

# International Channels: A Projection Abroad

Los canales internacionales: una proyección al exterior

Nazioarteko kanalak: kanporako emanaldiak

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## Abstract

The study reveals that Spanish international channels are important links with their local reality for citizens that live abroad . In addition, international television companies make important efforts to be in as many cable and satellite platforms all around the world as they can, while working on improving the quality of their internet broadcasts. However, this effort is not the matched in the area of content: most of the content is a re-broadcast of programs from other channels of the communication group, often from the archives, and we also point out that there are hardly any slots specifically dedicated to communities living abroad.

**Keywords:** Transnational television · International Communication · Regional Television

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## Resumen

El estudio revela que los canales internacionales españoles generan importantes lazos entre los ciudadanos que viven en el extranjero y sus realidades nacionales. Los canales internacionales llevan a cabo importantes esfuerzos para estar presentes en el mayor número de plataformas de cable y de satélite posible alrededor de todo el mundo, mientras paralelamente avanzan sus retransmisiones a través de Internet. Estos esfuerzos en las infraestructuras, sin embargo, no son secundados en el área de contenidos: la mayoría son redifusiones emitidas en otros canales del grupo de comunicación y apenas hay programas específicamente dirigidos a los espectadores en el extranjero.

**Palabras clave:** Televisión transnacional · Comunicación internacional · Televisión regional

## Laburpena

Ikerketa honek Espainiako nazioarteko kanalek atzerrian bizi diren hiritarren eta beraien errealitate nazionalen artean garrantzizko loturak sortzen dituztela erakusten du. Nazioarteko kanalek ahalegin bereziak egiten dituzte mundu zabalean ahalik eta kable eta satelite-plataforma gehienetan egon ahal izateko, Internet bidezko emankizunek aurrera egiten duten bitartean. Azpiegituretan egiten diren ahaleginak, halere, ez dira berresten edukien arloan: gehienak komunikazio-talde bereko beste kanaletan emandakoen errepikapenak dira, eta ez dago apenas atzerriko ikusentzuleei propio zuzenduriko programarik.

**Gako-hitzak:** Telebista transnazonala · Nazioarteko komunikazioa · Eskualdeko telebista

## **0. Introduction**

In the current article, we try to present the situation with regard to international television broadcasts on the part of Spanish television companies. Our work focuses on the supply of generalist channels put into operation by public operators at the government and regional level, so that their programs reach audiences outside of Spain.

Since the nineties, a wide range of television companies have extended their coverage around the world thanks to the increasing use of satellites. In Spain, specifically, the increase in international broadcasts coincides with the putting into operation of the Hispasat satellite and the birth of pay per view satellite television platforms which broadcast by way of Astra and Hispasat for Europe.

The international broadcasts carried out by these television companies are of interest in and of themselves, but the peculiarities of the Spanish system make them merit even more attention.

The decentralized administrative structure with which Spain was endowed after the Franco dictatorship was also reflected in the media sector, with the creation of public operators at the level of regional radio-television. What is involved is a regional television model quite unusual in Europe, consisting of 'independent channels with specific regional coverage', which produce and broadcast a complete range of programs on a daily basis (Moragas Spá, Garitaonandia, & López, 1999); these channels allow us to observe how a channel dedicated to local coverage draws up comprehensive programming. Language issues must also be kept in mind, given that Spanish television has access to the Latin American market, and, to an increasing extent, to the North American market as well.

In this sense, we can distinguish between national operators (Radio Televisión Española and Antena 3) and those operating at the regional level. The former aim to become authoritative news sources (above all in America), while the latter aim to serve their regions' respective emigrant communities abroad. One must not forget that Spain has traditionally been a source of emigration, with great waves heading for America between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, and to the rest of Europe in the 1960's and 1970's. This fact, combined with the language factor reflected in the use of Spanish in Latin America, constitutes a favourable environment for the development of these channels (although some only broadcast in their regional languages).

In order to present the reality of these international channels, we firstly locate them within the current framework of transnational television described by authors such as Chalaby (Chalaby, 2002; 2003; 2005a;

2005b), Karim (Karim, 2003) or Elasmár (Elasmár, 2003), while, in addition, taking into account some specific research undertaken on the use of this type of media by minorities or emigrant communities in other countries.

In the second part, we examine Spanish emigration patterns with a brief overview of their historical causes, thus enabling us to understand the driving force behind some of these broadcasts, as well as current trends in Spanish television, at which time we present the operators who are responsible for this type of international broadcast. In the last part, we present the analyses of these channels as well as our conclusions.

## **1. Research on transnational television**

Satellite television has been heavily researched using a wide range of approaches. Firstly, one must bear in mind that the quantum leap in communications engendered by the satellite is a key factor to understanding the structure of our current globalized world.

The potential for satellites to beam American television programs into households across the world, thus replacing local programming, gave rise to the thesis of cultural imperialism represented by the threat which satellites could constitute for national cultural integrity. (Mattelart, 1977; 1980; Schiller, 1969).

In reality, the evolution of satellite television has given rise to a far more complex set of conditions in the realm of transnational communication. Although it is true that large groups such as News Corp. dominate satellite communications, one must also take into account that the explosion in the number of satellite channels produced in recent years has made possible a substantial increase in offerings, including the appearance of new television phenomena across a wide range of areas. In the Middle East, satellite channels have introduced new formats and have led to quite significant changes in Arab television. Al-Arabiya has improved the level of television journalism, while Al-jazeera has introduced the talk-show. In Southeast Asia, ZEE TV and STAR TV have also been the instruments of radical changes which have taken place in the area's television industry (Chalaby, 2005b: 2).

Within the European area, the studies carried out on European audiovisual and communication policy may also be placed within this field. The possibility of covering large geographical areas by means of the dissemination of satellite signals has led to the introduction of the concept of 'audiovisual space' applied, in this case, to the European region (Casado, 2006). The European Parliament Hahn report (EP, 1982)

underscored the importance of creating a pan European television network in order to strengthen European identity, and indicated information as the most decisive factor in ensuring the triumph of European integration.

In order to classify the channels which are the subject of the study, we can use the Chalaby classification for pan European channels. Although the channels studied go beyond the European framework, the classification is valid with regard to our objectives.

Chalaby (Chalaby, 2005a) establishes a classification of transnational channels in the European area according to 'their motive for reaching out beyond their borders.' He includes four groups in his classification: 'ethnic' and 'multiregional' channels, 'pan European channels and networks' and 'pan European networks'.

- Ethnic channels

These channels are directed to a language and culture sharing emigrant audience in other regions. These channels are normally based on the recycling of existing programs, with very little original content.

- Multiregional channels

These channels follow an independent development plan in each country. They do not aspire to pan European coverage, but instead operate in a small number of markets. Chalaby uses the example of Canal Plus, which has local partners in different countries such as Italy, Spain and Poland, as an example of this category.

- Pan European channels and networks

Their purpose is to go beyond national boundaries and reach a regional area. They are intended for international and multicultural audiences. Within this category, Chalaby distinguishes between those channels which have succeeded in making 'international' part of their trademark and programming, such as BBC International, or CNN International, and those which take the localization route (normally by means of the introduction of the local language through dubbing or subtitles), an example being Euro news.

- Pan European networks

By means of this plan, a network of local channels, whose origin is pan regional (pan European in this case), is created. Chalaby classifies channels such as Cartoon Network or MTV, which adopt a portion of their program plans to different countries, within this category.

Within these categories, those which have received the most attention from researchers are those which Chalaby classifies as "ethnic".

The increasing importance of emigration in Europe and in the United States has led to an increasing interest in the way in which emigrants use the media originating in their countries and what effects this use has. In this sense, Creeber in his study on British television indicates that ‘the incapacity of traditional, terrestrial television to satisfy the needs of minorities has caused a large part of the audience to increasingly choose the cable or satellite option’ (Creeber, 2004: 32).

In the case of minorities who have as much presence as do Hispanics in the United States, the Spanish language media is so widespread that, as Guarnizo, Sánchez and Roach point out, they appear to recreate life as lived in Columbia.

“Radio and television news greet Columbians every morning on their way to work and on their way home in the evening in what appears to be a perfectly orchestrated simulation of Columbian life, as if they had never left their country” (Guarnizo et al, 1999: 386).

The dissemination of international channels has been studied in relation with their presence or expansion across a range of geographical areas. Thus, for example, the satellite broadcasts of Chinese operators (Man Chan, 1996; 2005), those of the Arab world (Amin, 1996; Sakr, 2005), those received in Latin America (Sinclair, 1996; 2005) and those in Europe (Chalaby, 2005b) have been subjects of study. With regard to the Latin-American audiovisual space, as indicated by Sinclair (2005), one can not speak exclusively of a ‘Latin-American’ space; one would have to include North America with its ever increasing number of Spanish speakers as well as Portugal and Spain. In Europe, international broadcasts by the big public operators are, in general, a *fait accompli* (table 2); Amezaga has also studied the linguistic panorama of satellite television considering languages with a large diffusion and languages with a medium or a lesser presence (Amezaga, 2007). Our research attempts to deal with cases of different international channels which originate in Spain and are disseminated in Europe and America in line with the work of Amezaga (2004) about the Basque international channel “Canal Vasco”.

**Table 1. International channels of the principal European television companies**

Channel	Country	Launch	Pub.-Pri.	Affiliation	Category	Distribution	Languages	Audience (1)
Arte	DE-FR	1990	PUB	Arte France; Arte Deutschland TV GmbH	Generalist- Culture	Europe, Africa	FR/DE	n.c.
Deutsche Welle TV	DE	1992	PUB	German State	News	n.c.	DE, Arabic	28 million viewers daily
TVE Internacional	ES		PUB	Spanish PSB	Generalist	Europe, USA, Latin America, Africa, Asia- Oceania	ES	n.c.
Euro news	EU	1993	PUB	Secemie- Socemie (20 shareholders) (1)	News	119 countries	EN, FR, DE, IT, PT, ES, RU	in Europe: 4 million viewers daily via cable and satellite + 3.2 million viewers daily via terrestrial distribution
France 24	FR	2006	PUB- PR	TF1- France Télévisions (50/50)	News	Europe, Middle-East, Africa and USA	FR, EN, Arabic	n.c.
TV5 Monde	FR	1985	PUB	France Télévisions; Arte France; SSR; RTBF; Radio Canada; Télé Québec; INA	Generalist	Over 203 countries and territories	FR with subtitles in FR, EN, ES, PT, NL, DE, SE, DK, RU, Arabic	24.5 million viewers daily
BBC World	GB	1991	PUB	BBC World Ltd	News	Over 200 countries and territories	EN; Spanish subtitles in Latin America	65 million viewers weekly
Rai International	IT	1995	PUB	Italian PSB	Generalist	North- and Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania. Not available in Europe	IT	n.c.
RTP Internacional	PT	1992	PUB	Portuguese PSB	Generalist	Europe, USA, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Australia	PT	n.c.

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory. 2006 yearbook.

## 2. Spanish emigration and the current television system

In order to understand what motivates different Spanish television companies to expand beyond their borders, it behoves us to examine two ideas with regard to Spanish emigration. Spain has traditionally been a source of emigrants. The main emigration waves outwards from Spain occurred between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and between the 1960's and 1980's. The first wave departed mainly for Latin America and the second towards Europe. Between 1895 and 1940, almost 800,000 Spanish people went to America, while between 1960 and 1972, almost 700,000 Spanish people went to Europe, although it is true that many returned in the following years.

Currently, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates that a million and a half Spanish people are living outside of Spain. Nevertheless, and especially when referring to America, one must take into account the children and grandchildren of Spanish emigrants, who continue to have a strong emotional connection and attachment to Spain but do not possess Spanish nationality. Currently, a law is being debated in the Spanish Parliament which would grant Spanish nationality to these descendants, and it is calculated that, if it is approved, two million people in Argentina alone could request Spanish nationality (El País, 2-4-2006).

Another good indicator of the importance of these collectives is the influence of their vote on Spanish elections, and the number of 'Casas de España' (Spanish civic and cultural centres) and 'Casas Regionales' (Spanish regional civic and cultural centres from different Spanish regions) which are scattered around the world. In 2006, 1,150,000 Spanish residents abroad had the right to vote. Of these, more than 300,000 were Galician. As for the 'Casas de España' or the Spanish 'Casas Regionales' around the world, there are currently more than 1,200 of them, of which almost 900 are located in Latin-America. These centres play a very important role with regard to international channels because they normally have satellite TV installations where community members can tune in.

It could be said that with the end of the Franco dictatorship and the establishment of democracy, Spain went from being a country of emigrants to a country which receives emigrants, although this immigration has become more accentuated, especially in the last decade. The advent of democracy also involved a profound change in the conception of the Spanish State; the state went from being centralized to highly decentralized with 17 Autonomous Regions, all of which possessed a large number of powers, in addition to the regional cities of Ceuta and Melilla.



In the audiovisual media area, RTVE, the state public-operator in Spain, began its activity in 1946, at the height of the dictatorship, and, therefore, adhered to the dictatorship's centralist plan. The arrival of regional Governments also had important repercussions in the media area. Several groups implemented their own regional broadcasting systems, as a result of which, at the present time, eleven of the seventeen Autonomous Regions now have their own public broadcasting.

Nevertheless, the organisms have come into existence gradually. Lopez (Lopez et. al 1999: 346) discern two periods in the birth of these organisms, to which we add a third, which runs from 1999 to 2006, during which five regional television channels appeared.

In the first phase, regional broadcasting systems were put into operation in the Basque Country (EITB in 1982), in Catalonia (CCRTV in 1983) and in Galicia (RTVG in 1985). These autonomous regions shared the fact that they were national-historic entities with distinct languages and unique cultures; in addition, the regional governments in power in these self-governing regions did not belong to the party which controlled the central government. At that time, nationalist parties were in power in the Basque Country and in Catalonia, and the conservative AP (now known as the PP) ruled in Galicia. To a large extent, the political tension between centre and periphery explains the early creation of these regional televisions, which must be seen in the context of the program to restore these nationalities' language and culture, in the process of which radio and television are given great importance.

The second phase occurs between 1986 and 1989, and is characterized by the putting into operation of a second wave of regional channels in the Basque Country and in Catalonia, and by the creation of regional television companies in Andalusia (RTVA in 1987), Madrid (RTVM in 1989) and the Comunidad de Valencia (RTVV in 1989). Of the three of them, only the Valencian station has a specific language agenda.

During the third phase, in which the situation was more stable at the level of regional television, the appearance on the television panorama of satellite pay per view television platforms resulted in certain regional communications groups putting satellite channels into operation for broadcasting from these platforms. In addition to this event, one must consider the putting into operation of the Hispasat satellite.

The last phase in the development of regional channels is that which takes place between 1999 and 2006, during which time another five regional television channels were created in the Autonomous regions of Murcia, Aragon, Asturias, and the Balearic and Canary islands.

## 2.1. *The initiation of international broadcasts*

TVE international broadcasts began in 1988 when the first channel TVE-1 signal was transmitted by the Eutel sat I-F4 satellite through the use of the capacity which Telefónica had on said satellite. At the end of that same year, broadcasting of the so-called 'Canal America', which broadcast four hours of programs a day, began. These broadcasts ended in December, 1989, when a new station known as 'Canal Internacional' began broadcasting via satellite from Europe and America. The programs consisted mainly of in-house productions and news. Therefore, TVE faced an important limitation with regard to its programs taken as a whole. In the past, these programs had been subject to broadcast rights, but TVE did not maintain these rights with regard to the retransmission of sporting events and international films. This provoked much protest from TVE audiences located outside of Spain; these protests also increased to the extent that technical problems which slowed down the introduction of TVE international in cable networks went unresolved.

At the end of the 1990's, a new step is taken when European and American offering are differentiated. The next step, which results in the consolidation of TVE's American gamble, is the putting into operation of the Hispasat satellite. By means of this channel, the broadcast of the international channel for America as well as of three new thematic channels began: Canal Clásico, Teledeporte (a sports channel) and Hispavision. The introduction of the new TVE offer turned out to be problematical due to the change in orientation required before antennas could receive the Hispasat signal.

In 1995, and in an effort to make the programs more interesting, an agreement allowing the broadcast of a match was reached with Galaxy, the holder of broadcast rights with regard to the Spanish league in America.

### 2.1.1. The use of satellites by autonomous regions

With regard to regional channels, projects for the first international broadcasts are not developed until the 1990's. Hispasat awakened the interest of three regional operators who wished to broadcast their programs to America: RTVG (Galicia), CCRTV (Catalonia) and EITB (Basque Country). The first regional channel satellite broadcasts were carried out by Galician television on December 29, 1994; other broadcasts by TVE followed on the heels of these test broadcasts. Subsequently, CCRTV and EITB broadcasts began.

It is necessary to point out that the continuous broadcasting of these three channels began by way of channel Galeuska<sup>5</sup>. Broadcast of this channel to America began on 31-12-96. The program schedule was shared by three operators, who presented their most important programs in the channel's spaces. Nevertheless, the project did not demonstrate much continuity; in March 1997, Galicia television abandoned the project in order to put its own channel aimed at America into operation. Basque and Catalanian television continued until September, 1998, the year in which they put their own international channels destined for America into operation.

In parallel fashion, in 1997, the two satellite pay per view television platforms began what was probably one of the hardest battles ever fought in the media in Spain. In January 1997, Canal Satélite Digital (CSD), which was owned by Sogecable, began operating. This group has traditionally maintained a posture close to that of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE). In opposition to this platform was Via Digital (VD), promoted by Telefónica and protected by the conservative People's Party (PP). When it came time to formulate the bids of both platforms, these political parties played an important role. The adoption of their respective positions was, in addition, conditioned by clearly political criteria. Over the course of that year, only one of the Autonomous regions with regional television was governed by the opposition party in Spain (the PSOE). The PP was in power in Galicia, Madrid and Valencia, while nationalist parties, which gave votes to the PP central government which lacked an absolute majority, governed the Basque Country, and Catalonia.

Against this backdrop, when CSD broadcasts began, the CSD only broadcast the regional channel, Andalusia TV. For its part, when VD began broadcasting, it could count on all of the regional operators (including Andalusia TV), some of which even formed part of its capital ownership.

This manoeuvre led channels such as Telemadrid (the regional channel in Madrid) and Canal 9 (the regional channel in Valencia) which had not previously shown an interest in satellite broadcasts to create their own international channels so that VD would broadcast them. In this way, in 1997, all of the regional television companies broadcast internationally for Europe, and three of them did so for America.

Nevertheless, the presence of regional stations was not, by any means, the determining factor in the platform race. VD always went along with CSD, and when it became evident that the market was too small, the two merged (Peñafiel et. al, 2005).

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<sup>5</sup> The name Galeuska is formed with the initials of the three communities that carried out the project: Galicia, Euskadi (Basque Country in its own language, the Euskera) and Catalonia.

### 3. Methodology and Hypothesis

The analysis carried out on these channels is divided into three areas: the financial area, program planning and television company objectives, with regard to which we shall present different research hypotheses.

According to Chalaby (2002: 186), European public television companies mainly wanted to establish pan European channels in order to optimize their program catalogue and broadcast rights, as well as to enter into the international news market.

Taking these factors into account, we have proposed the following hypotheses:

- With the creation of these channels, the objective is to enter competitively into news broadcasting at the international level.
- The creation of these channels corresponds with the use of production catalogues and broadcast rights, as well with the use of synergies within multimedia communications groups.
- The redissemination and use of archive materials makes these channels cheap for television companies

In the area of program planning, we use the week of February 19 to 22, 2006, with regard to program planning on all of the channels included in the study, and we analyze three elements: the genre of the programs, the volume of production specifically destined for said channel, the channel's programs in autochthonous regional languages and, lastly, program reruns. In order to carry out the study, the following ad hoc classification of genres has been created (see table 3).

In order to carry out the research, both interviews with the Directors of international channels and questionnaires on different hypotheses have been used.

**Table 2. Genres classification used in the study.**

Génres	Formats
News	News programs; Special Events; Opinion.
Fiction	Films; TV Series; Theatre; Animation.
Sports	Sports programs.
Culture / Educative	Documentaries; Educational programs; Debates.
Religion	Religious celebrations; Religion programs.
Variety	Magazines; Humour; Variety.
Children	Series; Animation; Child programs.
Info-show	Talk show; Debate show; Reality show.
Quizz-Shows	Quizz-Shows.
Music	Musical programs; Concerts; Video-clip.
Teleshopping	Tele-shopping; Commercial guides.
Continuity	
Bullfighting	
Others	

Source: own creation.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1. Coverage and penetration of international channels

Information with regard to television companies' coverage is available because it is marked by the prints of the satellites which carry out these transmissions. Nevertheless, their penetration is difficult to quantify. Hence, in the case of TVE, since it is a pay channel in America, we can obtain more precise figures for penetration by studying subscribers, but in the case of the other channels which are offered free of charge, one can with difficulty obtain a figure for cable operators who offer their signal, but this figure only serves as a guide, as the channels themselves point out.

Based on coverage, we can separate the channels into three groups: those with global coverage, those which have coverage in America and in Europe and those which only have European coverage.

Only TVE, which by means of broadcasts from five satellites reaches virtually the entire globe, in addition to having a significant number of cable operators spread around the world, is included in the first group. Currently, as shown in its 2005 Annual Report, there are 63 million households which subscribe to one of the Group channels, that is to say, 28% more than the year before. In this sense, it is necessary to emphasize that the most requested channel is precisely the international one, with 60,056,911 subscribers.

**Table 3. Coverage of international television channels**

Region	Channel	Reach
Spain	TVE América	America
	TVE Europa	Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceany
Spain	A3 internacional	America
Catalonia	TVCi	America and Europe
Basque Country	Canal Vasco	America
	Etb Sat	Europe
Galizia	Galicia TV América	America
	Galicia TV Europa	Europe
Canary Islands	TVCanaria internacional	America and Europe
Andalusia	Andalucia TV	Europe
Valencia	TVVi	Europe
Madrid	Telemadrid Sat	Europe

Source: own creation

Another aspect examined, which is in line with the use of group synergies, relates to the presence of audiovisual contents on different television companies' websites, in order to supplement the offer presented to residents of other areas. With regard to this point, there are many differences between channels: the most outstanding offers are those of Television de Cataluña or Television de Galicia. Both have a la carte broadcast services from their respective webs from which one can, in addition, see their international channels live. In the case of Valencian and Basque regional television, international channels can be seen on the web, but a la carte contents are offered by the JUMP TV operator. The case of TVE is unique because instead of transmitting its international channel over the web, it transmits its news channel. The television company explains that the issue revolves around "rights" given that much of the contents which are broadcast by the international channel can only be scheduled for specific areas (Europe and America), as a result of which their broadcast on the web would constitute an infringement of these rights. As for Televisión Canaria, it does not broadcast from its web.

#### 4.2. Typology of international TV channels in Spain

In our first hypothesis, we try to classify the different international channels based on their objectives; hence, TVE, as the most important public operator in Spain with international coverage, may be considered to offer an 'international' channel, whereas the international channels owned

by regional or autonomous television companies would be defined using Chalaby's ethnic category definition.

In the case of TVE international, the channel is set up as “tool for the spreading of Spanish reality and culture’ and as a ‘nexus between Spanish people living abroad or between other citizens of other countries who speak Spanish, or who are simply interested in Spain”. (RTVE Report). TVE international is distributed free of charge around the world, except for in America. There, it is distributed as a packet of four channels which, in addition to TVE international, contain the news channel 24 horas, the documentary channel “Docu TV” and “TVE 50 años” (which went on the air in order to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Spanish public TV).

Therefore, what we have is an apparently ambitious offering which, as we shall see, is heavily weighed down by the lack of financial resources available for program content, to a large degree the result of the serious economic crisis affecting the company.

Taking this situation into account, the director of the TVE international channels, Jose Luis Rodriguez Puértolas, indicates that the objective of creating a large international channel such as the BBC is ‘unfeasible’ and he is committed to going forward with more concrete, accessible and realistic elements such as the creation of “suitable, not very costly programs which could serve as a point of reference while acquiring emblematic status” (Rodriguez Puértolas, 2006).

With reference to the objectives of regional groups with regard to international channels, when referring to those channels which broadcast to America (as do the television companies in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia and the Canaries), one may speak of ethnic channels to the extent that their objective is to reach their emigrant communities residing abroad.

The case of the Andalusian international channel is to a large degree exceptional in that although it only broadcasts to Europe, its main objective is to reach the large Andalusian community which lives outside of Andalusia, especially in Catalonia. In fact, when this international channel first began broadcasting, the regional Andalusian government subsidized the installation of parabolic antennas in the different areas of Catalonia. In addition, it must be pointed out that present day TV Andalusia had its origins in a more ambitious project which was also invested in by private companies such as Telefónica. Thematic channels were also created within this project: ‘Canal Fiesta’ and ‘Andalucía Turismo’ with the objective of promoting Andalusia as a tourist destination throughout Europe. At this time, Canal Fiesta no longer exists, and ‘Andalucia Turismo’ produces little of its own material.

Lastly, the Valencia and Madrid regions' international channels arose, as we have already previously indicated, as the result of a political decision to support the creation of a communication group; in this sense, their broadcast via satellite to emigrants from these regions who live abroad was more a consequence of this decision than an objective of these channels when they went into operation. The director of channel TVVi himself admits that 'the programs do not exactly reflect the needs of the Valencian Diaspora,' although he insists that at the present time a strategic plan has been implemented and that its primary mission is to broadcast to Valencians and to other interested audiences on all five continents (Lezcano, 2006). With reference to Telemadrid Sat, not even the company itself considers the channel to be an "international broadcast"; instead, they see it as a window for displaying its contents, principally to the rest of Spain.

#### *4.3. International channels arising from the use of group synergies*

As Chalaby points out, these international channel broadcasts are fundamentally based on the recycling of programs which have already been broadcast. In the case of the international channels under study, the principal criteria for program planning is to broadcast the terrestrial channel broadcast in Spain for as long as possible, provided that the broadcast rights for these programs are held, and to broadcast programs from the archive in order to fill up those spaces for which broadcast rights are not held. Broadcast rights are therefore determinant when it comes time to create the broadcast grid for international channels.

In the case of TVE, which has worldwide coverage, the impossibility of spending large amount of money to acquire broadcast rights at the international level has led to its falling behind with regard to two fundamental aspect of the programming grid, films and sports. TVE international has an additional problem, which is that it can not broadcast films until four years after their premier (the terrestrial channel can broadcast films two years after their premier). Meanwhile, in the sports area, football, the sport with the largest following in Spain, is no longer placed on TVE's programming grid because broadcast rights have become more and more expensive. Therefore, first, TVE lost its Spanish Football League broadcast rights; subsequently, it lost the Champions' League, and finally it lost the Spanish team. This last decision is, in addition, strongly criticized by the company's director who pointed out the following: 'I was horrified that the few sports offerings which we still had were lost, much to the detriment of what we could offer our foreign audiences' (Rodríguez Puértolas, 2006).



The remaining television companies operate with very similar restrictions with regard to rights. The exceptions to this occur in the case of television companies which broadcast in Catalan, Galician or Basque rather than in Spanish; these companies can obtain broadcast rights for America or Europe for films dubbed into their broadcast language without creating a problem given that the film will only be understood by a very small percentage of the audience. TVC has broadcast full-length films dubbed in Catalan.

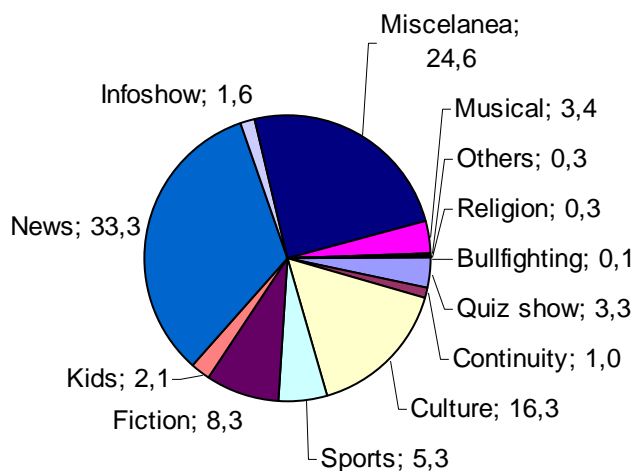
With regard to the production of contents specifically intended for international channels, TVE international produces the most programs of this type, consisting, specifically, of a package which amounts to 5% more than the production of the International channels, and which offers two entirely different spaces: on the one hand, there are the 'programs created basically for Channel 24 Horas', which are especially oriented, thematically speaking, to the TVE International audience in America. These are the constituent elements of the slot 'Puente Atlántico,' and, in addition, we must not forget the programs produced by TVE's Regional Centres, spaces directed to certain communities such as those of Catalonia, Galicia, the Basque country or the Canaries. These types of programs generally include documentaries and news: 'Desde Galicia para el mundo' ('From Galicia to the world'), 'Escala Catalunya' ('Stopover in Catalonia'), 'Tenderete' or 'Frontón' ('Pelota') are some of the most representative examples. Another 6% of the programming grid is completed through the dissemination of TVE programs which cover time slots during which the audience is small, that is to say, during the early morning or during the night.

As regards regional television companies, the only ones which create programs specifically dedicated to international channels are companies from Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country. While the last two create specific news programs, TVC creates small spaces normally lasting five minutes, which are centred on Catalan history or culture.

#### *4.4. International channel program planning: news or football?*

Faced with the task of confirming the hypothesis with regard to international channel program planning, we shall use the week of February 19 to February 22 as a sample of 2006.

**Graph 1. Television genres in international channel program planning (%)**



*Source: own creation*

Observing graph 1, we can see that the three main genres present in international channel offerings are the news, variety shows and culture. The news constitutes a third of the total number of programs on international channels followed by variety shows (mainly magazines) which constitute more than 24%, and by other news and cultural programs which occupy more than 16% of the programming grid. Within these figures, the percentage of news programs can be explained by the nature of the public service offering, whose objective is either to inform emigrants of national or regional events or, as in the case of TVE international, to produce news programs which become international points of reference in Spanish.

**Table 4.-Television genres in international channel program planning (by channel in percentages)**

			Quiz Shows	Continuity	Culture	Sports	Fiction	Kids	News	InfoShow	Variety	Music	Others	Religion	Bullfighting		
Spanish Channels		Public	TVE Am.	3	7	24	3	6	2	37	-	15	2	-	1	0,3	
			TVE Eur.	3	-	25	1	13	3	32	-	20	2	0,4	1	0,5	
		Private	A3 Int.	2	-	1	4	16	-	40	14	24	-	-	-	-	
Spanish regional channels (all of them public)		Basque Country	ETB Sat	9	-	7	9	9	2	32	4	26	2	-	1	-	
			Canal Vasco	11	-	16	8	-	-	32	0	33	0	-	-	-	-
		Catalonia	TVCi	2	-	12	4	13	5	24	1	37	3	-	-	-	-
		Galizia	TVG Am.	-	-	31	5	16	-	32	-	6	8	-	1	-	-
			TVG Eur.	-	-	29	6	17	5	32	-	6	6	-	1	-	-
		Andalusia	Andalucia TV	-	-	11	4	2	-	19	-	61	3	-	-	-	-
		Valencia	TVVi	-	2	16	10	8	9	29	-	21	2	1	-	-	-
		Madrid	TM Sat	10	3	9	5	-	-	47	-	18	6	2	-	-	-
		Canary Is.	TV Canaria	-	-	16	6	-	-	43	-	28	7	-	-	-	-

Source: own creation

The vast majority of variety shows correspond to the full-length broadcast of morning magazines, which in many cases are repeated during the early morning; these are contents over which television companies holds broadcast rights, and these contents can fill up many hours. More surprising is that cultural and news programs constitute more than 16% of the supply. To a large degree, this state of affairs is related to the holding of broadcast rights with regard to documentaries, but it is also related to audience interest in watching spaces related to their country's history and culture. Felix Azurmendi, the director of the Basque regional television international channels, indicates that "Basque national culture is a top priority on the international channels" (Azurmendi, 2006), while Isidre Rosic, program head of Catalan television's international channel, indicates that one of his principal objectives is to acquaint audiences with Catalan language and culture." (Rosic, 2006). The other two genres with an outstanding presence are fiction and sports. In the area of fiction, the majority of offerings are covered by in-house series productions. The most notable exception in this regard is provided by TVE, which, despite the difficulties which we described above, schedules large quantities of Latin-American cinema. This fact can also be explained; in Spain, television operators are legally required to invest 5% of their previous year's income in the production of full-length Spanish films, which can also be created as co productions with other Latin-American countries pursuant to various agreements in this area. In this way, TVE accumulates a large amount of capital in the form of full-length films, which after the corresponding time period, may be broadcast on its international channels.

The broadcast of sporting events, mainly football, is a thorny issue for these international channels. Given that the Spanish Football League is one of the most important in the world, the interest it has aroused has caused broadcasting rights to become so expensive that public television companies have decided not to bid. The channels receive complaints from audiences in other countries for not broadcasting matches. The broadcast of the matches also depends on the type of competition as well as on what continent it takes place on. Hence, for example, European matches can be broadcast in Latin-American but not in the rest of Europe because this would constitute a free broadcast of these matches in the area in which the teams were competing, thus infringing the rights of other channels in their respective regions.

To the extent to which football can not be broadcast, the majority of sports retransmissions involve less popular sports or, in the case of football, teams from lower leagues.

Aside from these genres, only bullfights are worth highlighting on account of the controversy which they have generated in other European countries. Both in Great Britain and in Holland, several animal rights groups have objected to the retransmission of these bullfights by TVE international to Europe, emphasizing that these bullfights were broadcast when children were likely to be watching (around six o'clock in the afternoon). After the controversy, TVE decided to broadcast the bullfights during the early morning hours.

As we have discussed before, in addition to Spanish, other co-official languages exist in Spain in the different autonomous regions. These are Catalan in Catalonia, Basque in the Basque Country, Valencian in Valencia and Galician in Galicia. Amongst the objectives of regional television companies in these *regions* is the promotion of the use of their autochthonous languages (Garitaonandia and Casado, 2007), for which reason they broadcast at least part of their programs in these languages. Variations in the use of autochthonous languages depend, to a large extent, on the percentage of speakers who live in the autonomous region; hence, in the Basque Country, where there is less knowledge of the language, of the two international Basque television channels (Canal Vasco and ETB Sat,) only ETB Sat, which is disseminated to Europe, broadcasts approximately half of its programming in Basque; the rest broadcast in Spanish. Meanwhile, the remaining regional channels broadcast all (TVCi, Galicia TV) or almost all (TVVi - 90%) of their programs in their autochthonous language.

## 5. Conclusions

International television channels belonging to Spanish public television companies are a clear example of agents who operate in what Straubhaar calls the 'geolinguistic iberomarian region'. (Straubhaar and Duarte, 2005). Nevertheless, the majority of these has no interest in exerting international influence, and could fall into Chalaby's ethnic channels category. Their main objective is to reach emigrant communities abroad and to offer them information or images with regard to their country.

Only TVE may lie outside of this category since it is considered to be a channel with a true vocation for becoming a point of reference for the Spanish speaking world. Nevertheless, the lack of ambition reflected in its programs, caused, in large part, by the serious financial crisis afflicting this public entity, has left it at a disadvantage with respect to the remaining international actors who have taken up positions in the Latin-American market.

Nevertheless, problems with respect to content are common to all of the television companies: the majority of these use reruns, almost exclusively broadcast successful in-house productions broadcast on the other channels of the Group, and hardly have any exclusive content for the international channel. Hence, what is involved are programming grids which are designed in accordance with program planning possibilities rather than in accordance with criteria for reaching a specific population or for transmitting a specific image of the country. Despite this, I would stress the importance of cultural and news programs in the programming grid, especially of those dealing with each region's culture and history.

The majority of these television companies have very small staffs and lack infrastructure for program production. With regard to the programs specifically created for these channels, the most outstanding are those for TVE, TVG and Canal Vasco. The first program attempts to bridge Latin-American and Spanish culture ('puente Atlantico'), while TVG and Canal Vasco create specific news programs which handle issues and problems facing the emigrant community.

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