and what for, are also analysed and highlighted. The influence between television and audiences is studied in both directions.

4.5. - The *uses and gratifications theory*: This theory is most significant within reception studies and it is certainly fundamental for the study of television from a positive perspective. Starting to be developed in the 70s, it is also based on a concept of active audience. This scholarship argues that television watching responds to specific needs that people seek and to the gratifications they obtain from it. We can observe that television entertainment fulfils most of people's needs and motivations listed by these theorists in this respect, and that it responds to most of the gratifications audiences obtain from watching television outlined by them.

Current studies on the industrial, professional field, about the reasons to watch television still mention some of those motivations initially pointed out by the *uses and gratification theory*, and, among them, those related to entertainment in different ways are highlighted among the principal reasons for watching television by most of the audience.

Consequently, the *Theory of Uses and Gratifications* can be considered as fundamental for the study of television from a positive perspective. This research model is used for the analysis of television within different academic disciplines: in audience and reception studies, when studying television entertainment within the psychology field and, finally, as part of the latest studies of effects, which consider entertainment as an effect of television itself.

4.6. - Psychology: Entertainment is also studied within the academic branch of psychology, and the psychology of entertainment is analysed. The relationship between television and emotions is highlighted, and entertainment is presented as a positive emotion. Entertainment is understood as a positive effect. The positive psychological and even physical effects of watching television entertainment are noted, due to the positive meta-emotion that viewing television entertainment generates. The role of television entertainment in fulfilling people's affective and emotional needs, as described within the *uses and gratifications* theory, is also underscored when analysing television entertainment from this perspective.

4.7. - The study of effects: Since the initial critical studies of television effects conducted within sociology, new approaches are now considered within the study of effects. TV entertainment has also recently been studied within this discipline, according to which entertainment is considered as a media effect as such. Concepts of audience activity, and very significantly the *uses and gratifications* theory, are applied when studying television entertainment from this perspective and for researching on the positive effects of this medium. In addition, other effects of television are also studied

from a positive point of view within this discipline. Among them, its impact in the industry and in economics are also analysed, and highlighted, when focusing on the influence of television and of television entertainment in particular.

4.8. - TV studies: The discipline of TV studies, which includes various areas of research, is gaining importance and interest on the academic side. Different areas and topics within the broad field of 'Television' have been studied from different perspectives in recent years, which can be classified in the following main areas of research: the analysis of television programmes as texts; the study of the television industry; research on television from a cultural perspective as well as the study of audiences within sociology and, finally, television history.

The development of television studies has broadened considerably the areas and topics of study, and allowed the analysis of television, and television entertainment in particular, from a positive perspective too. In this respect, although the impact of television entertainment in the industry and its contribution in the economic field have been generally acknowledged, both in academic research as well as in professional surveys and reports, positive effects and contributions of television entertainment in other areas are not so readily accepted, especially with regard to public television.

5. - Within this framework and among the broad range of topics for study, I have centred the last part of this research on approaching television entertainment and public television from a positive perspective. When doing so, I have focused on a specific entertainment programme to analyse its contribution to the regional public television

where it was produced and broadcast. A holistic approach has been taken, which includes the main areas of analysis identified within TV studies.

It is the case of an entertainment programme that we have labelled as a ‘night-show magazine’/ ‘night magazine-show’. The specific features of this show make it adequate for this analysis and permit the extrapolation of the conclusions drawn beyond its initial working framework and scope. Thus, the main findings can also be applied to entertainment programmes of different types and to television entertainment as such, in general, at Euskal Telebista, the Basque television public company. Moreover, we can say that most of the main conclusions are equally valid for other similar companies and, to a great extent, with regard to television entertainment and public television, in a broad sense, too. I will highlight the following aspects in this respect:

5.1. - Beyond the specific objectives of this entertainment programme within the company from content, audience and production perspectives, which were satisfactory achieved, we can observe that this night magazine show certainly contributed to the fulfilment of the main missions of Euskal Telebista regarding the promotion and dissemination of Basque language and Basque culture, in multiple and varied ways. Additional contributions to the Basque public television and to Basque society have also been identified.

5.2. - The analysis of this programme has shown that television entertainment programmes can be an excellent vehicle for the attainment of the mission and the goals of Euskal Telebista, in addition to, and far beyond, their initial and obvious entertainment purposes.

5.3. - In this particular case, among other aspects, the following factors are considered as key for those achievements: the high presence of such varied elements

and expressions of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity; its features as a popular programme -regarding the three main meanings of popular in television- ; the combination of global, local and glocal aspects; its attachment to current issues; its live airing and perception of authenticity; the mixture of such varied output of television entertainment genres and subgenres; the presence of humour and, definitely, its essence as a Basque and close television entertainment programme.

6. - The analysis conducted enables us to affirm that entertainment programmes are fundamental for Euskal Telebista, and that in line with, and in addition to, its mission and objectives as the Basque Public Television Company, entertainment content can benefit Basque society in various aspects and fields. Among them, we can outline the following topics and areas in which it can have a positive effect: Basque culture, Basque cultural identity and Basque language; cultural proximity, construction and production of meaning and social cohesion; creation and production of cultural products as well as the development of the Basque creative, audio-visual sector. This having been said, in this respect, we can conclude that:

6.1. - Television entertainment programmes, as long as elements of Basque culture and Basque cultural identity are adequately integrated, can be excellent vehicles for the promotion, development and dissemination of Basque culture and Basque language.

6.2. - The creation, production and dissemination of Basque television entertainment programmes by Euskal Telebista whether totally in-house or in association with the Basque audio-visual sector, is fundamental for the total fulfilment

of its goal and missions as The Basque Public Television Company, and to respond to its public service essence.

6.3. - All type of genres, subgenres and formats can be valid and useful for this task. It is their content and the way it is presented which makes the difference, so as to be appealing to Basque audiences, to preserve and disseminate the principles and values of this public television, to fulfil its main missions and objectives as well as, last but not least, to be entertaining at the same time.

6.4. - We can affirm that television entertainment programmes respond to the attainment of the entertainment mission of this public company, to the demand for entertainment content by Basque audience, to most of the needs and gratifications which television viewers seek and obtain from watching television and we can also assert that, when doing so, they help to accomplish the additional main objectives and missions of this public broadcaster too.

6.5. - The role of Basque television entertainment programmes is especially relevant in the current television ecosystem. In this context the high presence of genuine, local, Basque television entertainment content appears as fundamental not only for the visibility of the brand among such a tremendous offer of television output easily accessible, but also for the fulfilment of its public service role, its service to society, as the Basque Public Television Company of the Basque Country. It could even be said that their presence is closely linked to both Basque television and Basque public television's endurance in a long term and may be that, to a great extent, to its survival too.

6.6. - I would, therefore, affirm that, due to the features of both Euskal Telebista as well as of the current television landscape, Basque television entertainment content is

not only relevant, but crucial, for this Basque Public Television and for the adequate and complete achievement of its mission as such. Equally, we can assert that Euskal Telebista's activity is also essential for the creation, production and dissemination of television entertainment content, and that this task is fundamental for the fulfilment of the needs and demands of Basque society both with regard to television consumption, which is a very widespread activity among its members, as well as for the important industrial and economic sector associated to this medium. The essence of Euskal Telebista as a public company, that responds to public policies, which holds strong mechanisms of public control and is mainly publicly financed, is fundamental for this task. Its nature is certainly crucial in this binomial, this symbiotic relationship between television entertainment and the Basque Public Television, from which both benefit, as ultimately does the Basque society too.

7. - We can assert that these arguments just posed can be extrapolated to other public broadcasters too, and, therefore, can also be appropriate in assessing the contribution of television entertainment as a means to fulfilling their missions as public television entities.

In fact, equal to most public audio-visual service companies of this type, Euskal Telebista's public service essence is associated to its role as a close medium that can be trusted, that responds to the needs and characteristics of a certain cultural identity, of its cultural and linguistic requirements; a company whose output represents and reflects that people, and which is their voice both within the community and even outside its geographical boundaries. In addition, its economic impact in that society and its role in promoting the creative and cultural industries, in fostering local production in

opposition to imported audio-visual products, and, finally in nurturing creativity and generating employment are also taken into account when assessing its value. I have presented a great deal of arguments that show the contributions of entertainment content in this regard.

Although, according to the features of Euskal Telebista, we may initially think that these arguments can only be applied to proximity, regional television, I would affirm that these conclusions are equally valid for most public television channels, regardless of their size and scope of reach. In fact, ultimately, all of them share similar missions: to offer a public service within the television activity to a certain community with their specific cultural characteristics and with their own language, too, be it hegemonic, non-hegemonic or a minority one.

8. - Final statement:

Television entertainment has been, and still is to a great extent, associated with concepts such as banality, frivolity and triviality. Its negative effects are still generally remarked over its potential benefits. As far as public television is concerned, this type of content is often dismissed in comparison to their informative output, which is still generally considered as more suitable and 'noble' for them, due to the public service essence of PBS/PMS (Public Broadcasting Service/Public Media Service) companies. Thus, the presence of entertainment programmes in these public broadcasters' schedules is often seen as a threat to the fulfilment of their main missions, and especially to the informative function, which is commonly considered the most fundamental task, the primary activity, of public media companies.

Without denying the importance of all sort of informative programmes, and even more in this time in which fake news has proliferated so much, I would affirm that the significance of entertainment content should be valued adequately, not only as a means to fulfilling the entertainment mission of public television companies, which should also be given the consideration its deserve, but also as excellent vehicles for achieving the additional objectives of these public entities, including the informative one.

It is certainly a matter of balance between those two macro-genres in the programming portfolio but it is also a question closely related to a concept of television entertainment content that is created, produced and disseminated in a way in which is adequately adapted to, and integrated in, the present television/audio-visual ecosystem and that, at the same time, and precisely due to that, can contribute to enriching the output of these public entities. In that way they thoroughly respond to their entertainment function but, beyond that, they also fully contribute to the achievement of the additional objectives and missions of public service television, audio-visual media.

It can be affirmed that, in this context, television entertainment not only is not an obstacle for the adequate development of public television and its public service function, but is an essential element in achieving it. Both the enormous cultural and economic influence of television entertainment cannot be denied and in this particular environment the role that public television plays in this regard should be acknowledged and appropriately valued.

We can certainly state that the power of television at present is greater than ever, due to the enormous and varied audio-visual content which is delivered in so many different ways and to the multiple windows where it can be watched. Its ubiquity means it offers viewers almost unlimited choice of what, when, where and how to watch.

Public support is fundamental in this context, and even more in the case of those small proximity television companies which offer a service to their communities that no other network fulfils. That help and assistance, which could take place in different manners, should indeed be provided by those public entities related to the various fields involved in this activity, television being as it is part of the creative, culture and industry sectors. Equally, new ways to monetize content, to facilitate its delivery and distribution, either as finished products or as programmes formats, and to generate extra income should also be explored, for which initial public involvement seems also fundamental.

In addition, the support of the public, the participation of society, is also crucial. The creation, production and distribution of television content which promotes and achieves the participation of ‘the people’ in different ways, whether taking part in the programmes, directly, in different manners, or watching and commenting on the content offered, is necessary so as to obtain a response and, eventually, a certain engagement from the public each particular pubcaster addresses. For that, it is essential that the programming is appealing to them, at the same time as it stays true to the missions and principles that each public broadcasting company responds to. Entertaining - regarding its various meanings-, gaining the attention of the audience, in this particular context, is not an easy task for public television and it is even more difficult for those types of proximity television companies we have mainly focused on in this research work. It is certainly more complicated than ever, but also, I would affirm, it is even more necessary than in previous times, too.

I also regard as fundamental conducting adequate research, both in the academic field and in the industry, as well as the collaboration of both areas and the combination of different disciplines (again both academic and professional) for this purpose. I have also found very useful the mixture of both global approaches and local analyses, of the

global and the local, of glocalisation indeed, in terms of the study of television in its various areas. I must note that, regarding research, I also understand the term glocalisation in both directions, as it can be observed that global knowledge certainly helps in the analysis of local cases but, equally, that international expertise is also nurtured by the study of specific close realities, which, in many aspects, even share similar parameters and conclusions, regardless of their provenance. Therefore, I understand that the particular television programme and television company analysed in the second part of this PhD dissertation, and the derived conclusions, could also be valid to contribute to the study of this topic when approaching it from a global perspective.

Actually, we have already observed that many of the reflections posited in this text as a result of the professional research work conducted during the production time of the programme analysed – *Sorginen Laratza* –, as well as due to the analysis conducted specifically for this PhD dissertation, do in fact coincide with many of the statements pointed out by international academics in different areas of television studies which were published at the time this programme was on air and even after it was finished, as can be observed in many quotes gathered in this text.

Finally, I would affirm that if we conduct adequate research, both academic and professional, which allows us to be aware of the effects of television and television entertainment in particular, both positive and negative, and we identify in each specific case those elements and strategies that can be useful in utilising television and television content in a positive manner so as to benefit society, we will surely achieve what is indeed the final goal of this my PhD research work. I am referring to my objective to go beyond the negativity on television entertainment, to find about positive perspectives when approaching the analysis of this media and this genre in particular, to identify the ways in which television entertainment can help public television to achieve its main

goals and, finally, to apply them in the creation, production and distribution of television entertainment content within each particular company of this type, so as to benefit the society it works for and, due to the essence of public broadcasting, it, indeed, finally serves.

3.2. Further research.

In the first part of this PhD dissertation I have established a theoretical framework that has been applied to a particular case in the second unit of this work. Nevertheless, a global approach has been taken when developing that first unit, which permits the application of its arguments to a much broader scope. Thus, we can observe that this framework can be appropriate for the analysis of many other cases within the same purpose, i.e. the study of television entertainment from a positive perspective. This is certainly a broad field of research which permits enquiry about almost endless cases of study, and from several perspectives among those presented in the theoretical framework defined.

As said, within that broad research area opened, in the second part I have narrowed it and focused on public television. More precisely, I have analysed a specific television programme. However, as has been argued, the study conducted into this particular case permits the extrapolation of the conclusions drawn from it to a broader extent. Actually, this reasoning may be also pertinent to other entertainment programmes as well as to different public television companies, but also to television entertainment and public television in general.

In addition, we can also observe that within this framework, further research can be carried out. In fact, I have centred this study in two main areas: regarding television I have focused on public television, and among the television entertainment output I have mainly referred to those that we have named as ‘television programmes’, i.e. non-fictional/unscripted television shows. Both areas can, however, be extended so as, for example, to include commercial television companies and fiction entertainment. Thus, I understand that new venues can be opened when taking into account these parameters of analysis. Therefore, when researching on the benefits of television entertainment the following four areas can be included: Public broadcasters; Private, commercial television companies; Fiction television; Non-fictional television entertainment programmes.

These parameters of analysis can be combined in various manners and, if focusing on specific cases, the field of study can be as wide as desired, due to the great amount of existing television companies in the world and the obviously countless number of entertainment programmes of any kind that have been, and are constantly being, produced. In addition, these analyses can also be conducted regarding the different subgenres that can be identified within the broad genre of television entertainment.

Therefore, we can assert that the application of the theoretical framework and the reasoning posed in the first unit of this PhD dissertation, as well as the analysis of the specific case reflected in the second part, permit the undertaking of research in various fields. Furthermore, those arguments can be used for the analysis of countless cases, on a global scale.

Focusing on my immediate reality, and in line with the study conducted in the second unit of this PhD dissertation, I will mention several paths that I foresee as topics of analysis that may be illuminating in helping us to better understand the contribution of television entertainment to Euskal Telebista, the Basque Public Television, and more precisely the benefits of the television entertainment output originally produced in Basque language:

- Speaking in general terms I would refer to the analysis of the specific subgenres within television entertainment, either fictional or non-fictional, including both comedy and drama. This study could be conducted by grouping chosen entertainment programmes in different categories and analysing them from a positive perspective as part of a specific entertainment genre. That would allow us to identify the contributions of each specific entertainment category in this regard.

- Individual analysis of entertainment shows of varied type, so as to identify how each one of them benefit Euskal Telebista and contribute to the fulfilment of its main missions, and additional objectives, can certainly be made. For that, the theoretical framework posed, the example of analysis presented, and the conclusions drawn can be surely useful for these enquiries.

In fact, the night magazine show taken as a case study in this work, *Sorginen Laratza*, could also undergo further analysis so that, taking as a starting point the work already done, detailed dissection, in-depth study, of each one of its multiple different sections can be carried out. That would permit exhaustive analysis of the way in which each one contributed positively to Euskal Telebista and Basque society. It would also allow the identification and careful outlining of the elements that helped achieve that in each case.

Moreover, beyond that, the analysis of other programmes of Euskal Telebista may be interesting for conducting further research on this topic. Referring to different subgenres within entertainment, night shows of the most varied type and different outputs of the factual-entertainment genre are appropriate for analysis in this respect, but also emblematic game shows as *Mihiluze*, as well as the different outputs of comedy, either in the form of sketched comedy, such as *Wazemank*, *DBH* and even *Brinkola*; sitcoms such as *Jaun eta Jabe*, *Martin* or *Bi eta Bat*, or the most recent and very popular humour-factual-entertainment show *Herri Txiki Infernu Haundi*. In fact, the analysis of comedy and humour in its various forms and the ways in which this genre benefits the Basque Public Television and Basque society is, in my opinion, an interesting field of study as such too.

This having been said, the framework posed can indeed also be useful to some extent to analyse what can be considered the most iconic fiction output of Euskal Telebista. I am referring to the soap opera *Goenkale*, which concluded in December 2015 after 21 years on air.

Detailed analysis of Euskal Telebista's programming since its inception, in 1982, would provide a wealth of examples that are appropriate for research, under the premises mentioned, either individually or as part of the different entertainment genres produced and broadcast in all these years. In fact, little academic study about Euskal Telebista's programming and specific programmes has been conducted, and I would say none that approach them from a positive perspective. Therefore, we can affirm that extensive ground is still to be explored in this regard.

This PhD work provides both a theoretical framework and the study of a specific case that can certainly be taken as starting points and references for further research.

Any studies in this respect can also bring about additional historical elements of enquiry about Euskal Telebista and Basque television in general.

Finally I would add that programme analysis that combines both professional and academic research entails an interesting area and mode of enquiry. Studies of this type, such as the one conducted by this scholar and TV professional, and whose results are reflected in the second part of this PhD dissertation, follow new paths of research within the television studies discipline, which permit a holistic and more complete approach to this topic. Moreover, in my opinion, the final objective of this type of analysis should entail the application of the results obtained not only in further academic studies but also in the professional field. Thus, they should be valuable for further projects, which could be put into practice in the creation, production and distribution of new entertainment content.

PART IV

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SUMMARY IN BASQUE - LABURPENA EUSKARAZ

Beyond negativity on television entertainment: positive perspectives and research on its contribution to public television. Additional analysis: the Basque night-show magazine *Sorginen Laratza* at Euskal Telebista.

Telebista-entretanimenduarekiko negatibotasunetik haratago: perspektiba positiboak eta honen ekarpenak telebista publikoari. Gainerako azterketa: euskal gaueko show-magazina, *Sorginen Laratza*, Euskal Telebistan.

Telebista oso kritikatu izan da sortu zenetik. Ikerketa lan ugari garatu izan da, eta oraindik garatzen da, baliabide honen inguruan, ikuspuntu kritiko ezberdinetatik. Telebistari buruzko azterketak eta hedabide honek gizartean duen eragina aztertzen duten lanak ugariak dira alor akademikoan, baina baita alor profesionalean eta gizartearen beste hainbat esparrutan ere. Asko hitz egiten da telebistaz, eta telebista entretenimenduz bereziki, eta argi esan daiteke asko kritikatzeko dela ere, ez bakarrik intelektualen aldetik, beste giza esparru askotan ere bai, sare sozialetan barne, egungo ohiturei jarraituz.

Bestalde, ezin da ukatu telebistako entretenimendu edukien kontsumo ugaria, ez eta saio horiek egungo gizartean duten eragina ere. Gai hau aztertzean, ordea, badirudi ikuspuntu negatiboak gailentzen direla, are gehiago telebista publikoaren kasuan. Enpresa, kate, komertzialen kasuan entretenimendu saioen garrantzia azpimarratu egiten bada ere, telebista publikoari dagokionean genero honek ospe txikia izaten du gehienetan, eta, nahiz eta ikus-entzunezko hedabide publiko gehienek entretenimendua

duten beraien misio eta helburuen artean, askotan bigarren mailako zeregintzat hartzen da, askok informazioa kontsideratzen baitute telebista publikoen xede nagusia.

Horrela, informazio saioak garrantzitsuagoak eta, nolabait, ‘nobleagoak’, maila ‘gorenagokoak’ direla pentsatu eta adierazten dute askok. Entretenimenduaren helburua, eta, horri lotuta, mota honetako telebista saioen balioa, aldiz, gutxietsi egiten da, eta baita mespretxatu ere, telebista publikoen kasuan.

30 urte baino gehiago dihardut telebistaren esparruan lanean, telebista publikoan gainera, eta baieztapen hori nire esperientzia profesionalean oinarritu nezakeen soilik; baina, ikerketa lan honetan azalduko dudan bezala, bada nahikoa arrazoi hori horrela izan dela eta oraindik ere hala dela baieztatzeko.

Halere, nire eguneroko lanean ikusi, egin eta bizitakoa kontuan izanik, eta nire ibilbide profesionala dela medio ekoiztutako hainbat saio eta beste hainbesteren inguruan egindako hausnarketa eta azterketa dela eta, beste pertzepzio bat ere badut, eta izan dut urte askoan. Hau da, entretenimendu saioek duten garrantziaz eta bai telebista publikoari eta bai gizarteari egiten dieten ekarpenaz jabetzeko aukera izan dut.

Bi ikuspuntu kontrajarri horiek dira, hain zuzen, ikerketa lan honen abiapuntu eta ardatz nagusiak. Helburua, izenburuak adierazten duen bezala, telebista entretenimendurekiko negatibotasunetik haratago joatea da, hedabide, komunikazio eta entretenimendu baliabide honekiko hurbilketa positiboak bilatuz, arakatur, aztertuz eta, horrela, azkenik, genero honek telebista publikoari egiten dizkion ekarpenak identifikatu eta horiei balioa emateko.

Doktorego tesi honek bi zati nagusi ezberdin ditu, nahiz eta bien lotura nabaria den. Lehenengo zatian, orain aipaturiko bi gaiak aztertzen dira. Horrela, telebistarekiko kritika negatiboen inguruan ikerketa egitea da lehen partearen helburua, eta, aldi berean,

gaiarekiko hurbilketa positiboagoa ahalbidetzen duten perspektiba, ikuspuntu eta teorien bilaketa, bilketa eta hausnarketa. Planteamendu zabala, globala hartzen da bi gai, bi ikuspuntu kontrajarri horiek aztertzean. Horrela, nazioarteko testuinguruan aztertzen da gaia, eta hainbat alor eta diziplinaren ikuspegitik, gainera.

Ikerketa dokumentala da nagusi tesiaren lehen zati horretan, eta, horretarako, nazioarte mailan argitaratutako liburu eta ikerketa lan ezberdin ugari aztertu ditut, bai “telebista” gai nagusiaren ingurukoak (telebista ikasketak) eta bai honi, eta baita horrekin lotura duten jorratutako beste hainbat gairen ikerketan nabarmendu diren akademiko eta ikertzaile ugari argitaratutako lan ezberdinak ere. Horien artean, aipaturiko bi postura horiekin lotura duten gai eta diziplinekin zerikusia dutenak nabarmendu ditut. Horietaz gain, profesionalen iritzia eta mota ezberdinetako txosten profesionalak izan dira kontuan azterketa honen bilakaeran.

Testuan ikus daitekeen bezala, askotan testualki jaso ditut ikertzaile eta profesional horien hitzak, bereziki inportanteak iruditu baitzaizkit jorratutako gaien inguruan azaldutako argumentuak dokumentatzeko. Gainera, horrekin batera, interesgarria iruditu zait horiek guztiak idazlan/ikerketa lan berean eta modu ordenatuan biltzea, testu horien konpilazioak izan dezakeen balioagatik, orain egindako ikerketa honetarako, noski, baina baita aurrera begira ere, aztertutako gaien inguruan etorkizunean egin daitezkeen ikerketa lanetarako. Izan ere, bertan azaltzen dudan bezala, oso lan gutxi egin da telebista entretenimenduaren alde positiboa eta onurak aztertuz, eta are gutxiago telebista publikoari dagokionez. Zer esanik ez “gertuko telebisten” kasuan, eta, batez ere, horien ikus-entzunezko edukiak hizkuntza minorizatuan ekoiztu eta zabaltzen direnean.

Gainera, nik esango nuke lan honetan aztertutako esparru guztiak ez direla batera azaldu orain arte gai hau aztertu denean, nik eginiko ikerketa lan sakonaren ondoren, behintzat, ez dut horrelakorik aurkitu. Hori izan daiteke, beraz, doktorego tesi honen gainerako ekarpena esparru akademikoan, eta telebistaren inguruko ikerketaren alorrean, hain zuzen ere. Hori dela eta, esan bezala, garrantzi handia eman diot gaia aztertzerakoan arakatutako dokumentu guztien artean eginiko aukeraketa zehatzari, eta inportantea iruditu zait, esan bezala, aditu akademiko eta profesional horien hainbat testu eta hitz bere horretan azaltzea, horien bilduma eskaintzea, etorkizunean egin daitezkeen ikerketetarako baliagarriak izan daitezkeelakoan.

Beraz, gaiarekiko planteamendu globala egin dut tesiaren lehen zatian, besteak beste hurbilketa mota hori ezinbestekoa iruditu zaidalako, kontuan izanik bai ikerketaren esparru bera eta bai egungo telebistaren ezaugarriak. Beraz, nazioarteko testuinguruan aztertu dut gaia.

Hori esan eta gero, nire errealitate hurbila ezagutzeko eta aztertzeko interesak ere bultzatu nau doktorego tesi hau aurrera eramateko, eta ikusmin, jakin-min horri erantzuten dio ikerketa lan honen bigarren parteak. Horrela, lehen zatian aztertutako gaia gertuagotik analizatzen dut tesiaren bigarren partean. Gainera, antzeko esparruan, hizkuntza minorizatuan lan egiten duten gertuko telebista publikoenean, alegia, gai hau - entretenimendu saioen ekarpenak - nekez jorratu dela esan daiteke. Nolanahi ere, Euskal Telebistaren eta euskararen kasuan ez da, behintzat, horrelako ikerketarik garatu orain arte.

Arrazoi horiek direla medio, bigarren zatian ikerketa kasu bat hartu dut: Euskal Telebistan euskaraz ekoiztu eta zabalduko entretenimendu saio baten azterketa eraman

dut aurrera, gaueko ‘show-magazina’ izenpean sailkatu dudana *Sorginen Laratza* saioarena, alegia (1999-2005).

Bigarren zati horretan eginiko ikerketaren azken helburua saio horrek Euskal Telebista, telebista enpresa publikoari, eginiko ekarpenak identifikatzea izan da, eta, beraz, horrela, eta horren ondorioz, baita euskal gizarteari eskainitako onurak azaldu eta arrazoitzea ere. Horretaz gain, ikerketaren ardatz eta bilakaera dela medio, ikus daiteke ateratako hainbat ondorio beste kasu batzuetara estrapolatu daitezkeela, ez bakarrik antzeko enpresa eta telebista eduki zehatzen kasuan, entretenimendu generoaren eta telebista publikoen kasuan, orokorrean, ere bai.

Saio honen analisisia egiterakoan hiru esparru nagusi ikertu ditut: edukia, ekoizpena/gestioa eta audientzia/harrera.

Hainbat arrazoi izan dira saio hori aukeratzeko orduan. Alde batetik, *Sorginen Laratza*-ren ezaugarriak telebista entretenimendu saio gisa, makro-genero honen barnean sailkatu daitezkeen hainbat azpi-genero biltzen eta uztartzen baititu gaueko ‘show-magazine’ horrek. Bestalde, tesi honen izenburuari lotuz, telebista publiko batek ekoiztu eta banatutako saioa izatea erabakigarria izan da, noski. Era berean, garrantzitsua izan da saioak izandako arrakasta bere zabalkunde eremuan, bai ikuslego kopuru eta profilararen aldetik, bai ekoiztutako atal kopuruaren aldetik; bai emisio parrillan izandako kokapenagatik eta baita bertan iraun zuen denbora aldetik ere. Esan daiteke genero honetan ETBn, eta baita euskaraz orokorrean ere, egun arte ekoiztu den telebista saiorik esanguratsuen dela.

Azkenik, esan saioaren ezagutza sakona eta honen ekoizpenari eginiko jarraipen eta azterketa zuzena, ko-sortzaile, zuzendaria eta ekoizle-exekutiboa izanik, faktore gehigarri inportanteak izan direla saioaren aukeraketa eta azterketa egiterakoan.

Tesiaren bigarren zati honetan ikerketaren planteamendua ‘glokala’ dela esan daiteke, hitz honen esanahia bi norabideetan hartuz, gainera: hau da, globaletik lokalera eta lokaletik globalera. Hasiara batean, ikerketa dokumental gisa har daiteke soilik, azken fase honetan dokumentuak aztertu baitituz (ikus-entzunezkoak zein idatziak), baina saioaren ekoizpenaren garaian eginiko ikerketa profesionala ezin da alde batera utzi, orain aztertutako hainbat dokumentu eta azaldutako hainbat ondorio denboraldi horretan eginiko lan eta analisiaren fruitu baitira. Beraz, esan daiteke hainbat ikerketa modu izan direla azkeneko ondorioen oinarri, hala nola dokumentala, esperimental, landa/eremu-ikerketa, eta baita obserbazio eta akzio ikerketak ere. Gainera, ikus daiteke azaldutako hainbat informazio eta hausnarketa bai ikerketa kualitatiboan eta bai kuantitatiboan oinarritu direla.

Horretaz gain, lanaren bigarren zati honetan lehen zatian azaldutako informazioa, hausnarketak eta konklusioak hartu dira kontuan, eta bertan agertutako epistemologia oinarria izan da erabilitako marko teorikoa diseinatu eta definitzeko. Gorpuztutako teoria esparru hori aplikagarria izan daiteke, gainera, hainbat gai jorratu eta nahi beste kasu zehatz aztertzeko ere, bai gune hurbilean eta baita testuinguru globalean ere, nazioarte mailan, alegia.

Horretaz gain, egungo telebista eremuaren ezaugarri bereziak azaldu, aztertu eta kontuan izan dira doktorego tesi lan honen barnean eginiko hausnarketan eta azken ondorioak ateratzerakoan.

Horrela, ikus daiteke, nahiz eta kasu zehatz eta hurbila aztertu den bigarren zati horretan, lehenengo partean azaldutako epistemologia, informazioa eta hausnarketak, gorpuztutako marko teorikoak eta horretan oinarrituta eginiko lanak, ondorioak beste antzeko kasu batzuetara zabaltzea ahalbidetzen dutela. Ondorio horiek antzeko saio eta

telebistetan aplikatu daitezke; horretaz gain, egokiak dira entretenimendu saioak eta generoa bera aztertzeko, eta baita telebista publikoan ezartzeko ere, orokorrean, gaur egongo egoeran gainera.

Azkenik, aipatu nahi dut ikerketa akademikoa eta profesionala uztartu ditudala doktorego tesi honetan, ikertzeko modu horrek bat egiten baitu nire profilarekin, jakinarloekin eta intereseekin. Esparru biak konbinatzen dituzten analisiak eta ikerketak aberatsagoak, osatuagoak direla baieztatu daiteke. Besteak beste, prozedura eta ikerketa modu bien aplikazioari esker agerian jarritako informazioa eta hausnarketak, ateratako ondorioak baliagarriak eta aplikagarriak izan daitezke eremu bietan. Doktorego tesi honek hori ere izan du helburu.

