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# Alternative spaces of freedom during Transition. Brief history of free radio stations in Spain (1976-1983)

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## Abstracts

**[ES] Introducción.** Este trabajo expone la importancia y singularidad del movimiento de las radios libres en España durante la Transición Española. Se pretende definir qué es una radio libre y cómo fue su evolución y desarrollo desde sus inicios en 1976 hasta 1983 a través de las emisoras más representativas. **Metodología.** Se han consultado fuentes bibliográficas y hemerográficas (*El País*, *Abc* y *La Vanguardia*), así como documentos y publicaciones vinculadas al movimiento de radios libres. También se han realizado entrevistas a fundadores de emisoras libres históricas. **Resultados y conclusiones.** Las radios libres fueron un fenómeno comunicativo heterogéneo y paralelo a los medios convencionales: eran participativas, reivindicativas y sin ánimo de lucro, entre otras cualidades. Se ofrece un censo de todas las emisoras que operaron en estos años destacando las iniciativas pioneras de Cataluña, País Vasco, Navarra y Madrid.

**[EN] Introduction.** This paper presents the relevance and singularity of the free radios movement in Spain during the Spanish Transition. We aim to define what a free radio is, as well as its evolution and development from its beginnings in 1976 up to 1983 by analyzing the most representative radio stations. **Methodology.** We consulted bibliographic and hemerographic sources (*El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*), as well as documents and publications associated to the free radios movement. We also conducted interviews to the founders of historical free radio stations. **Findings and conclusions.** Free

radios were a heterogeneous communicative phenomenon and parallel to mainstream media: they were participative, activist and non-profit, among some attributes. We offer a census of all radio stations broadcasting through these years, emphasizing on the pioneering initiatives of Catalonia, Basque Country, Navarre and Madrid.

### Keywords

[ES] radios libres; tercer sector de la comunicación; Historia de la Radio; Historia de los Medios de Comunicación Social; Transición española.

[EN] free radios; third sector of communication; History of Radio; History of Media; Spanish transition.

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## 1. Introduction

The construction of the current democratic system in Spain returned the rights denied to media during four decades of dictatorship. The possibility of informing, expressing opinions and disseminate their broadcasts without censure contributed to a complex transformation, that forced press (Humanes & Martínez, 2015), radio (García, 2013) and television (Martín & Reguero & Pelaz, 2016) to adapt to their new social function during the transition period.

This renovation reached all radio stations. Privately-owned radios achieved freedom of information thanks to a Royal Decree in 1977 and broadcasted their first newscasts in a legal manner. Public networks faced the loss of news monopoly while re-structuring, with the constitution of the Public Entity RTVE in 1980. In addition, the provisional technical plan of 1979 doubled the number of licenses for frequency-modulated broadcasting on air in Spain until then, establishing the grounds for the future generalization of FM from the following decade.

This new context was completed by the eclosion of an alternative space in airwaves. New small stations of quite diverse origin, nature and purpose emerged under different labels: independent or “pirate” radios pursued commercial interests outside legality; municipal radios depended on their local government and encouraged a local and proximity programming; and others made a difference with their rebellious spirit inspired in Italy’s and France’s counter-cultural movements. The latter were named free radios and lived their golden age in Spain during the 1980s, when they reached their time

of greater influence and territorial spreading (García, 2013: 122).

Free radios are a communicative phenomenon parallel to majoritarian or mainstream media, that was barely mentioned in the general histories of communication in Spain. At most, there were testimonial references in the main historical syntheses about Spanish radio (Balsebre, 2002; Faus, 2007) or were summarized in their main milestones without further detail (Franquet & Martí, 1985).

The first wave of literary production about free radios in Spain concentrated in their years of emergence and spreading, between the late '70s and the middle of the 1980s (Bassets, 1981; Prado, 1983; Aguilera, 1985). The research interest declines after that and until the middle of the 2000s, when new studies about free or community radios arise, both in the country's scope (García, 2013; Barranquero & Meda, 2015) as well as in more reduced geographical contexts (Santos Díez, 1994; Gutiérrez Paz, 2002, or García-Gil, 2017, among others).

The purpose of this research is connecting the historical traces of this heterogeneous group of radio stations and reflect their relevance in the history of Spanish radio broadcasting, both in Transition as well as in the current democracy. The general goal is translated into two specific objectives. Firstly, to specify the concept of "free radio", the difference with its kin (community radio and the third sector, among others) and, secondly, to analyze the birth and evolution of free radios in Spain, especially through their most outstanding cases in the geographical contexts where it had greater attendance.

The time period of this study encompasses from the first broadcasts of *Radio Maduixa* and *Radio La Voz del Pobre*, in 1976, until the elaboration of the *Villaverde* Manifesto by *Coordinadora Estatal de Radios Libres* in 1983, which was pivotal for the recognition and visibility of these radio stations.

The analysis of the development of free radios is performed in a double level: internal, with the territorial expansion of the phenomenon and the means of support of an ensembled movement by coordinating entities, and external, through public vindications. In this sense, media outlets visibilized the demands of free radios before the political power and its consequent police conflicts, which derived in closures and protests.

Lastly, we produced the first census of free radios that operated in Spain during that period (1976-1983). We show the names, years of creation and location of all radio stations associated to the concept of free radios in Spain we found in this research. We divided the result of this census into five tables: on Table 1 we included free radios of Catalonia; on Table 2, the radio stations of Basque Country and Navarre; on Table 3, those of the Community of Madrid; on Table 4, radio stations of the Valencian Community; and on Table 5, radio stations from the rest of regions.

## 2. Methodology

The qualitative methodology used relied on several kinds of sources: bibliographic, hemerographic and personal testimonies, assuming for its selection the double internal-external perspective mentioned before.

In this sense, regarding the bibliographic sources we combined the contributions scholars with the direct and indirect testimonies handed down in written by participants and volunteers of free radios. Among them, we collected the voluminous documentation –fanzines, dossiers and further documents of several radio stations– published by *Radio Topo* on its website.

The hemerographic information comes from newspaper libraries from three newspapers circulating countrywide - *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*- to show free radio movement's activities in general-

interest media. However, we also added hemerographic sources we deemed close to the free radios movement – magazines of counter-cultural nature targeted to similar publics than these radio stations’ –.

Lastly, in a complementary manner, we offer the oral testimony using in-depth interviews of responsables from historical free radios, in order to remark the view of protagonists about the movement’s status and its evolution despite hurdles. The two interviews conducted during the study were done to Salvador Picarol -*Radio Pica*- online and Manolo Gallego -*Ràdio Klara*- by phone.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. What is a free radio in Spain? A conceptual debate

The heterogeneity of the free radios movement hinders its theoretical definition. The numerous conceptualization proposals both from the academic field as well as the movement’s, produced a long and still ongoing debate. Our approach attempts to establish an operational-style theoretical background based on the analysis on the varied nature of these radios to determine their common attributes and usual similarities.

García (2013: 114) synthesized the most usual criteria to classify radio stations: by exploitation form -commercial or non-profit-, by ownership of the radio station- public, privately-owned...-, by legal status, by type of contents offered, by geographical reach and other features of internal – structure, management- and external nature –such as their mission–.

Following this multiple classification, we can profile free radios by identifying their most common features: non-profitable, associative and privately-owned radios, with an horizontal structure – assembly-like decision making process, without managerial posts– and local broadcast reach. In any case, these attributes are not enough to differentiate free radios from other radio stations, such as religious, educational or university radios, which may meet said criteria without being necessarily free radios or without feeling identified by this label.

However, it is difficult to achieve further concretion using this classification, considering the wide variety of initiatives that defined themselves as ‘free’ and which have many differences between them, starting by their legal status. From their beginning, promoters of free radios in Spain argued that the Constitution of 1978 allowed them to perform their activity in a state of “alegality”, since on article 20 of this *Carta Magna* there is recognized the right to “freely express and spread thoughts, ideas and opinions orally, in written or by any other reproduction means whatsoever”, as well as to “freely communicate [...] true information by any spreading means.” The absence of specific laws and regulations recognizing, protecting or granting frequency-modulated broadcasting licenses for free radios – with the exception of few cases of regional reach, and since the late ‘80s- historically positioned them in a continuous limbo between permissiveness and pursuit, depending on the will of political action in every moment and place.

In addition, in the movement’s focus there were differences of opinions between voluntarily “alegal” radios -as a complaint for the distribution of licenses or as an anti-establishment fight- and radios willing to regularize their status by presenting to tenders of privately-owned radios licenses against commercial radio stations, the only ones who were allowed attendance in most of the country.

Only a few free radio stations were successful in regularizing their legal status, like *Ràdio Klara* in Valencia, the most popular and veteran of this group, although from the start it was part of those radio stations that were voluntarily “alegal” (Durà, 2012: 34), however Manolo Gallego, one of its founders,

nuances that “inside, there were people who wanted to have a legal status and fought with legalization” [1]. This fact evidences the double sensitivity that manifested even in the core of the same radio.

On the other hand, is impossible to delimit the type of contents of a free radio. The horizontal philosophy in the decision-making process and the respect towards the freedom enjoyed by every program, produce a huge variety of themes. Cultural, social and musical contents are usual, although they may coexist in the programming together with experimental programs, about politics, breaking news or other more specific issues.

We cannot cluster the free radios movement under a mission criterion either. Aguilera established a classification into four types –commercial, revolutionary, sectorial and epicurean-, even though he extended it to free and “pirate” radios. We discarded commercial radio stations- since we identified “pirate” radios as radios that have profit purposes indeed (Jones, 1994)-, thus we kept the other three groups that summarize the possible purposes of free radios: revolutionary radio stations, “that mainly seek the radical transformation of the society they are addressing to”; sectorial radio stations, “mainly committed to some activist social sector, such as ecologists, feminists, homosexual...”; and lastly, epicurean radio stations, “stations that broadcast just out of the delight of doing so.” (Aguilera, 1985: 66-67).

Despite these determining elements, many attempts of theoretical definition existed. For instance, Prado (1980: 155-156) considers free radios as those that attempt to alter or introduce changes in the classic communicational scheme of ‘sender-channel-recipient’. This is a direct consequence of the promotion of citizen participation, which differentiates free radios from mainstream networks: the latter clearly separate the role of the sender –radio speakers and professionals- and the recipient– listeners, whose interventions are controlled and limited-. While free radios promote citizen participation on air both in a passive manner –listeners who usually participate via phone and with barely any previous filter- as well as active manner– they can play the role of radio speakers who produce their own program-.

Aguilera has the birth of free radios as baseline, and puts it together with that of “pirate” radios, through its technological -the sales of new and cheaper technical devices for broadcasting- and sociological origin –the ‘connection’ of the youngest generations back in the ‘60s with the counter-cultural movement, pop-rock music and a new broadcasting language-. Likewise, he differentiates free radios -like those broadcasting legally in those countries where they are allowed to do so- from “pirate” radios, which broadcasted even though they were considered illegal (Aguilera, 1985: 65-66). However, this criterion is not applicable in the Spanish case, because free radios were not regulated by the Administration and their role was far from that of “pirate” radios, essentially due to waiving profit.

An added difficulty is the confusion between the concepts of free radio and community radio – two of the most used-, who some authors of the movement point out as synonyms, or even group them inside other more generic concepts, such as the third sector of communication (*Red Estatal de Medios Comunitarios*, 2009; Sáez, 2008: 30) or social radios (*Unión de Radios Culturales de Madrid*, 1998).

The use of the term ‘community radio’ among radios in Spain was subsequent to its boom. According to the co-founder of *Ràdio Klara*, Manolo Gallego [2], this label was imported from Latin America years after free radios appeared in Spain. In countries like Colombia, community radios achieved legal status long before Spain.

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters uses this description, but it doesn’t expressly distinguish between community and free radios. In his European branch, AMARC groups



radio stations that name themselves in many ways: free, community, associative, neighborhood, alternative or popular (Guedes & Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008: 6-7).

AMARC understands community radio as a “broadcasting service” (Mtimde, Bonin, Maphiri & Nyamaku, 1998: 16), and not only as a mere initiative. This association also emphasizes on the absence of profit-orientation, associative property and tasks towards the community as the features of community radio.

On its part, the European Parliament used the term “third sector media (TSC)” in a resolution of 2008 and appealed to some of their characteristics:

- a) non-profit, independent from powers both national as well as local and essentially dedicated to activities of public interest and of the civil society, with clearly defined objectives that always include a social benefit and contribute to intercultural dialog;
- b) responsables before the community they try to serve, which means they must inform the community about their actions and decisions and justify them and which may be sanctioned given the case of inappropriate behavior, in such a way that the service must be under the control of community interests to avoid the creation of «from top to bottom» networks;
- c) open to the participation of the community members in the creation of contents, and in all operational and managerial aspects, even though individuals responsible of the editorial content should be professionals. [3]

In Spain, the *Red Estatal de Medios Comunitarias (ReMC)* is supported by AMARC and the European Parliament and defines TSC media in their articles of association (2009). The main distinctive feature the definition offers is that these media “do not perform political or religious proselytism”, therefore they position party radios, religious radios and parish radios outside the third sector and, hence, free radios as well, although they might share the rest of attributes.

We can conclude that the many definition attempts of free radios emphasize the complexity of making a definition of the movement. The main reason for this lack of agreement comes from the diversity of free radios, which activity varies, widens or reduces the frontiers between free radio and other peer typologies or with some resemblances –community radio, of the third sector, “pirate”–, causing a theoretical weakness in a concept elaborated based on the real practice of these radios.

Therefore, we deem necessary to know the history of free radios so to collect from their background, creation, development and internal cohesion attempts -through coordinating entities and most relevant attempts of self-definition- useful attributes to delimit this concept.

### **3.2. Historical background**

The early backgrounds of the free radio movement date back to the trade union radio stations in the 1920s. The oldest example found was the *Arbeiter-Radio-Klub Deutschland* -Laborer Radio Club of Germany-; although it started with an apolitical philosophy and of cultural nature, it ended up having a political purpose, conditioned by the German laborer movement [4]. Similar radio stations emerged during these years in the Netherlands and in cities such as Chicago, in the United States (Aguilera, 1985: 36).

In the following years, the radio was used in several countries as a means of resistance and political struggle. Even though this mission doesn't necessarily coincides with the current perception of free

radios, these clandestine radio stations are mentioned as background for free radio stations due to their rebel, combative, activist spirit and on the fringes of the established legality, and even due to the defense of free and democratic values forbidden in these countries by dictatorship regimes. Like the cases of *La Voix de L'Algérie libre et combattante* –the Voice of Free Algeria–, an anti-colonialism radio station founded in 1956 by the National Liberation Front (Zaragoza, 2016: 204-205), or *Radio España Independiente*, “*La Pirenaica*”.

The first free radio considered as such was born in the United States. In 1949, the pacifist Lewis Hill founded KPFA Radio in Berkeley, California (Walker, 1997: 3). This non-profit radio station criticized wars such as the war of Korea, dealt with taboo issues in the USA society such as marijuana consumption and offered a programming that was described by the House Un-American Activities Committee as “subversive” [5]. Its example was followed by other radios that appeared later such as WTRA, founded in Springfield, Illinois, in 1986, to express political ideas at the same time it promoted a social progress (Howley, 2000: 259).

As we have seen already, free radios have been confused historically with another previous broadcasting phenomenon: “pirate radios”. The name was used due to the fact that these radios broadcasted from ships sailing in international waters to escape the jurisdiction of countries they broadcasted to (Zaragoza, 2016: 22-24), although later this same name was adopted by radios that followed the same model from dry land.

The “pirate radios” had a great relevance in countries such as United Kingdom. Radio stations such as Radio Caroline or Radio London were the loudspeakers of pop and rock music that revolutionized the cultural scenario of the time (Zaragoza, 2016: 24). However, “pirate radios” were profit-oriented and weren’t driven by ideological or social purposes, unlike free radios (Jones, 1994: 395-396). Their model was later adopted by other radio stations that moved to dry land under the same label.

“Pirate radios” have some similarities with free radios. Both were targeted to a young public and boasted about their rebel spirit, using a more relaxed style that clashed with the rigid standards of mainstream radios (Pérez Martínez, 2009: 900) and openly opposed to the “dictatorship of airwaves” (Carmona, 1986: 14).

The public property of airwaves has been the argument used by free radios. They advocate that license tenders have been regulated using political and ideological reasons. Radio stations that were less uncomfortable for heads of state or closer to their postulates were prioritized, thus denying the legal use of the radio media to groups without commercial interests which could become problematic or subversive. The legal conflicts both free and “pirate” radios were subjected to, caused several closures, sealings, confiscation of technical material and legal problems, which explains the constant fragility from the very beginning of their activity.

Italian and French free radios, linked to ‘underground’ movements and inspired in revolutionary left-wing protests such as May’68, directly influenced in the Spanish movement during the 1970s. In Italy, free radios achieved the legal recognition of their Constitutional Court twice –in 1974 and in 1976–, which was helpful for breaching the monopoly of public radio and television until reaching more than 1,600 privately-owned radio stations in three years [6].

The combative and countercultural Italian spirit found speakers such as *Radio Bologna per l'accesso pubblico*, *Radio Canale 96*, *Radio Milano Centrale*, *Radio Parma* and *Radio Alice*, among many others (Carmona, 1986: 14; Franquet & Martí, 1985: 80; Gaido, 1981: 176). *Radio Alice* reached a relevance beyond the free radios circle. Its new language renewed the Italian broadcast and its programming

included social conflicts, mixed with political comments, alternative music, poetic and philosophical references. It even became newscast reference in events such as Bologna's student riots in March 1977. During these protests, the police replied that *Radio Alice* was encouraging riots from their microphones and burst into their facilities to close the broadcasting without a court order (Eco, 1981; Carmona, 1986).

The first French free radios broadcasted illegally, against the monopoly imposed on French airwaves until 1981 (*Colectivo de Radios Libres*, 1981: 13-14). Despite opening after that year, the French government forbid the advertising incomes for free radios and limited their coverage [7], a measure criticized by the supporters of their legalization [8].

### 3.3. First free radios in Spain (1976-1982)

The first broadcasts of free radios in Spain date back to 1976. These small pioneering radio stations used frequency-modulated signal due to the lower cost of the broadcasting device and its easy assembly [9]. In addition, FM sacrificed a lower reach for a better sound quality of compared to the medium wave, which was used by the mainstream radio stations back then (López, 1997: 239). The lower reach compared to medium waves did not represent a problem for free radios, which could address their programs and messages to a closer geographical scope.

The phenomenon of free radios in Spain had different speeds in its origin, which took shape in regional experiences with three focuses of particular interest and an uneven development: Catalonia, Basque Country and Madrid.

#### 3.3.1. Catalonia

Paris received the International Assembly of Free Radio Stations in March 1978, also known as "Alfredo 78" (Prado, 1980: 159). This meeting included the participation of Barcelona activists, who planted the seed for the foundation of *Colectivo Ona Lliure* (*Colectivo Ona Lliure*, 1979). *Ona Lliure* began sporadic broadcastings during the Anti-repressive Conferences held in Vic in July 1978 (*Colectivo de Radios Libres*, 1981: 18).

*Ona Lliure* -also written *Onda Lliure*- was usually considered the first free radio in Spain, not only due to its promptness, but also due to its innovative will, influence and meaning within the movement. However, we have evidence of at least two previous experiences. In 1976, broadcastings of *Radio La Voz del Pobre* began in Madrid, promoted by the participants of the later *Cadena del Water*, and of *Radio Maduixa* -Strawberry radio-, in Granollers (Pérez Martínez, 2017: 521).

Nevertheless, *Ona Lliure* represented a paradigmatic case of pioneering free radio, both due to its advocacy of the rights for free broadcasting and its proclamation as part of the European free radios movement as well as due to the many collectives included therein, among others, ecologists, homosexuals, feminists, pacifists, conscientious objectors, radical groups, students and professors (Prado, 1999: 225-226). Namely, it wasn't only a technical experiment of ludic purposes within the epicurean radios mentioned by Aguilera, but instead, following that same classification, they pursued sectorial purposes and also, as we will see shortly, revolutionary pretensions.

*Ona Lliure* returned to the airwaves for the second time during the festivities of *la Mercè* from Barcelona, on September 23 and 24, 1978 (Prado, 1980: 159-160). After several months of preparations, *Ona Lliure* began its regular broadcasts on April 4, 1979, from 91.5 FM in Barcelona, with a three hours daily programming, from 9 to 12pm (Prado, 1980: 160). Its first broadcasts included a satirical news program called "*Deformativo Onda Lliure*", music and an interview to several



conscientious objectors (Clement & Navarro, 1979).

Its spirit was reflected in its *Propuesta para una radio libre* [Proposal for a free radio], a foundational manifesto read on air that represented one of the first self-referential documents of the free radios movement in Spain. There, the characteristic features of the philosophy of these radios stations were described:

We understand that the priority and global objective of radio is giving people the opportunity to talk [...] that is, people who do not have the chance to express themselves in their life through media in order to communicate with others in its true sense [...] When we talk about people, we are referring to sectors that are currently marginalized (being aware of it or not) from a communicational process. [10]

Besides bidirectional communication, an independent radio was also vindicated in this manifesto -that wasn't "spokesperson of a trade union or political party"-, provocative, of "counter-information" compared to the mainstream discourse, that worked as "a place for test and debate" and that served as a participation platform for movements such as feminists, gays, ecologists or conscientious objectors -among others-. Moreover, this 'Proposal' even referred to the inner functioning of the radio: which promoted an horizontal structure where "there shouldn't be social division of work" and therefore, replaced the flowchart of traditional radios by a collective decision-making structure.

On April 19, the radio underwent one of its first closures by the police. In spite of this, four days later they restored their broadcasting clandestinely (Claudín, 1979). The second sealing occurred on May 15, due to a denounce filed by the civil governor of Barcelona, who accused the radio of "contempt of authority and serious alteration of the public order". Nevertheless, on May 28, the removal of sealings due to absence of proofs was legally ordered; but it did not prevent a third closure on day 30 (Prado, 1980: 161). In its whole history, *Ona Lliure* experienced six closures and re-openings (Cheval, 1990: 69). Meanwhile, the press reflected the changes in the names of the radio station in their re-foundations, such as *Ona Lliure-2* [11] or *Ona Lliure Bis* [12].

In its three first sealings there was no regulation regarding police action [13] until the Royal Decree 1433/1979, of June 8, supported successive closures. *Ona Lliure* ended its activity permanently after a new police closure in October 1980 (Doğ & Sanchis & Deó, 1985: 40-41).

The main legacy of *Ona Lliure* was stimulating the birth of other radio broadcast projects of the kind. Radio stations such as *Contra-Radio* and *La Campana de Gràcia* -the later created after the second closure of *Ona Lliure*- emerged in Barcelona in 1979 [14], consolidating Catalonia as the spotlight of free radio in Spain.

*La Campana de Gràcia* -July 1979- broadcasted twice per week from the terraces of the buildings in the Barcelona neighborhood of Gracia (*Bicicleta*, 1981). Its case illustrates the economic expenses these radio stations involved during that period:

Opposite to what might be believed, a huge economic expense is not needed to try the airwaves experience. *La Campana [de Gràcia]* began with an initial budget of 50.000 *pesetas*, the broadcasting device was built with the aid of several amateur radio users. *Onda Lliure*, which was constituted of more than one hundred individuals that paid some fees, began with a somewhat higher budget, 200.000 *pesetas*. [15]

Materials were difficult to find though, despite their low cost, which forced promoters to look for them in other countries. According to Salvador Picarol -radio nickname of Salvador Palos-, participant of

*La Campana de Gràcia*, the assembly of this radio was possible thanks to the technical material coming from Italy as contraband [16].

*La Campana de Gràcia* was sealed on January 1980, while sharing broadcasting with one of the “re-foundations” of *Ona Lliure*. Twenty individuals were detained by the police [17]. Before that, *Contra-Radio*, *Radio Estel* and *El Avispero* already stopped broadcasting. However, as Picarol states, *La Campana de Gràcia* was re-founded and achieved the “administrative tolerance” to move and broadcast without sanction from the square’s tower of the Local Government of Gràcia. The radio station terminated its activities in 1982, according to Salvador Picarol due to lack of economic resources and the tiredness of its radio speakers [18].

Picarol’s broadcasting activity continued with the foundation of his own radio station, *Radio Pica* - initials of Independent Promotion Artistic Coordination-, on March 9, 1981. This radio station focused on the creation of counter-cultural contents, with the broadcasting of programs that were “completely different compared to what was listened in Barcelona’s radio stations”, it included an agenda of underground events and chronicles of “neighborhood activist activities that were completely silenced in other media.” [19]

*Radio Pica* took advantage of the parallel birth of other alternative artistic manifestations, such as self-edited fanzines and street graffiti, to favor “collaborations and joint spreading and programs dedicated to ‘comic and underground art’” among other themes. *Radio Pica* broadcasted until 1987, when it was closed by order of *Generalitat de Catalunya*, although it could return to the airwaves in 1991, even though Picarol [20] points out that the first stage of his radio station enjoyed the greatest popularity and audience.

**Table 1. List of free radios created in Catalonia between 1976 and 1983.**

Name	Locality	First broadcast	Closure(s)	Notes
<i>Ràdio Maduixa</i>	Granollers	1976	?	
<i>Ona Lliure</i>	Barcelona	1978-July (experimental) 1979-April (regular)	1979, 1980	Six closures by the police.
<i>La Campana de Gràcia</i>	Barcelona	1979-June	1980, 1982	Closure by the police (1980) / Self-dissolution (1982).
<i>Contra-Radio</i>	Barcelona	1979-June	1979	
<i>La Voz de la España Nacional</i>	Barcelona	1979	?	Extreme right-wing political radio station.
<i>Radio Libertina / Ràdio Llibertina</i>	Barcelona	1979/1980?	?	
<i>Ràdio Gavina</i>	Barcelona	1980-	1981-	Self-dissolution. Some of its

		November	September	members created <i>Radio Venus</i> .
<i>Ràdio Músic</i>	Barcelona	1980	?	
<i>Ràdio Pica</i>	Barcelona	1981-March	1987	Closure by the police. Re-opens in 1991.
<i>Antena Alternativa</i>	Barcelona	1981-October	1981-December	Self-dissolution.
<i>Ràdio Farigola</i>	Barcelona	1981-May (experimental) 1982-March (regular)	Several closures (1981, 1982, 1983)	Definitive closure in Summer of 1983. Re-founded later as <i>Radio Línea IV</i> .
<i>Ràdio Venus</i>	Barcelona	1982-January	1984	
<i>Ràdio La Veu Impertinent</i>	Barcelona	1982-November	?	Re-founded as <i>Radio Àgora</i> .
<i>Ràdio Trinitat Vella</i>	Barcelona	1983		Neighborhood radio station.
<i>Ràdio Poble Sec</i>	Arenys de Mar	1979-September	1979	Re-opened later [active in 1983].
<i>Ràdio Estel / Ràdio l'Hospitalet</i>	L'Hospital et de Llobregat	1979-November	1979/1980 ?	Re-opened.
<i>Ràdio Hospitalet FM</i>	L'Hospital et de Llobregat	1979-November	1980-February	Closure by the police. Re-opens in 1980 with municipal support.
<i>Ràdio Can Serra / Ràdio l'Hospitalet</i>	L'Hospital et de Llobregat	1979/1980?	1980-February	Closure by the police.
<i>Ràdio Almeda</i>	Cornellà de Llobregat	1978 (experimental) 1979 (regular)	1979, 1980	Closure by the police (1979). Re-foundation as municipal <i>Radio Cornellà</i> (1980).
<i>Els Pirates Empordanesos / Los Piratas del Ampurdán</i>	Figueres	1979-June	?	
<i>Ràdio Borrego</i>	Cardedeu	1979	?	Re-foundation as municipal

				<i>Radio Cardedeu.</i>
<i>El Avispero</i>	Santa Coloma de Gramenet	1979 (experimental)	1979, 1981	Attempts to re-open in 1980 (September- December) and in 1981.
<i>Ràdio Sant Boi</i>	Sant Boi de Llobregat	1979 (experimental) 1980-January (regular)	1980	Closed. Re-foundation as municipal radio (1980-May).
<i>La Seba / La Ceba</i>	Sabadell	1980-January	?	
<i>Ràdio Juventut del Plá / Ràdio Jove del Plá</i>	El Plá de Santa María	1980	?	Currently municipal.
<i>Ràdio Gavà</i>	Gavà	1980	?	Re-founded as municipal radio in 1982.
<i>Ràdio Boira Lliure</i>	Vic	1980-April	1980, 1981- August	Second opening in December 1980.
<i>Radio Palafrugell</i>	Palafrugell	1980-December		Municipalized.
<i>Ràdio Ferrerito</i>	Sant Feliu de Guixols	1980	1980	Fusion with <i>R. Juriola</i> ( <i>R. Sant Feliu de Guixols</i> )
<i>Ràdio Juriola</i>	Sant Feliu de Guixols	1980	1980	Fusion with <i>R. Ferrerito</i> ( <i>R. Sant Feliu de Guixols</i> )
<i>Ràdio Sant Feliu de Guixols</i>	Sant Feliu de Guixols	1980		Admitted advertising later.
<i>Ràdio Ganxona</i>	Sant Feliu de Guixols	1981	1986	Originally born as <i>Ràdio Costa Brava</i> .
<i>Ràdio Cerdanyola</i>	Mataró	1981-May	?	
<i>Ràdio Lliure Sant Adrià</i>	Sant Adrià de Besòs	1981-September	?	Closure due to economic problems and the creation of other radio stations nearby.
<i>Ràdio Llamborda</i>	Manresa	1982-August	1983-May	Re-founded as municipal radio <i>Ona7 Ràdio</i> .
<i>Ràdio Music Club</i>	Reus	1982-September	1983-June; 1989	Administrative closure. Re-founded as professional radio

				( <i>Punt 6 Radio</i> , 1994).
<i>Radio Estudiantil de Palamós</i>	Palamós	1982-January	1983	Re-foundation as <i>Radio Palamós</i> .
<i>Radio Palamós</i>	Palamós	1983		Municipal radio since 1984.
<i>Ràdio Platja d'Aro</i>	Castell-Platja d'Aro	1982-December	1988	Re-opened in 1989 as municipal radio.
<i>Radio Montgrí</i>	Torroella de Montgrí	1982		Municipalized.
<i>Ràdio Saturn</i>	Cassà de la Selva	1982?	1983-November	Re-opened. Re-founded as municipal radio: <i>Ràdio Cassà</i> .
<i>Ràdio Banyoles</i>	Banyoles	1982	1982-3?	Municipal radio with the same name broadcasting since 1991.
<i>Ràdio Begur</i>	Begur	1983	?	Re-opened in 1991 as municipal radio.
<i>Ràdio Silenci</i>	La Garriga	1983-April	1986	Municipal radio since 1984. Closed in 1986 by municipal decision and re-opened in 2000.
<i>Ràdio Baldufa</i>	Santa Susanna	1983-December	1984	Re-foundation as <i>Radio Jove</i> , and later as the municipal radio: <i>Radio Santa Susanna</i> (1989).
<i>Radio Carolina</i>	Lleida	1983-December	?	
<p>With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Radio Clot / Radio Ateneu del Clot</i> (Barcelona; broadcasting in 1983), <i>Radio Música</i> (Barcelona / L'Hospitalet, 1980-?), <i>Radio Ocaña</i> (Barcelona), <i>Radio Gràcia Rebel</i> (Barcelona), <i>Radio Ciutat de Badalona</i> (Badalona, 1979-1980), <i>Radio Tramvia</i> (Tiana), <i>Radio B</i> (Barcelona, broadcasting in 1983); <i>Radio Montnegra</i> (Barcelona, broadcasting in 1983); <i>Ràdio Àgora</i> (Barcelona, broadcasting in 1984); <i>VSJ-3</i> (Sant Andreu de la Barca, 1979-July-?), <i>Radio Aire Lliure</i> (Sant Adrià de Besòs, broadcasting in 1981), <i>Radio Alternativa</i> (Sant Adrià de Besòs), <i>Radio Lliure Ítaca</i> (Girona, broadcasting in 1980), <i>Radio Ampurdán</i> (Girona), <i>Radio F-103 MKM Ripollés</i> (Girona), <i>Radio Belcaire</i> (Belcaire d'Empordà, 1982), <i>Radio Juventud de Andalucía</i> (Cornellá, broadcasting in 1982), <i>Radio Calonge</i> (Calonge, 1983), <i>Radio Alternativa</i> (Sant Adrià de Besòs).</p>				
<p>Other radio stations mentioned in studies found and which not complied with the proposed definition of free radios: <i>Radio La Paloma</i> (Barcelona, 1980/1-1985; neighborhood, commercial radio station, closed by order of <i>Generalitat</i>); <i>Radio Obrera</i> (1981-May, Barcelona; union radio station linked to <i>Comisiones Obreras</i>); <i>Radio Estudi Esplugues</i> (Esplugues de Llobregat, 1981-2004; commercial radio); <i>Studio-79</i> (1983-1988, Sant Andreu de la Barca; privately-owned, re-</p>				



founded as municipal radio: *Radio Sant Andreu*); *Radio Azul* (1981, Rubí; commercial radio; extreme right-wing political radio station); *Ràdio Ponent* (Miralcamp, 1982?, company-like collective), *Ràdio Mediterrànea* (Blanes, 1982-October –1985-July; with the internal structure of a commercial radio?), *Ràdio Blanes* (Blanes, 1983-January –1983-December, re-founded as *Radio Antena Brava*; with the internal structure of a commercial radio?). *Radio Bahía* (Roses, 1982, commercial radio), *Radio Bisbal* (La Bisbal d'Empordà, 1982, municipal radio), *Ràdio Ripoll* (Ripoll, 1980, commercial radio).

Source: authors' own creation.

### 3.3.2. Basque Country and Navarre

By late 1978 and the early 1979, a new focus of free radios concurrent to the Catalan focus emerged in the Basque Country and Navarre [21]. The creation of alternative radios in these areas was linked to many groups, like Catalonia, ecologists, feminists, anti-nuclear, cultural and neighboring collectives, *gaztetxes* or 'okkupied' social centers, etc. (Gutiérrez, 2004: 3). In addition, several of these radio stations used Basque on air as a sign of identity and vindication of their language (Gutiérrez, 2004: 2).

The musical radio *JMC-Radio*, of Las Arenas, and *Osina Irratia* (*Radio Ortiga*), of Rentería, competed for the honorary title of being the first radio station of this kind in the Basque Country. *JMC-Radio* began its broadcasts in December 1978, but its marked profit-oriented nature contrasted with the activist role of *Osina Irratia*, which could be considered as the first radio station clearly associated with the movement's spirit.

*Osina Irratia* began broadcasting on February 23, 1979 (Santos, 1994: 137). According to different sources, its foundation originated from "political parties and organizations" (Santos, 2003: 317) or from "an antimilitaristic and ecologist group that used the media for spreading its ideas" (Ramírez de la Piscina, 2010). In its programming, they alternated general information with debates about issues such as the Armed Forces Day, with the active presence of anti-military activists, or interviews to social groups such as anti-nuclear activists (Gutiérrez, 2002: 105).

Meanwhile, in that same year in Pamplona *Sorgiña Irratia* was born – translated as Radio Witch -, renamed in 1980 as *Radio Paraíso* (Gutiérrez, 2002: 114), and in Tolosa, *Satorra Irratia* -translatable as Radio Mole- (Santos, 1994; *Irola Irratia*, 2000).

*Radio Paraíso* broadcasted musical-humoristic programs [22] and, unlike the rest of radio stations, had some proposals close to commercial radios (*Irola Irratia*, 2000). On the other hand, *Satorra Irratia* defined itself, among other characteristics, as a radio station "at the service of the laborer class and the working people of the area of Tolosa", that wanted to "give a voice to those who didn't have one" and serve as "an instrument of coordination between the different activist struggles." (Colectivo de Radios Libres, 1981: 24)

*Paraíso* was not the only free radio station in this time period in Navarre. Among the ones that appeared later we can mention *Xorroxin Irratia*, in Baztán since 1981 and one of the very few cases countrywide that achieved a license, a municipal license in this case, in 1999; *Eguzki Irratia*, which began broadcasting from Pamplona on December 1982 driven by ecologist groups [23] and which survived several closures and confiscations by the police (*Irola Irratia*, 2000: 11); and *Zaborra Irratia*, in Alsasua, which began to broadcast in 1983, although it closed afterwards (Gutiérrez Paz, 2002: 114-115).

Other broadcasting projects underwent several stages depending on the will of their members at all times, transforming the main objectives of radio stations and therefore, their nature. This was the case of *JB-Irratia*, in San Salvador del Valle (current *Valle de Trápaga/Trapagaran, Bizcay*), born in the Summer of 1983 --with broadcasts only in Summer until continuing on a steady basis in 1985--. This radio turned from a self-funded cooperative-- close in this sense to the model of free radio-- to a commercial radio by accepting advertising (Santos, 1994: 34-35).

Many of them ended up being closed: *Satorra* in 1980 (*Colectivo de Radios Libres*, 1981); *Paraíso* in November that same year, four months after its onset, and with four of its members detained by the police [24]; and *Mosollo* in 1981 after an administrative warning (Santos, 1994: 27). Of course, there were attempts for re-opening, and even social reply, with a protest in Pamplona in favor of *Radio Paraíso* where there attended two thousand individuals [25].

This popular response evidenced the social follow-up some of these radios achieved. For instance, a survey of 1984 estimated the audience of *Radio Paraíso* to be about six thousand listeners (Gutiérrez, 2002: 114).

**Table 2. List of free radios created in the Basque Country and Navarre between 1976 and 1983.**

Name	Locality	First Broadcast	Closure(s)	Notes
<i>Sorgina Irratia / Sorgine Irratia / Sorgiña Irratia</i>	Pamplona	1979-February	1979-May	Closure by the police. Re-founded as <i>Radio Paraíso</i> (1980).
<i>Radio Paraíso</i>	Pamplona	1980	Several (identified: 1981, 1983, 1984, 1988)	Continuation of <i>Sorgiña Irratia</i> . Closures by the police.
<i>Radio Cocodrilo / Radio Kokodrilo</i>	Pamplona	1978 (experimental) 1980 (regular)	1987	
<i>Eguzki Irratia</i>	Pamplona	1982-December	Several (identified: 1983, 1984, 1988, 1992)	Closures by the police. Re-opened.
<i>Radio Iris</i>	Pamplona	?	?	Broadcasting in 1983.
<i>CRDI (Club Radio de Iruña)</i>	Pamplona	1983 (regular)	?	Constituted as association in 1986.
<i>Radio Paranoia /</i>	Pamplona	1983	1985?	

<i>Paranoia Irratia</i>				
<i>Osina Irratia / Radio Ortiga</i>	Rentería	1979-February	1979	
<i>Radio Mosollo / Mozoilo Irratia</i>	Galdacano	1979-May	1981	Closure by administrative warning. Re-opening in 1986 constituted as cultural association. Municipal radio since 1987.
<i>Satorra Irratia / Radio Topo</i>	Tolosa	1979-December	1980-November	Closure by the police and imprisonment of their members due to the anti-terrorist law.
<i>Xorroxin Irratia</i>	Valle del Baztán	1981		Legalized as municipal radio since 1999.
<i>Ganbara Irratia</i>	Amurrio	1982	?	
<i>Kakaflash Irratia / Kaka Flash Irratia</i>	Azcoitia	1982/1984?	1985	Closure by the police.
<i>Lizarra Irratia-Radio Estella</i>	Lizarra	?	1985	Active in 1983. Closure by government's order.
<i>Arlote Irratia</i>	Ordicia	1983	?	
<i>Pottoka Irratia</i>	Eibar	1983-January	2001	Re-founded as <i>Matrallako</i> .
<i>Radio Kalaña / Radio Calaña</i>	Bilbao	-	-	Constituted in 1982. Did not broadcast regularly due to dissolution of the collective.
<i>Gramola Irratia</i>	Bilbao	1983-February	?	
<i>Txomin Barullo Irratia (TBI)</i>	Bilbao	1983-August (regular)	?	
<i>Hala Bedi Irratia</i>	Vitoria-Gasteiz	1983-August	Several (1983, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1990)	
<i>Zaborra Irratia</i>	Alsasua	1983-December	1984-August	Closure due to governments' warning.
With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Eate Irratia</i> (Pamplona, ? – several closures, the last one in				

1989 by governments' order), *Urtxintxa Irratia / Radio Urtxintxa* (Rentería, broadcasting in 1983 - ?), *Radio Queen / Queen's* (Pamplona, broadcasting in 1983, 1984 - ?), *AQSPDN* (active in 1983, 1984), *Biak* (active in 1983), *Askatasuna Irratia* (San Sebastián, 1983 or 1984? - ?), *Ostadar Irratia* (San Sebastián, active in 1983), *Arb Beltz Irratia* (San Sebastián, active in 1984), *ICL Fin de semana* (San Sebastián, active in 1984), *Canal 25* (Bilbao, active in 1984), *Radio Las Arenas* (Portugalete, active in 1984), *Radio Pita* (Pamplona), *Bihar* (Pamplona), *Radio Rufo* (Tafalla).

Source: authors' own creation.

### 3.3.3. Madrid

Although Catalonia and the Basque Country-Navarre axis were the first eclosion focuses of free radios, Madrid had the pioneering experience of *Radio La Voz del Pobre* in 1976. However, after its disappearance in 1978 there was a vacuum of activities until the creation of *Radio-Ola*, which determined the beginning of a new generation of free radios from Madrid in 1980 (Aguilera, 1985: 150), represented by *Esstereo*, in February, 1981; *Radio Manzanares*, in October --with only one month of life--; and *Radio Keka*, at the end of that year (Pérez Martínez, 2009: 334-335). All those shared a spirit of “transformation of the radio broadcasting activity” but did not have a specific ideological or social mission, but instead they broadcasted out of experimentation alone (Aguilera, 1985).

The promoters of the missing *Radio La Voz del Pobre* began broadcasting *La Voz de la Experiencia – Cadena del Water* in 1982. Its case was peculiar taking in mind it wasn't considered as part of the movement, although it shared many features of it though. Its purpose was not changing the society or representing oppressed or ignored collectives, but instead the mere radio experimentation through its contents, its informal language and the direct communication and without filters with listeners through the radio station's phone, establishing a complicity relationship. Thanks to these as well as other factors, *la Cadena del Water* achieved an impact in youth of Madrid that wasn't achieved by any other free radio back then, until its forced closure in 1989 (Pérez Martínez, 2015b).

**Table 3. List of free radios created in the Community of Madrid between 1976 and 1983.**

Name	Locality	First broadcasting	Closure(s)	Notes
<i>Radio La Voz del Pobre</i>	Madrid	1976	1978	
<i>Radio-Ola</i>	Madrid	1980- August	1981	
<i>Esstereo</i>	Madrid	1981- February	?	
<i>Radio Manzanares</i>	Madrid	1981- October	1981- November	
<i>Radio Keka</i>	Madrid	1981- October	?	
<i>Cadena del Water</i>	Madrid	1982	1989	Self-dissolution due to risk of potential closure by the

				government.
<i>Radio Acción</i>	Madrid	1983	?	
<i>Onda Sur Villaverde</i>	Madrid	1983- January	?	
<i>Onda Verde Vallekana</i>	Madrid	1983-April		Later, <i>Onda Verde</i> .
<i>Radio Luna</i>	Madrid	1983-May	?	
<i>Radio Fhortaleza</i>	Madrid	1983- October	?	Re-founded as <i>Radio Enlace</i> .
<i>Radio Vicálvaro / Antena Vicálvaro</i>	Madrid	1983- November	?	
<i>Radio Rara</i>	Getafe	?	?	Broadcasting in 1983.
<i>Radio Tú</i>	Parla	?	?	Broadcasting in 1983.
<i>Radio Leganés</i>	Leganés	?	?	Broadcasting in 1983.
With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Radio Piel Roja</i> (Leganés, broadcasting in 1983?); <i>Radio Las Águilas</i> (Aluche, 1983 or 1984?).				

Source: authors' own creation.

### 3.3.4. Others

In the rest of the regions in Spain, there was less presence of the movement and took longer to branch out into the airwaves, either due to the difficulty of gathering enough volunteers for the cause, or due to mere technical reasons.

In Valencia, there are barely data published about *Radio Galena*, which seems to be the first background of free radio in this region. The few authors that mentioned it, established its birth between 1978 and 1979 (Forti, 2014: 32), although they couldn't broadcast due to economic and definition problems (Dolç & Sanchis & Deo, 1985: 51). There is evidence about *Colectivo Radio Galena*, responsible for managing the radio station, and of one of its members, Josep Climent, based on a text he undersigned in *Bicicleta* in 1979.

Shortly after the *Radio Klara* project emerged, “free and libertarian” as they called themselves, which is currently the most veteran and outstanding free radio of Valencia. The idea was born in 1979 in a group of members of the libertarian movement and CNT, after some cultural meetings, although the first broadcasts were done on March 26, 1982. According to Manolo Gallego -one of its founders -, this three-year-period was the time needed to collect the initial money for the purchasing and the assembly of the material. (Durà, 2012: 31-36).

*Klara* programming followed the line of other free radio stations. According to Gallego “free radios in general, and in this case Radio Klara in particular, revealed things that weren't heard of” in mainstream media outlets, such as anti-militaristic, ecologists, feminists or LGTB spaces. Anyone could produce a program if enough level of technical and communicative quality was reached, as well as if it complied with its “idea of radio”, specified in “two red lines: no fascism, no Stalinism.” [26].



In its first years it suffered its “alegal” status and, with it, three police closures. According to Durà (2012: 34), initially its founders didn’t look for a legal way of broadcasting. However, Manolo Gallego nuances that within *Radio Klara* “there were also people who wanted to be legal and fought for legalization”, up to the point of interviewing directly with the *Generalitat* to get the license [27].

Conversations were successful and, after participating in a tender reserved to cultural radio stations, *Radio Klara* obtained a license of the Valencian government in 1989. Since then, *Klara* became one of the free longer-lived radio stations in the region.

Besides *Galena* and *Klara*, the Valencian Community also sheltered other outstanding experiences in the middle of the 1980s such as *Radio Puça*, *Radio Iris*, *Radio Llibertaria* and *Radio Califat* (Martínez Gallego & Bas Portero, 2000: 311).

**Table 4. List of free radios created in the Valencian Community between 1976 and 1983.**

Name	Locality	First broadcasting	Closure(s)	Notes
<i>Radio Galena</i>	Valencia	-	-	*
<i>Ràdio Klara</i>	Valencia	1982-March	Three closures between 1982-84.	Re-opened. Legalized as cultural radio station.
<i>Ràdio Puça</i>	Valencia	1982-November	1984	
<i>Radio Metropolitana</i>	Valencia	?	?	Broadcasting in 1983.
<i>Radio Juventud</i>	Valencia	?	?	Broadcasting in 1983.
<i>Onda Jove / Onda Joven</i>	Valencia	?	1984	Broadcasting in 1983.
<i>Ràdio Califat</i>	Valencia	1983-February	1984	Sealed and then unsealed by police in 1985-1986.
<i>Ràdio Cinc / Ràdio 5</i>	Sueca	1982-December	1984?	
<i>Radio Torta</i>	Paterna	1983	?	
<i>Radio Unitat / Radio Unidad</i>	Sagunto	1983-July	?	Broadcasting in 1983.
<i>Radio l’Horta Independent</i>	Paiporta	1983-October	?	
<i>Radio Pessic</i>	Pedreguer	1983-November	?	
<i>Radio Astèrix</i>	Benetússer	?	?	Broadcasting in 1983. Sealed

				and later unsealed by the Civil Guard (1984).
* There is no reliable document proof that <i>Colectivo Radio Galena</i> produced its first broadcastings (in any case, they would be around 1979). In any case, this list was included to make a record of its existence as a group and its relevance as first attempt in Valencia and first Valencian representative in the meetings of the <i>Coordinadora Estatal</i> .				
With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Radio Piula</i> [broadcasting in 1983], <i>Radio El Grao</i> [broadcasting in 1983].				

Source: authors' own elaboration.

Other pioneering radios in their territories during these first years were *Radio Arnedo Independiente* -1981-, in La Rioja; *Antena del Ebro* [28] -1982- and *Radio Grillo* [29] -1983-, in Zaragoza; *Radio QK* -1983-, in Oviedo; *Radio Cometa* [30] and *Radio Karibú* [31], in Valladolid -both in 1984-; and *Radio PKO*, in Segovia.

**Table 5. List of free radios created in other regions of Spain between 1976 and 1983.**

Name	Locality	First broadcasting	Closure(s)	Notes
<b>LA RIOJA</b>				
<i>Radio Arnedo Independiente</i>	Arnedo	1981	1981	Police closure.
<b>CASTILE-LA MANCHA</b>				
<i>Radio Botijo</i>	Campo de Criptana	1982	1984	
<i>Radio Manuela</i>	Albacete	?	Several (one of them in 1984)	Broadcasting in 1983. Administrative closure.
With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Onda 1</i> (Albacete), <i>Radio Bigarda Libre</i> (Cuenca, broadcasting in 1984).				
<b>ARAGÓN</b>				
<i>Antena del Ebro</i>	Zaragoza	1982-September	1982-November	According to some sources, it was a free radio or commercial-oriented radio.
<i>Radio Grillo</i>	Zaragoza	1983-February	1985	
<i>Radio Antena</i>	Zaragoza	1983-May	1983-November	Founded by former members of <i>Antena del Ebro</i> .

<i>Radio del Barrio</i>	Zaragoza	1983-May	1983?	Precursor of <i>Radio Sabina</i> .
<i>Radio Sabina</i>	Zaragoza	1983?	?	Coming from <i>Radio del Barrio</i> .
<i>Radio Dharma</i>	Zaragoza	1983	?	Later <i>Megarradio</i> .
<i>Radio Urbana</i>	Zaragoza	1983	?	
<i>Radio Nacional de Aragón / R. J. 6</i>	Zaragoza	1983	1983/1984	Self-dissolution due to threat of police closure.
<i>Radio Antena del Huerva</i>	Zaragoza	1983	?	
<i>Onda 11</i>	Zaragoza	1983	?	
<i>Radio Castaña</i>	Huesca	1983	?	
<i>R.C.L.</i>	Garrapinillos	1983-March		Started as free radio. Later, it turned into a commercial/ pirate radio.
With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Canal 13</i> (Zaragoza, 1983? - ?), <i>Radio Palangana</i> (Zaragoza, 1983? - ?).				
ASTURIAS				
<i>Radio QK (Radio Cucaracha)</i>	Oviedo	1983-May		
MURCIA				
<i>Radio Termita</i>	Murcia	1983	?	Closure by government order in 1984, re-opened later.
<i>Radio Cieza</i>	Cieza	1983	?	Re-founded in 1987 as <i>Radio Cieza</i> municipal radio station.
ANDALUSIA				
With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Radio Primavera</i> (Seville, broadcasting in 1983), <i>Radio Joven</i> (Cádiz), <i>Radio Arcos</i> (Cádiz), <i>Radio Guadalquivir</i> (Cádiz).				
EXTREMADURA				
With scarce or doubtful references: <i>Radio Chaqueta</i> (Cáceres; closure by administrative order in 1984), <i>Radio Omega</i> (Cáceres; closure by administrative order in 1984), <i>Radio Coria</i> (Coria; closure by administrative order in 1984), <i>Radio Navalmoral</i> (Navalmoral de la Mata; broadcasting in 1984), <i>Radio Trujillo</i> (Trujillo; broadcasting in 1984).				

Source: authors' own creation.

### 3.4. Between valid legality and repression: first reactions from the government

The first free radios caught administrations off-guard, which reacted with police closures. The promoters of these alternative media complained that these closures violated their freedom of broadcasting, as set forth in article 20 of the Constitution of 1978. Therefore, the Government sought a regulation providing a legal support for subsequent interventions. The first legal response to this situation was the Royal Decree 1433/1979, of June 8, which remarked the monopoly of the frequency-modulated ownership in its first article. The third article directly affected the situation of free radios:

One. The lack of license shall entail the immediate closure of the radio station broadcasting without it.

Two. Civil governors, on their behalf or on the behalf of the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Transport and Communications, shall adopt the necessary measures for the interruption of all clandestine radio broadcasting and the closure of the corresponding equipment. [32]

Furthermore, in paragraph number three, the sales of broadcasting technical material to unlicensed radio stations was forbidden, hindering the acquisition of broadcasting equipment as well as the development of new radios. Although police closures already occurred before this Royal Decree --like the case of *Ona Lliure*--, since its publication it offered a legal argument to the intervention of material.

From this point, free radios were forced to get their material through other routes. Among them, there was the construction of the equipment itself, its importation -like the aforementioned case of *La Campana de Gràcia*- and even the trade of technical equipment between free radios, an additional level of internal cohesion of the movement countrywide, even though it was forced by circumstances. For instance, several components of *Cadena del Water* produced their own brand of broadcasting equipment for other radios, as well as antennas to amplify their own signal in Madrid (Pérez Martínez, 2015b: 69).

### 3.5. Together, but not scrambled: “municipal” manifestation of free radios

Another phenomenon of similar origin appeared in a parallel manner to those of the free radios in Spanish airwaves during this period. Municipal radios, depending on local governments of their locations, shared in their beginnings the format and alternative contents of free radio stations. *Radio Arenys de Mar*, created on September 1979, was the first municipal radio of the state (Prado, 1999: 225-226). In a year, eleven Catalan localities started their municipal broadcasts, and other twenty-five were in the pipeline [33].

Municipal and free radios shared the “alegality” status. This also caused that the former were subject to police action, depending on the levels of permissiveness in every territory: they could live from the permissiveness up to the immediate action. The most known case was *Radio As Mariñas*, the first municipal radio of Galicia, in the locality of Oleiros. On the night of July from 24 to 25, 1980, it began broadcasting and 70 minutes later they were closed by a governmental order [34].

Nevertheless, the pathway between free and municipal radios was separated as the eighties progressed. The self-affirmation of free radios as disconnected from the political and economic power was helpful for said separation; exactly unlike municipal radios, which depended directly on their local governments and were accused of serving as propaganda for parties controlling them.

Furthermore, municipal radios achieved the seal of approval by the administration: there were tenders of specific licenses for them from 1989 and two years later the law of organization and control of

municipal broadcasting radio stations was approved (Law 11/1991, April 8). This law regularized the existence of municipal radios throughout the country and it opened the door to its double funding: through public funds and “their own commercial incomes”. When these radios were legalized, there were about 500 in Spain, and the approval of the law expected the foundation of another 600 new ones [35].

### **3.6. Coordination: from the beginnings (1979) to the *Villaverde* Manifesto (1983)**

Despite the disparity of collectives, programs and objectives that were part of free radios as a whole, from the beginning they perceived the relevance of a cohesion for a double reason: to grow as a movement –through the joint collaboration, mutual technical support and collective consolidation of free radios-- and join efforts before the Administration to defend their right to broadcast which –based on the different sensitivities of the movement-- needed to undergo the legalization of their activity, or otherwise, to request a permissive attitude and without closure threats.

This way, the first regional coordinating entities emerged and the *Coordinadora Estatal de Radios Libres*, which met on a regular basis in said meetings. Although the *Coordinadora Estatal* did not achieve its main aim --legalization--, its activity was rather outstanding. It became the usual spokesperson before the national press during the eighties, and established a milestone with the *Villaverde* Manifesto of 1983.

The first meeting countrywide was held in Barcelona, on June from 14 to 17, 1979, with the participation of radio stations of Catalonia, Basque Country, Navarre, Valencian Community and Madrid, including groups from Extremadura, Andalusia, Galicia and Castilla y León that couldn't attend (Prado, 1980: 162). In a notice of the publication *Bicicleta*, signed by the member of *Colectivo Radio Galena* of Valencia, Josep Clement (1979) there is a record that “the *Coordinadora Estatal de Radios Libres* was just created”, where other groups that didn't attend the meeting were also part of, coming from Andalusia, Extremadura, Galicia and Castilla y León. It was also open to upcoming radio stations or closed radios stations waiting to return to their activity.

The main purpose of those meetings was the consolidation of the movement to denounce the “alegality” status, but were also useful for sharing specific broadcasting experiences, have debate about their goals and common objectives and receive advise about technical issues between them.

On October 12, 13 and 14, 1979 the second country meeting was held, also in Barcelona. This meeting was marked by the closure suffered by Catalan radio stations such as *Ona Lliure* and *Contra-Radio*. Therefore, it was useful for preparing a joint program on October 22, among all existing radio stations; *La Campana de Gràcia* took advantage of the initiative to resume its broadcastings a day later (Prado, 1980: 162).

The mediatic relevance of free radios and their joint actions started to be perceived since 1980, when the police dissolved a protest *passacaglia* organized by free radios in the Rambla of Barcelona [36]. The press made a record of the birth of initiatives such as the *Coordinadora de Radios Libres de Euskadi*, which included 17 radio stations of Guipuzcoa, Biscay and Navarre [37], or *Coordinadora de Emisoras Independientes de Cataluña* -CEIC-, which also gathered municipal radio stations to defend the broadcasting freedom together [38].

The third, fourth and fifth meetings were held in Barcelona, Zaragoza and Pamplona, respectively. The documentary references about these meetings are rather scant.

The fourth state meeting was held in Zaragoza in March 1982 -although broadcasting free radios didn't



exist in Aragon back then-. Based on plain minutes from that meeting, the Zaragoza event allowed to “determine a series of issues that were already discussed in the previous meeting in Barcelona”, which are not specified. This document advocated the “liberation of airwaves, as an additional part of freedom of expression” and highlighted the need for a “coordination between us against the constant repression to alternative media” [39]. The movement of free radios also claimed the creation of new radio stations, “as well as the creation of an extended counter-information trend”, and ended up by defending “the freedom of broadcasting by spreading”.

According to sources identified for this study, the country meeting of free radios in Pamplona - presumably the fifth – was held in December 1982. There participated radios of the Basque Country, Aragon and Catalonia, with the joining of other radio stations of Valencia, Jaén, Canarias, Oviedo and Madrid [40]. The closure of one of the first alternative radios in Zaragoza the previous month, *Antena del Ebro*, was denounced by free radios and qualified as “a new arbitrary measure against the freedom of expression-broadcasting” in the Pamplona meeting in December 1982 [41].

These meetings did not reach a great mediatic effect, but established the grounds for a new meeting in Madrid which, in this case, reached a certain national impact and was a slap on the back for the movement countrywide.

On May 21 and 22, 1983 the sixth country meeting of free radios was held in a Madrid’s neighborhood called *Villaverde Alto*, also known as the Congress of Madrid, under the patronage of *Onda Sur Villaverde* and with the collaboration of *Radio QK* of Oviedo, both created recently for the date. *Onda Sur* was created on January by *Grupo Ecologista Alternativo de Villaverde* [42], while *Radio QK* began broadcasting about that same month of May in a workshop of *Asociación Juvenil Club Cultural de Oviedo* [43].

Participants, a total of 22 radio stations [44] -although they expected about half a hundred [45]-, wrote the conclusions of the meeting in the Villaverde Manifesto, which made record of other meetings as well and the *Propuesta para una radio libre* (Proposal for a free radio) by *Ona Lliure* to elaborate a self-definition of the movement. The manifesto started with its mission:

In a society which reality is highly centralized and computerized, where private and public media represent power and are at the service of power, Free Radios emerge before the need and the right of every individual and collective person to freely express their opinions and criticize and offer alternatives regarding whatever affects them directly or indirectly. (cit. in Carmona, 1986: 15)

Among its characteristics, the undersigning radios included their “non-professional” nature, “self-managed functioning”, their autonomy “apart from any political or economic group of pressure”, the promotion of participation and the fight for “an alternative way of living compared to the current one” against “all kind of social relationships of domination.”

This document entailed a decisive moment for free radios, because it accounted for the incorporation of its members and presented a vindication in the shaping of their movement, in the middle of the expansion throughout the country and forced by the constant threat of closure after nearly ephemeral experiences such as *Ona Lliure*’s.

The Villaverde meeting was also symbolic due to its location. It was the first one held outside the northern half of the country and represented the progressively increasing relevance of radios from Madrid inside the movement (Pérez Martínez, 2009: 908). From 1983 to 1988, especially in the first

three years of this period, at least 24 free radio projects were brought to light in the Community of Madrid. Among them, some with especial relevance within the Madrid and State movement, such as *Onda Verde Vallekaña*, *Onda Sur Villaverde* -both in 1983- and *Radio Cero* -in 1984-.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Spanish radio broadcasting landscape of the late 1970s was disturbed by the bursting of a new phenomenon. Several small initiatives promoted by groups of citizens manifested through frequency-modulated airwaves without complexes, in a non-profit manner and without broadcasting license. Each radio station pursued its own aims, from the social change and political vindication up to mere entertainment apart from usual networks, controlled by mainstream media. Thus, with the direct influence of French and Italian models, free radios emerged in Spain.

The particular attributes of each one of these radio stations, which highlight the heterogeneity of the phenomenon, hinder the theoretical consensus about what a free radio is, despite the fact that inside the movement there was agreement about a definition proposal with the *Villaverde* Manifesto, in 1983. Historically, free radios have been often confused with "pirate" radios, although the fact the later were profit-oriented distance them from the foundational precepts of a free radio station.

Nevertheless, we can determine that, considering its historical background, a free radio must be voluntary – non-profit –, privately-owned, economically and institutionally independent – both from local governments as well as from external companies (not related to the radio station)-, with a democratic or assembly-like decision making process, participative with listeners, plural without restrictions regarding the topic handled in their programs and committed to the support of minoritarian social collectives or under risk of exclusion (García-Gil, 2017).

*Radio La Voz del Pobre* (Madrid), *Radio Maduixa* (Granollers), *Ona Lliure* (Barcelona) and *Osina Irratia* (Rentería) are the first examples of free radios in Spain. Its regions (Catalonia, Basque Country, Navarre and Madrid) experienced the boom of free radios earlier and with a greater number of radio stations, moving ahead to the territorial expansion of the middle and late '80s.

The lack of previous experiences forced the collaboration among radios. This aid derived into the constitution of regional coordinating entities and a coordination countrywide of free radios, which advocated their freedom of broadcasting and denounced their legal status, described as "alegality". The meetings started in Barcelona in 1979, but the Villaverde meeting, which resulted in the manifesto of the same name, represented the epitome regarding country coordination tasks and, at the same time, a trigger to reinforce and expand the movement.

However, closures boycotted the stability of all these radio stations. The constant police interventions, which occasionally summed to the confiscation of technical material and the detention of radio speakers, hindered the standardizing of free radios, despite the fact that the combative spirit of their promoters led to breaking sealings and return to the dial as soon as possible, ignoring potential consequences.

The movement, also weakened due to inner conflicts, diluted after the new distribution of licenses of 1989. Only two free radio stations achieved legal status, while most of them were subject to definitive closure to avoid the substantial fines they could receive given the case they continued their broadcasting activity. Many years later, community radios emerged –the term preferred at present--making the most of the new technological environment and Internet possibilities --streaming, podcast,

radio on demand-- to essentially do the same as their predecessors: to communicate without restrictions and in freedom.

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- Start of study: April, 2015.
- End of study: February, 2018.

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