What are the media preferences of the rural dwellers? The Quantitative Analysis of the Research

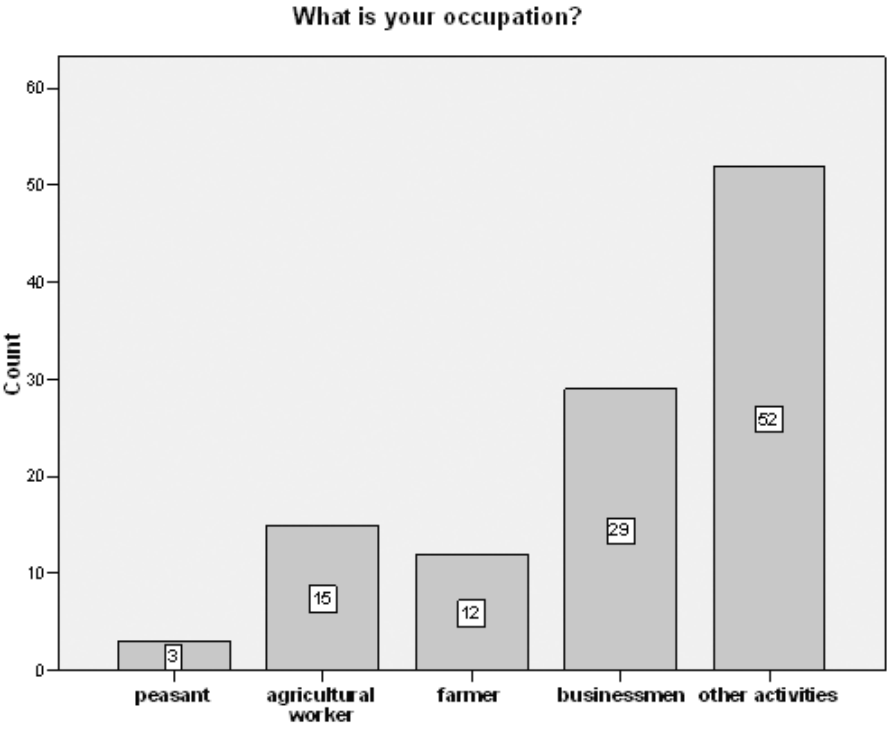
Mass Media Consumption Models in the Rural Area of Romania: Traditional Identities, European Identities

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General characteristics of the research sample

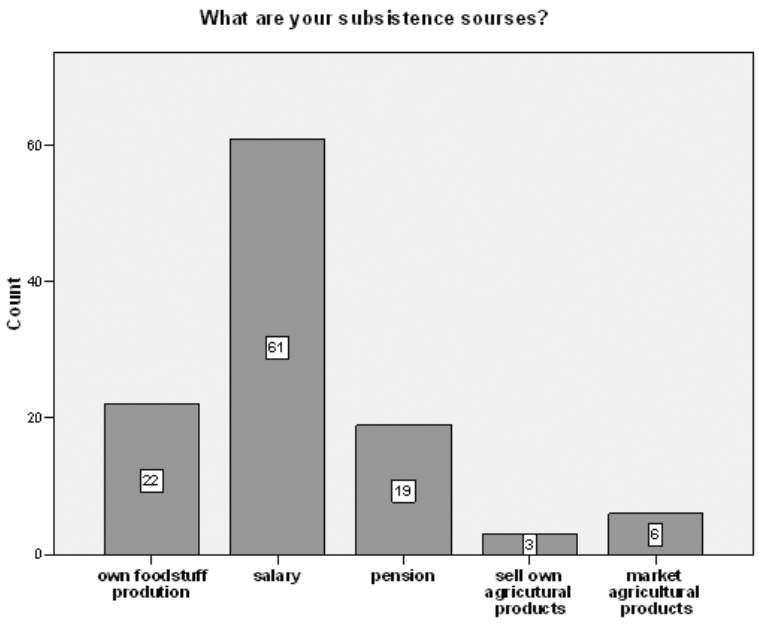
In this article I will present the quantitative analysis[1] of the research *Mass Media Consumption in the Rural Area of Romania: Traditional Identities, European Identities*. The sample of the research is constituted by a number of one hundred and eleven interviewees from five distinct areas of Romania: Drăguțești commune (Gorj county), Însurăței commune (Brăila county), Voineasa commune (Vâlcea county), Densuș commune (Hunedoara county) and Brezasca (Caraș-Severin county). Sixty-five of the interviewees are men and forty-six are women, aged between 20 and 85. The average age of the interviewees is 47 years old. Thirty-nine of the participants in the research have graduated from a secondary school; nineteen have gymnasium diplomas, sixteen – post high school diplomas, while thirty-one say that they have university degrees. Six of the interviewees have only primary school studies; the majority of this category is represented by women between the age of 63 and 85. On the opposite, there are men interviewees, thirty-four of whom have post high school and university degrees; the average age of the latter is of 45.

As concerns the occupational profile, approximately half of the participants in the research consider themselves peasants, agricultural workers or farmers. Over fifty of the interviewees have other professional activities, such as public servants (mayors, secretaries, policemen etc.), teachers, doctors or priests. The only exception is made by three of the interviewees who are small business men. The comparative analysis of the variables "occupation" and "sex" pointed out that in the majority of the cases, the proportion of both women's and men's activities is relatively balanced. Only the "peasant" category is, according to the results of the research, preponderantly a women's activity, while the "farmer" is more a men's inclination.



As regards the sources of subsistence, sixty-one of the interviewees declare that their main source of income is the salary. They activate in the public or private sector, in positions like public servants, teachers, doctors, priests or small business people. Nineteen of the questioned persons cover their daily expenses mainly from sources like their pension or unemployment allocation. Approximately one fifth of the interviewees do not have other sources of household incomes other than their own production of agricultural produces. Only nine of the total are involved in the marketing of their own goods and/or are obtaining revenues from other sources. They sell their products at the

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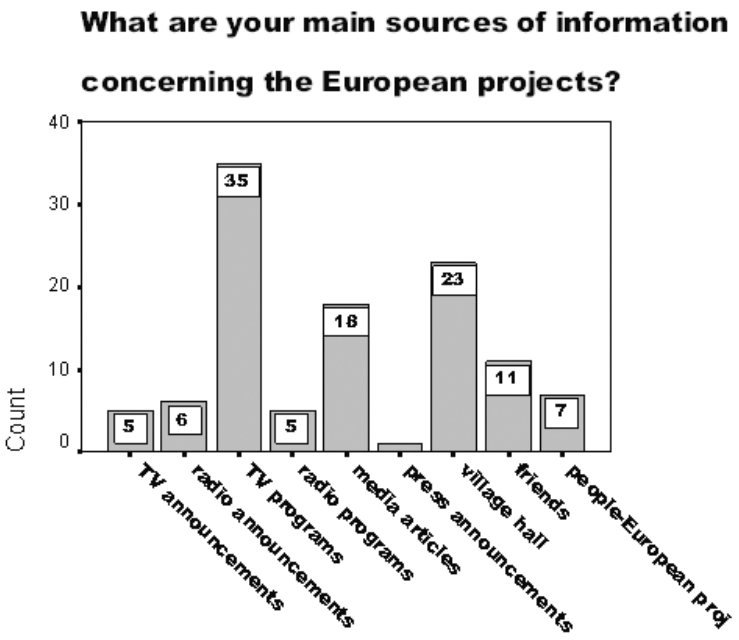


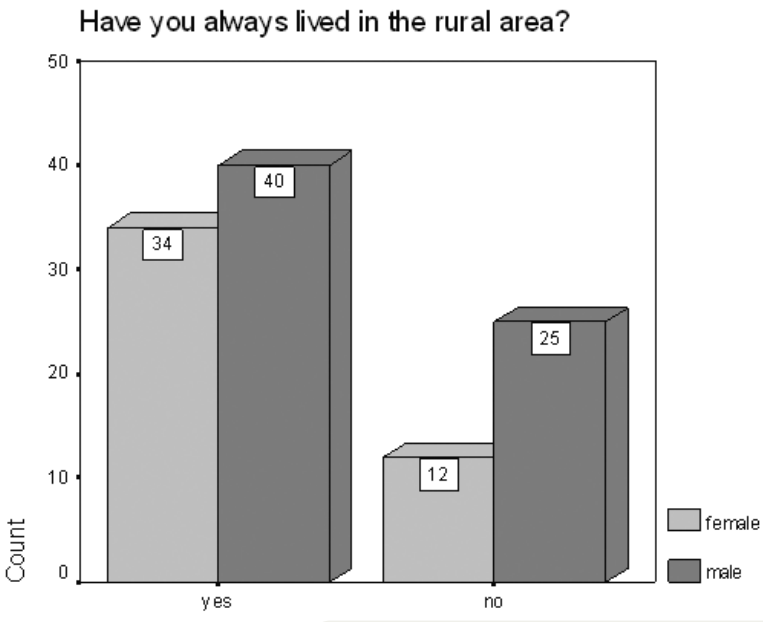
market, through various sales stores and mini-markets or through intermediaries.

At the question "Have you always lived in the rural area?", seventy-four of the interviewees gave a positive answer; thirty-four of them were women, while forty were men of different ages and occupational profiles. More than a half of the respondents have chosen to live in a rural area invoking reasons like "proximity of the family" and "family tradition", and only one in ten participants in the research have motivated their answer pointing at the "inherited estate".

On the opposite, those thirty-seven of the interviewees who gave a negative answer are represented both by women and men aged between 22 and 40, and have post-high school and university education. The majority of these respondents are professionally involved in the administrative, educational and private-economic sectors. At a certain moment in the past they preferred to leave from the rural area in order to continue their studies or to find a well paid job in the city (22), because, in their opinion, the city could have offered more material advantages (11) or better chances to their children (4). The reasons that made them come back in the rural area indicate mainly to the "inherited estate" (20), "the possibility to start a business (project)" (10) or "the possibility to live a quiet retirement" (7).

Over eighty of the interviewees mentioned that the opportunities of the European projects for the development of the villages will positively impact their living standards in the rural area. In the meantime, twenty-nine of the respondents had a skeptical view towards the welfare increase in the countryside through the implementation of the European programs. Both women and men participating in the research proved to be equally reserved as concerns the benefits of the European projects. Nonetheless, it is interesting to find that the age of the skeptics is concentrated on two opposite poles: on the one hand, the young people between 20 and 33, on the other hand, adults aged between 61 and 85.



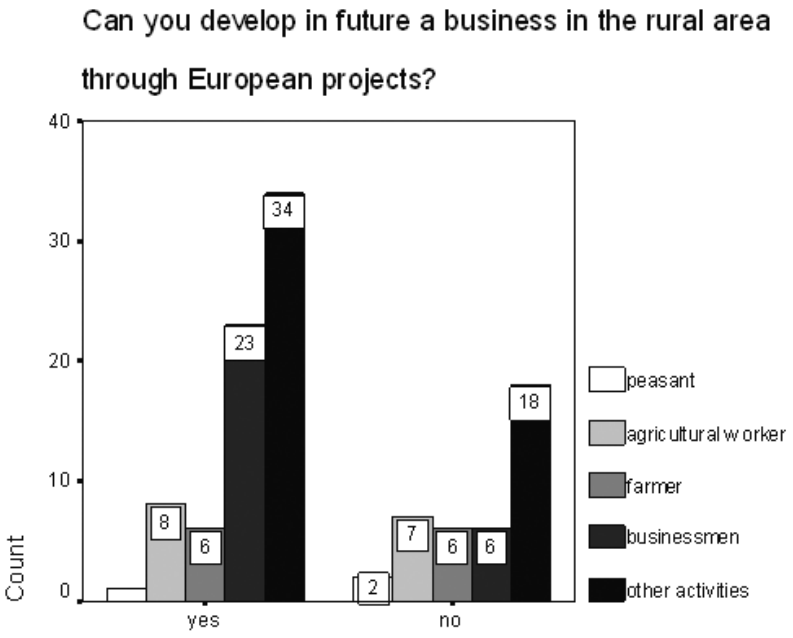


The main sources of information of the interviewees concerning the European projects and programs, developed in the target areas, are as follows: rural area targeted TV programs (35), sources from the village hall (23), articles from the local and national press (18) or friends and acquaintances (18).

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Over 90% of the peasants and agricultural workers who answered the questions of this research get informed about European projects at and by the village hall, while a three quarters of them use as alternative information sources TV programs for the rural audience (*The Village Life, the Farm etc.*) Just like peasants and agricultural workers, the farmers prefer the same sources of information, except that the TV programs about the rural area represent the primary source of information on the European programs, while the village hall is the second source. As far as the small business people are concerned, their options aim at four distinct information sources: articles from the written media, TV programs about the rural area, people who developed European projects and the village hall.

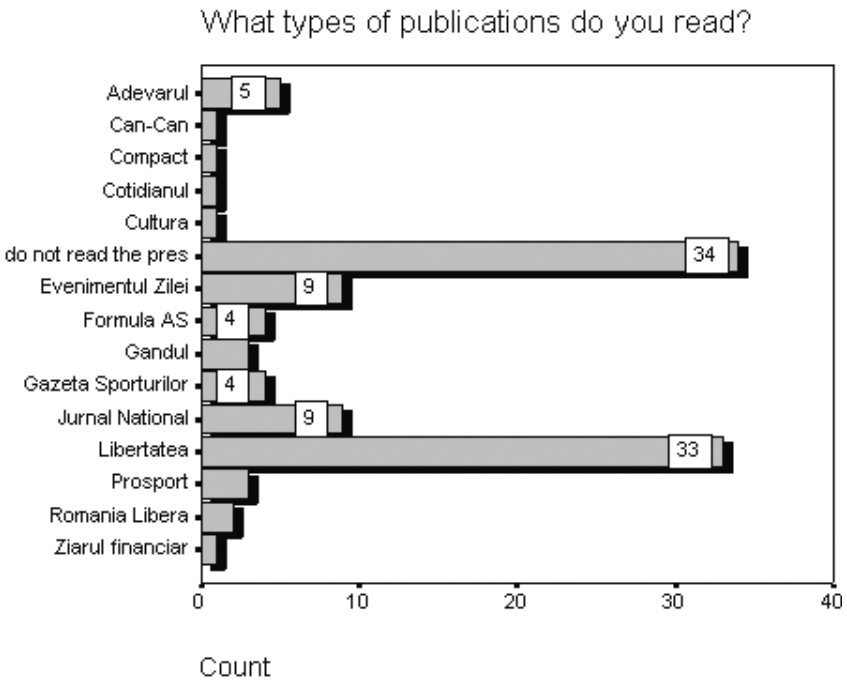
Eighty-two participants in this study declared to be positive about developing a business in the rural area in future through European projects; twenty of them are small business people, while forty-four - public servants, doctors or teachers. Half of the interviewed say that, generally, they would be interested in the implementation of the European projects in the rural area. In the same time, twenty-nine of the respondents, in their greater majority people over 60, have recognized that they do not possess physical and material resources "to manage a business on European money". According to them, "aged people do not have the knowledge and the know-how, and maybe not even the physical strength, to write European projects, to say nothing about putting them in practice". This category is represented by all target professionals: peasants, farmers, agricultural workers, but also by business people and public servants.



The participants in this study have also been asked what they would do if they remained in the rural area for the long run and had the possibility to change their occupation. Their answers have been distributed as follows: founding a pension (24), opening a store with a universal profile (20), working an agricultural land, own property (19), opening a small restaurant\bar\pub (9), building a small food shop (8), developing a business specialized on producing ecologic food of animal origins (7) and opening an animal farm (7).

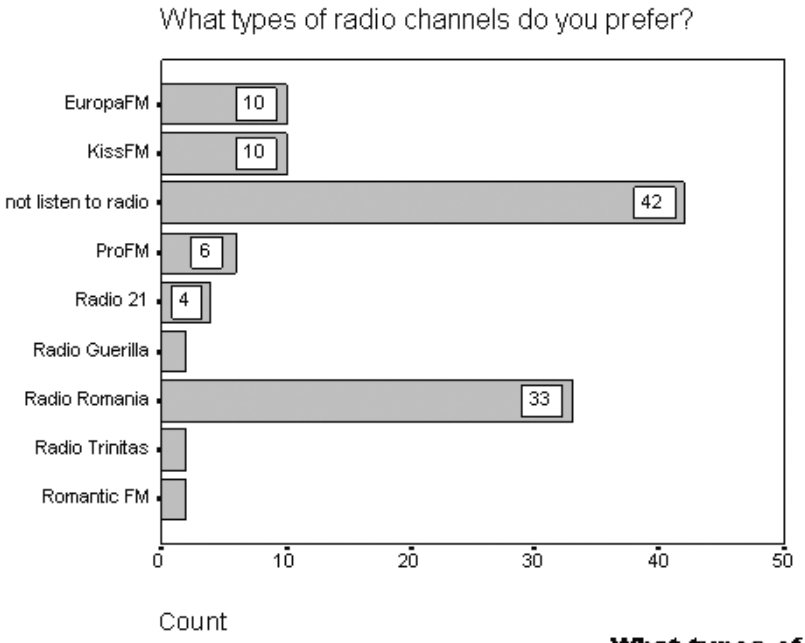
Mass Media Consumption in the Rural Area

Concerning the "media consumption in the rural area", the one hundred and eleven respondents have been asked questions about the types of publications they usually read. Thus, thirty-three of the interviewed, equally women and men, aged between 20 and 60, occasionally read the daily *Libertatea*; eighteen of the interviewed men of different ages and educational backgrounds, prefer *Jurnalul National* and *Evenimentul Zilei*; less than 5% of those interviewed, women and men aged 35 on average, have as their usual favorites *Adevarul*, *Formula AS*, *Gazeta Sporturilor* and *Prosport*. Meantime, more than thirty respondents "do not read the press" at all. Although this category is formed by representatives of all ages identified in the research, the age category over sixty who has only primary school studies is the one who reads the least. The interviewed with high school, post high school and university degrees represent the category to be the most interested in consuming local and national mass media.



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Taking into consideration the radio preferences, forty-two participants at the research have declared that they do not listen to any radio channel. This category is represented by peasants, agricultural workers and farmers, both women and men aged over 60 and who have mainly primary school and gymnasium level education. On the opposite side, approximately one third of the respondents – agricultural workers, farmers and public servants, both with secondary school and university education, occasionally listen to (especially in the car) regional branches of the nation-wide public

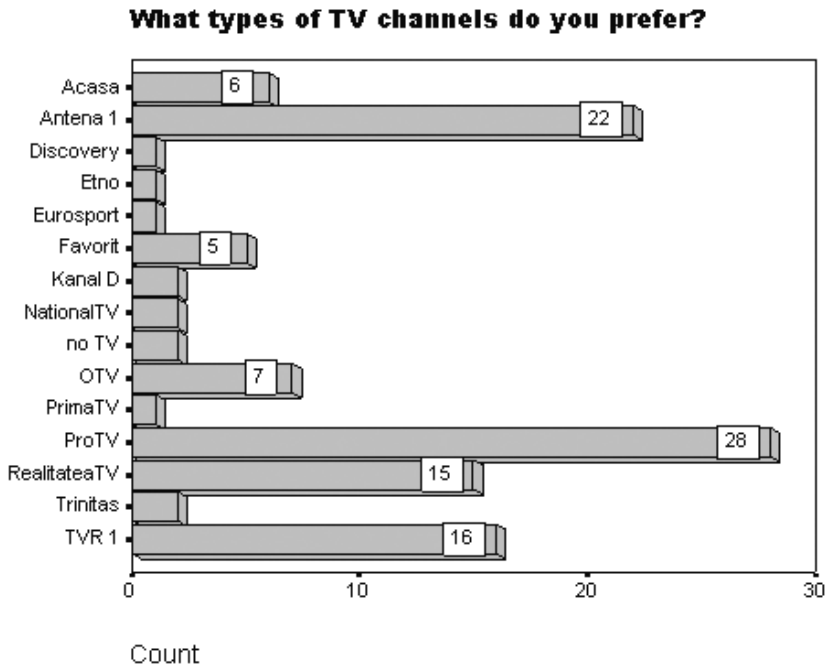


channel *Radio Romania*, such as *Radio Craiova* or *Radio Constanța*. Less than twenty-six of the young respondents (under 45 years old), who represent distinct occupational categories, such as small business people and public servants, with post high school and university education, prefer private radio channels such as *Europa FM*, *Kiss FM* and *Pro FM*. Other radio channels – *Radio 21*, *Radio Guerilla*, *Radio Trinitas* and *Romantic FM* – have accumulated less than 4% of the options expressed by the latter two categories, namely those with university education and under the age of 35.

The most preferred radio programs, mentioned by the interviewees, are the music and news programs. Religious and cultural programs are listened to occasionally, especially by women with higher education who have diverse occupations: public servants, doctors or teachers.

At the top of the respondents' TV preferences there are three private television channels – *Pro TV*, *Antena 1* and *Realitatea TV* – and a public TV channel (TVR 1), which has the widest national coverage. TV channels like *OTV*, *Acasa* and *Favorit*, scored between 6.3% and 4.5%. Other specialized TV channels – *Eurosport*, *Trinitas*, or *Discovery* – or TV channels broader in scope – *Prima TV*, *Kanal D* and *National TV* – did not gather more than 1.8%. From the occupational viewpoint, the interviewees' predilections have been distributed as follows: peasants prefer channels like *Pro TV* and *TVR 1*, although there is also a category of peasants (aged over 70) who do not own a TV set; the agricultural workers watch especially *Pro TV*, *Antena 1*, *Realitatea TV* (especially men), *Acasa*, and *OTV*; farmers watch *TVR 1*, *Realitatea TV*, *Antena 1* and *Favorit*; small business people have selected for their top TV preferences *Antena 1*, *Pro TV*, *OTV* and *TVR 1*; other professional occupations (public servants, policemen, teachers, doctors etc.) have mentioned the following TV channels: *Pro TV*, *Antena 1*, *Realitatea TV*, but also *TVR 1*, *Acasa* and *OTV*.

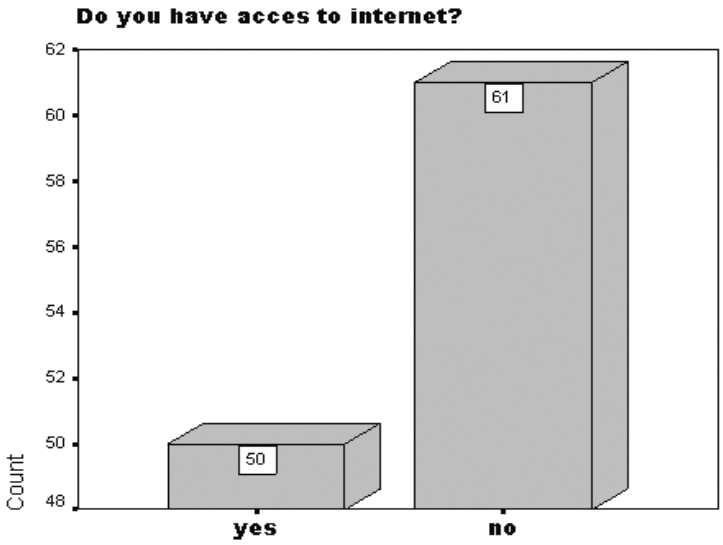
The news programs by the private TV channels, entertaining programs, movies (action, comedies, and whodunits), but also Romanian and\or foreign soap operas have top-ranked the first positions for the most watched TV programs, accumulating between 20% and 35% of the interviewees' options. A considerably smaller percentage went to the sports programs (football matches, sports talk-shows etc.) and political debates.



Fifty respondents with high school, post high school and university education, who are under 55 years old, mention that they access daily or occasionally the internet. The professional categories which are systematically in touch with the internet are public servants and teachers, small business people and farmers. These categories usually access sites that publish information about agricultural activity and about European projects developed in Romania or communicate with business partners by means of their electronic mail. Occasionally, the internet serves for reading the

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national and local press or for entertainment activities (music, movies, photographs, games). On the opposite side, approximately sixty respondents who are over 50 years old do not have general knowledge about what is the internet or how to use it. This category is represented by peasants, agricultural workers, farmers and small business people.



Conclusions

The main conclusions which should be brought to the fore are as follows: the five professional categories identified in the target areas – peasants, agricultural workers, farmers, business people, others occupation (public servants (mayors, secretaries, policemen etc.), teachers, doctors and priests) – have distinct and diverse media preferences, conditioned both by their access to local and national media, and by their personal interests. Thus, the peasants, agricultural workers and farmers do not read the press, do not listen to the radio, except on rare occasions (especially *Radio Romania*), but watch TV channels, such as *TVR 1*, *ProTV*, *Antena 1* and *Favorit*. The small business people occasionally read *Libertatea*, *Jurnalul Național* and *Evenimentul Zilei*, but also *Gazeta Sporturilor* and *Prosport*; they listen quite rarely to radio channels *Europe FM*, *Kiss FM* and *Pro FM*; they prefer such TV channel as *Antena 1*, *Pro TV*, *OTV* and *TVR 1*. The other professional categories (mayors, secretaries, policemen, teachers, doctors and priests) ususally read *Libertatea*, *Jurnalul National*, *Evenimentul Zilei*, *Adevărul*, *Formula AS*, *Gazeta Sporturilor* and *Prosport*, listen to such radio channels as *Radio Romania*, *Europa FM*, *Kiss FM Radio 21*, *Radio Guerilla*, *Radio Trinitas* and *Romantic FM*; and watch *Pro TV*, *Antena 1*, *Realitatea TV*, *TVR 1*, *Acasa* and *OTV*.

As regards the internet, the first two professional categories – peasants and agricultural workers – have never acessed the world web, while the remaining categories – public servants and teachers, small business people and farmers – access the web rarely, especially for information about agricultural business and about European projects developed in Romania or for communication with business partners by means of their electronic mail.

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Footnote

[1]Two research techniques were used in the research: the questionnaire and the semi-directive interview. This article presents only the analysis of the quantitative data gathered by means of the questionnaires. For the analysis of the quantitative data I have used the SPSS.

Abstract

This article presents the quantitative analysis of the research *Mass Media Consumption in the Rural Area of Romania: Traditional Identities, European Identities*. The sample of the research is constituted by a number of one hundred and eleven interviewees from five distinct areas of Romania: Drăgușești commune (Gorj county), Însurăței commune (Brăila county), Voineasa commune (Vâlcea county), Densuș commune (Hunedoara county) and Brezasca (Caraș-Severin county). The five professional categories identified in the target areas – peasants, agricultural workers, farmers, business people, others occupation (public servants (mayors, secretaries, policemen etc.), teachers, doctors and priests) – have distinct and diverse media preferences, conditioned both by their access to local and national media, and by their personal interests. Thus, the peasants, agricultural workers and farmers do not read the press, do not listen to the radio, but watch TV channels (*TVR 1*, *ProTV*, *Antena 1, Favorit*). The small business people occasionally read the press, listen quite rarely to radio channels and prefer such TV channel as *Antena 1*, *Pro TV*, *OTV* and *TVR 1*. The other professional categories (mayors, secretaries, policemen, teachers, doctors and priests) ususally read *Libertatea*, *Jurnalul National* and *Evenimentul Zilei*, listen to such radio channels as *Radio Romania*, *Europa FM* or *Kiss FM Radio 21* and watch *Pro TV*, *Antena 1*, *Realitatea TV*, *TVR 1*, *Acasa* and *OTV*.

Key words: *media consumption, rural area, European projects, internet*

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