Regional Television after Communism in Dobrogea: Mapping Institutional Decline

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Abstract: *The transition from communism to democracy has profoundly changed the landscape of the local and regional media in Romania. The emergence of a significant number of new publications, the establishment of private radio and television stations, the development of the commercial media sector have shaped a mass media map still insufficiently explored and analysed. The transition process of the Romanian society was difficult, but at the same time expansive. There has been a constant concern for setting up local / regional media to identify and publicize the problems of small communities. In Romania, the emergence of radio, television and publications that provided information in an unstable political, economic, social and cultural context has constantly been up at least until the mid-1990s, and Dobrogea was no exception. The reconstruction of the history of the first television stations in Dobrogea follows the important mission of change, the new stages of this media reality and the institutional decline.*

Keywords: *audio-visual, Post-Decembrist, radio, television, Dobrogea, development, institutional decline*

Introduction

The exploration of the unknown called capitalism took place in one of the most difficult periods in the post 1989 history of Romania: the society was marked by the dramatic decrease in the standard of living and of the purchasing power of the citizens, by rising prices, by the lack of jobs and, implicitly, unemployment. The political, economic and social instability justifies the phrase "savage capitalism" defining the state of Romanian society, and the six mineriads which took place during the 1990s fuelled the feeling of insecurity and chaos. The need for information has materialized in the establishment of private media outlets, including those with local / regional coverage, and Dobrogea is no exception.

According to journalism professor Peter Gross, the early stage of democracy in Romania was marked by two elements: civil society and the information society (Gross 57). The latter was far from being a reality, thinks the author, because of the political, economic and social instability that marked Romania, especially in the first half of the 1990s, but also afterwards. The development of mass media at national and local level was marked by the lack of professionalism of some members of the profession, whose image was publicly associated with the practices of the communist regime. Moreover, the paper crisis affected printing newspapers, there was a lack of regulations in the field, thus the desiderate for an information society was far from reality (Gross 62).

Raluca Petre, associate professor in Communication Sciences at the Faculty of Letters of "Ovidius" University, argues that after 1989 journalism has managed to encourage change at the society level, but it has not succeeded in transforming itself into

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an autonomous field of practice, because it focused on its mission as the spokesperson for change, but lost its own capacity for action (Petre 169).

The 1990-2000 decade can be divided into three main stages, as stated by professor Valentina Marinescu in the volume *Mass Media and Political Change in Romania*:

● 1990-1992 - the official functioning of the mass media was regulated by the often-chaotic action of the market forces; the effect of demand and supply being combined with that of the adoption of minimal legal norms;

● 1992-1996 - the stage of structuring at a fundamental normative level of the media domains in Romania. The main institutional "laws" in the field are adopted, their text providing for a series of rights and obligations that are configured in the media-society relationship on a triple level: 1 economic, 2 political, 3 social-civic.

● the period started in 1996 corresponds to the process of practical manifestation of the effects of the regulations previously adopted towards the relative stabilization of the media landscape in our country (Marinescu 77-78).

By developing the audio-visual media at local / regional level, there has been a re-positioning of the topics addressed in the news reports or in entertainment programs. The history of the audio-visual in Dobrogea recomposes the course of small communities, and the specific enthusiasm of the 90s generated the development of radio and television stations, thus a natural interdependence being achieved. The community established the audio-visual, and the radio and television provided a vision and another image of the society, hitherto unknown or hidden by the censorship established in Romania in 1948 when the Communist Party took power.

According to professor Marian Petcu, "local information is confused with the individualized communication system it has created in the local community" (Petcu 162-163).

The construction of the local / regional audio-visual also represented an adaptation according to the specificity that each community had or has and the public to which it is addressing. Dobrogea is a heterogeneous area, a region with two counties, Constanța and Tulcea.

Methodology

The corpus presents the history of four television stations in Dobrogea, two that still exist in the audio-visual market and two that have ceased their activity: TV Accent (Tulcea), MTC TV, Alpha Media Medgidia and Constanta TV (CTV). The history of these television stations has been reconstructed through the information made available by the National Audio-visual Council, the articles published in the print and online press and through the documentary interviews with journalists who have worked and are still working in the local / regional television in Dobrogea. Ten interviews were conducted that explain how the newsrooms of these television stations were set up, how the program grid was developed, which were the reasons why some of them ceased to exist and, at the same time, the conditions under which a television with local / regional

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coverage may exist on the media market. The hypothesis is that 30 years after the fall of communism in Romania, the tendency to establish local / regional television stations is declining, and the number of institutions capable of keeping up with the media market is decreasing due to financial problems, lack of sustainability, and because some owners of television stations have legal problems.

In this case study I chose to present four television stations, two from Constanța, one from Medgidia and another from Tulcea. The reason that made me choose these four was the desire to highlight the arguments that may cause the institutional decline of a local / regional television station or that may lead in the direction of disappearance from the media market. The television stations based in Constanța no longer exist today, and the reasons that caused them to be closed will be highlighted in the lines below. The television in Tulcea still broadcasts, but only one hour a day, while the one in Medgidia hardly manages to maintain a complete program grid, with different programs, 24 hours a day.

Case studies

TV Accent (Tulcea)

TV Accent started broadcasting on March 1st, 1994. Initially, the television station was named Tulcea 1, being set up by the cable company Burțilă & Co. Electrom M-Bit.

The television team consisted of two reporters, a cameraman and a monteur. During the 25 years of existence, the television had one hour of broadcast every day, the rest of the program being made up of video-text messages, except for short periods of time.

Paul Prisada, the current owner of the channel Accent TV, stated in an interview we conducted: "This was how the first local TVs were set up, by the cable companies that could afford to make shows at the public's request" (Prisada).

The program grid, consisting of one hour of broadcasting per day, included 15 minutes of local news and a program, "Clepsidra" [The Hourglass], which dealt with topics according to the agenda of the day: political, social, economic or cultural, and the show which was broadcast in the evening was rerun next day morning. Currently, this show has been suspended.

In 1999, the television was re-branded and received the name TV Bit. At the same time, the number of employees rose up to 16, a figure maintained for about ten years. Although the editorial team was larger, the program grid was not changed, as this change would have involved obtaining another license from the National Audiovisual Council (C.N.A.). At the same time, there existed the fear that a grid of programs with more programs could not be sustained in the long run. Paul Prisada mentioned that "in 1999, the television business was sustained by the cable company, but also by advertising revenue, which is why the editorial team could be maintained" (Prisada).

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Because Tulcea county represents the gateway to the Danube Delta the environmental issue was also included in the program grid, alongside the shows on cultural, political, and economic issues. Also, the transmissions from the Local and County Council meetings were inserted. The latter are posted on the television website and also on their Facebook page, so that those who did not have the opportunity to watch them live can do so at their leisure.

The main challenge of the television channel is the lack of labor force and of funds. Regarding the last aspect, the decrease of the economic contribution matters and it greatly affects the life of a local / regional television. The fact that there are advertising agencies that carry out projects at national level, being thus conditioned to publicize their projects, is an important factor, because various media actors can benefit from advertising contracts. The current owner of the Accent TV channel confessed that "when CONY SAT TV[1] was no longer broadcast, which had about 20 percent of the audience of the TV station, I thought it would increase the advertising revenue, but this was not the case" (Prisada).

During the 25 years of existence there have been fluctuations in the editorial team. First, the television was set up and maintained in such a way as to operate with a small number of employees, although for ten years the station had three times as many people.

"There are enough costs for maintaining a television station, from broadcasting to copyright and salaries" (Prisada), said Paul Prisada during the documentation interview.

Currently, the television program is transmitted by the cable company UPC, Next Gen, Telekom and RDS-RCS. The two problems currently faced by the television station are the lack of workforce and the lack of funds. The number of employees fell to five, the team consisting of two cameramen, a monteur, an editor, the director of the channel being the same person as the owner.

The "Actuality", "Administration", "Social", "Politics", "Education", "Culture", "Useful" and "Miscellaneous" sections were created on the Accent TV television website. At the same time, the section dedicated to the 2016 elections remained visible. Once the video button is accessed, the public can watch the Local and County Council meetings, the film records of cultural events grouped in the "7 Arts" section and the productions prepared by the television team as well.

[1] According to the Decision no. 109 of 23 July 1993, regarding the granting of broadcast licenses for broadcasting / cable television broadcasting, in trim. II / 1993, according to Art. 1, licenses for cable broadcasting / cable television were granted to several applicants, among which Burțilă & Co Electron Tulcea M-Bit and Cony Galați - Cony Sat SRL, http://www.cdep.ro /pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?idt=13898 (accessed March 18th, 2019, 3:38 pm).

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MTC - Maritime Training Centre Television

The television station MTC TV began broadcasting on March 28th, 1994, being a component of the "Center for Personnel Improvement of the Civil Navy and Staff Qualification for Port Operation Constanta"[2].

The television was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transport, and the broadcasts dealt mainly with topics dedicated to the maritime and port sectors. According to the documentation interviews, it was the first post in Dobrogea with staff trained to use the video cameras and execute video editing owing to specialized courses coordinated by professionals in the field.

Ana-Maria Munteanu, Professor in Communication Sciences at the Faculty of Letters of "Ovidius" University and TV programmer at MTC TV during the 1990s, said that they "attended a vocational training course for electoral campaigning. The port area was fascinating, because it was open, internationalized, offering added value to the city, and the television created professional offers" (Munteanu).

The training modules were initiated before the establishment of the television station, the initial objective being the creation of video didactic material for the navigating personnel trained at C.P.P.M.C.[3] Subsequently, with the advent of MTC TV, they gained a double utility and, at the same time, importance, as these were considered to be the first specialized courses for technical and editorial staff in the local / regional television in Dobrogea. The training was carried out for three months, the selection of the staff being made following an examination. All this happened less than four years after the events of December 1989.

Mihaela Postelnicu, a French language teacher and program director at MTC TV, confessed that "a very important group of well-educated cultural people from Constanta was created, and our trainers, especially those from operation-editing, said we would become very strong if we initiated production" (Postelnicu).

The economic growth of Constanta county has always been influenced by the activity in the port area and the evolution of the labour force in the maritime sector, and the launch of specialized courses and a television station were considered a necessity and a challenge, but this was particularly an innovation for the first half of the 1990s.

The introductory courses on television were taught by TVR professionals[4]. The pre-launch period consisted in "blank broadcast" using equipment received from donations, "two V.S., one player, one recorder and some cameras."

The experience was beneficial from two points of view. First of all, it generated awareness among the technical and editorial staff. Secondly, it allowed the formation of

[2] Haralambie Beizadea was the director of the "Center for the Training of Personnel in the Civil Navy and Personal Qualification for Port Operation Constanta" and, later, of the television M.T.C. TV.
[3] Center for the Training of Civil Navy Staff and Personal Qualification for Port Operation in Constanța.
[4] Paul Șoloc, Viorica Bucur. Doru Mitrache, etc.

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teams[5] made up of reporters and cameramen who had learned how to create specialized reports, shows and interviews for the maritime and port sectors, and not only. In time the television channel gained the character of a generalist station due to the variety of topics covered.

Iulia Pană, journalist, film producer, photographer, teacher at Theodor Burada County Cultural Center in Constanța, recalled that "it was decided that the television was to be set up at C.P.P.M.C. because there already was a small video studio, in «Humatic» and «Betamax» formats, which produced video teaching material that the sailors were studying for exams. They then requested and received support from the Ministry, which approved the establishment of this television. We thought it was the first private television in Dobrogea, but the station belonged to the Ministry of Transport (Pană).

The program schedule of MTC TV consisted in political, social, cultural, sports, and entertainment shows dedicated to teenagers, sailors and to the port activity ("Wednesday's Magazine", "Teen Weather "- production dedicated to teenagers, "Women in public life", "Planet of Miracles" - science fiction show, "Friday from 6 o'clock" - hidden room show, "How Short is the Summer Vacation" - entertainment show, "QTH" - a show about the position of ships, etc.), with a broadcast space covering 24 hours a day, news programs (at least three hours of the 24 hours) covering the most important topics in the community, movies and cartoons. In the absence of regulations in the field of copyright and because the copyright law did not exist, both the films and cartoons were broadcast from video tapes, the subtitling being done by the editors.

"We made the subtitles of the films and broadcast them on television. With the adoption of the Copyright Law, some shows no longer had a place in the program grid" (Pană), confessed Iulia Pană.

Partnerships with private national television stations were concluded, on the basis of which certain programs were re-broadcast on the local TV station in order to diversify a 12-hour program that insufficient staff could not manage.

Vasile Pipirigeanu, technical coordinator at the Radio Constanța-Radio Vacanța Territorial Studio and, since 1994, in turn, technical director of Canal 57+ and of Pellin and MTC TV in Constanța, mentioned that "from a technical point of view, MTC was more developed than the other stations. We were the first to broadcast on radio relay, wirelessly, all the technical adjustments being made by us, in the absence of a specialized design team" (Pipirigeanu).

The desire to identify alternative means of financial support of the television station in a society recently out of communism, in full reconstruction, led to the emergence of the advertising departments whose activity was initially managed by the same editorial staff working on the production of informative materials. Thus, in the

[5] The first team consisted of: Iulia Pană, Fery Predescu (social-politic), Ana-Maria Munteanu (culture-education), Dan Mușat (entertainment), Luminița Neațu, Eduard Antovici, Marian Ivan, Elvis Burlan, Petruș Ciubotariu, and Liviu Botoșanu.

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absence of a specialized team in an area unknown in Romania in the 1990s, reporters and broadcasters combined content production with the specific activity of a marketing and advertising department (designing and carrying out contracts, attracting customers, establishing partnerships, creating ads and their distribution). The products were promoted through advertising programs.

A specific production of the 1990s was the real estate show in which properties for sale were presented, a format that we will not find only with MTC TV. Later, these shows took the form of "Small Advertising" ads in the print media, which represented a benefit for the economic sector, in the view of the producers of the advertising department. At MTC TV, the advertising production began to develop in 1994. Iulia Pană added: "In 1998-1999, the advertising shows that we made according to the following format appeared: the company presented itself, we organized a raffle, people bought from shops, and finally they received prizes" (Pană).

Although it was a television station whose shows mainly dealt with topics on the maritime and port sectors, the partnerships with the different cultural institutions or the involvement of the station and the editors in international projects and conferences were not neglected. The presence of the numerous military vessels and of personalities in the port of Constanța created important "partnership networks" for the community, and all of these topics were reflected in the shows from MTC TV, according to our documentation interviews.

Approximately seven years after the launch of the television station, following the Government Decision no. 451 / 9 May 2001, published in the Official Gazette on 11 May 2001, the official status of MTC TV has been modified.

According to G.D. no. 451 / 9 May 2001 regarding the establishment of the Commercial Company "Maritime Training Center Television" S.A. Constanța, by detaching some activities from the Center for Staff Training of the Civil Navy and Staff Qualification for Port Exploitation Constanța, Art. 1, par. 1, the Commercial Training Center Training Television S.A. "Becomes a company of strategic interest, with full state capital", and the television station comes out of the jurisdiction of C.P.P.M.C. From that moment, the activity of the television reached the attention of the public opinion, the triggering factor being the "association contract" that four institutions under the subordination of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing should have signed: C.F.R. (Romanian Railways), C.F.R. Freight, "Mihail Kogălniceanu" International Airport and the Maritime Ports' Administration.

As a result of this partnership, the amount of approximately eight million dollars was expected to be given to MTC TV. With the publication of the information in the print media and with the public statements made by the mayor of Bucharest in the period 2000-2004, Traian Băsescu, and by the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing at that time, Miron Mitrea, the activity of the MTC TV station was not the same: the management was changed, the staff was reduced, the employees who did not find themselves in the organizational chart were dismissed, expenses were reduced and an optimization of the performance indicators was attempted, but with no result.

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Investigations were launched, articles were published in the press of the time, attempting to determine exactly how the money was directed to the accounts of MTC TV, who were the actors involved and to what extent this amount of money was used effectively and for the benefit of all the parties involved in this agreement. At the same time, the beginning of 2005 was marked by the inability of MTC Tv management to pay the salaries of the employees, which is why, on May 5th 2005, a protest began against the conditions under which they exercised their profession, and there was an audit on behalf of the Territorial Labor Inspectorate of Constanța.

As a result of this scandal, MTC TV ceased its activity in 2006. At the Constanța Court there were trials against the station in which the former employees demanded their unpaid salaries. According to C.N.A., the license of this television station was withdrawn on April 4th, 2006.

Alpha Media Medgidia

Alpha Media Medgidia station received the license from the National Audiovisual Council in 2007, the legal holder being S.C. "Alpha Media" S.R.L. The first broadcast day was October 15th, 2007, and the slogan of the station is "Close to the people". The shareholder structure consists of Mioara Țuțu and Cristian Ciobănuc.

According to the information on the website www.tvalphamedia.ro, "S.C. Alpha Media S.R.L. (...) is the legal holder of the Audiovisual License no. 342 TV-C / 20 June 2007, for the broadcasting of television program services through the telecommunications network under the name Alpha Media" (C.N.A.).

TV Alpha Media is a general television station that broadcasts 24 hours a day. Although it is a local station, following the established partnerships the station is picked up in 22 towns in smaller coverage areas in the Constanța and Ialomița counties, analog and digital (as of 2015).

The launch of the television station was the result of countless hours of work with few people of little experience in the field, and the money for the purchase of technical equipment represented an investment made with the support of the family. The idea of setting up a local television station came up in the early 2000s, collaborations being established with other local television stations, but also with the authorities in Sibiu, an aspect found in the program grid of TV Alpha Media. For the establishment of the Alpha Media television, credits were contracted by the family members, and quite frequently there were difficult times, caused by financial shortcomings.

Cristian Ciobănuc, technical director of TV Alpha Media, confessed that "it was very difficult, but we did it because we had support from our family. There were times when I didn't have the money even for DVDs or spectators. But I didn't give up" (Ciobănuc).

In the first six months, Alpha Media television broadcast four hours a day: two in the morning, between 09:00 and 11:00, and two in the evening, from 20:00 to 22:00,

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the other broadcast hours being "covered" by video-text messages.[6]. Shortly after the launch, a collaboration with the Radio Constanta Territorial Studio was initiated, which allowed the re-run of the programs and their transmission by Alpha Media TV.

The slogan "Close to the People" was not chosen by chance, the desire of the shareholders being to have a "different television station", in which shows are broadcast where the politicians and the representatives of the local authorities can talk live with citizens.

"Although they were reluctant, they realized that it was in their advantage and that, when talking to the people, they could find out what problems the community and the county are facing" (Gârbă-Țuțu), said Mioara Gârbă-Țuțu, Alpha Media TV director.

The coverage area of the television station has expanded following the partnerships which were concluded. Those invited to speak at the station come from other towns, from different administrations, from other counties, even politicians from Bucharest reached the Alpha Media set because they realized that even though a dialogue with the viewers can be uncomfortable, it can generate positive results for the community.

The editorial and technical team was made up of five people, and collaborations with the former students of the Medgidia Journalism Circle were established, especially for the creation of the news program.

In less than a year, the program grid was modified, which meant that the number of broadcast hours increased: there were four in the morning and four in the evening, and the number of employees reached eight.

In 2009 the television faced its first problems, according to the shareholder. The station was no longer received by subscribers, which is why a protest was initiated, and one of the management members went on hunger strike to sound an alarm. Mioara Gârbă-Țuțu said that "(...) we have been contacted by various parliamentarians, because there has always been the suspicion that we are politically supported. We are an independent television. Two journalists set up a local television station" (Gârbă-Țuțu).

Since 2010, Alpha Media TV broadcasts 24 hours a day, and the number of employees has reached 10.

Regarding their qualification, not all employees have specialized studies, but this aspect was not a priority, because in order to create the profile shows people were sought who were specialists in the medical, economic, historical field, etc.

At the time when the television station was opened, none of the three collaborators had "job experience", the two members of the management making sure that the staff received the training they need: how to use the camera, how to make the

[6] According to the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002 of 11 July 2002, "the video-text service represents the totality of the messages made available to the public in the form of text or graphic signs, within a grid or a catalog, made by an audiovisual media service provider, having the form and content of the video services. television or being comparable in form and content with them, in www.cna.ro, http://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/LEGEA_AUDIOVIZUALULUI_CU_MODIFICARILE_LA_ZI.pdf. (accessed January 02, 2019, 3:00 am).

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montage and to design a news report. Besides the fact that there is a preference for staff to be trained once hired, it is difficult to find "people with journalism studies in Medgidia". Another problem arises when people with experience who might come to work in Medgidia give up, because the costs of commuting are consistent, and the television does not have a budget according to the expectations of potential employees, who most often reside in other localities. However, a local / regional television is a "journalism school". Most of the journalists from Constanța were trained at Neptun TV, the situation being similar to the one in Medgidia.

"It is painful when they come and tell us they want to leave (ed. - the trained employees), because Medgidia does not provide them with any prospects, but we are proud when we see or hear of them making programs for national televisions or radio stations" (Gârbă-Țuțu), added the director of the TV station Alpha Media.

In addition to the lack of specialized staff and prospects, local television is facing financial problems caused by the lack of money in the community. The amounts that the economic agents could invest in advertising are small and do not compare with the prospects that televisions with national coverage can benefit from. Secondly, the amounts paid quarterly to copyright collecting bodies exceed the budget of a television with local coverage, and a solution could arise if "open doors" policies were created at county or national level. A solution could also arise if financially strong economic agents would choose to invest, in the form of advertising contracts, in local stations to the detriment of national ones, because the money would remain in the community. According to the documentation interview with the director of the TV station Alpha Media, she mentioned that "we pay 750 euros quarterly and, if we had to direct money to everyone, I think we would have to close the door and go home. At present time we pay royalties for whatever music includes: from the soundtrack to a news report, spots, videos to shows such as shows with pop party or rock music. Almost every time there are delays, penalties, maybe even hundreds of lawsuits on this topic" (Gârbă-Țuțu).

In addition to the lack of specialized staff and financial shortcomings, another issue facing local televisions is that of political influence.

The Alpha Media TV project imposes an equidistant editorial policy. The constant refusal of any political affiliation has generated "difficult situations", and the technical director of the television said that "there were pressures (...) from some politicians. I received proposals from all parties. We have been told many times: "There must be someone"! Well, we are not politically affiliated" (Ciobănuc).

Another handicap of local television is the very presence in the community. Local television is focused on disseminating the information that the community needs, while avoiding the specific tabloidization of certain national channels. In addition to the editorial production made by the small staff, from a numerical point of view, the slogan "Close to the People" has come to represent a great responsibility and "maybe sometimes a torment", because being truly "Close to the People" is impossible. The lack of human resources and technical ones is the main impediment in a television with local / regional coverage. The viewer who calls to Alpha Media TV to point out various issues in the

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community believes that the television plays the role of the saviour, and journalists are hypothesized to have a different contribution in the community: policeman, doctor or psychologist. Mioara Gârbă-Țuțu testified that "those who follow us call us daily, and the reasons are different: power cuts, lack of sewerage on the street or pits in the road. At one point, we were asked if we didn't know someone who knows how to repair an air conditioner or what steps they need to take to enrol their child in school. One night, a lady called us and asked us to talk to her because her husband is recalcitrant and it was the only solution for the gentleman to calm down. There are situations when we are called and we are told: "Come now !!!" (Gârbă-Țuțu).

As of 2015, the grid of TV Alpha Media program included political, cultural, health, and religious programs ("The Citizen's Agenda", "In the Spotlight", "Truth First", "Face to face", "Political perspectives", "People and people", "Historical landmarks ","Light of the world ","Point of view "," Health guide"," Interview of the week"," Press review"," TV Lawyer "," Talking to the Psychologist "," Steps to education", "Weekend school "," Children's world"," Cultural dialogues "," Popular traditions ","The Dowry Chest", "Guitar chords"). There are no political shows on Saturdays and Sundays, those of culture, entertainment, education and folklore representing the priority.

In 2016, the license was extended by the National Audiovisual Council.

At the same time, there is the prospect of setting up a local station in Sibiu, or at least a workstation, because, at the moment, a collaboration in this direction exists: the recordings which touch on traditions and folklore are re-run according to established collaborations.

Constanța TV (CTV)

The television station Constanța TV or CTV was launched on October 27th, 2007, with the slogan "See what you live and live what you see".

Constanta TV was a local news station, the launch of this station being an initiative of the political opposition in Constanta, the National Liberal Party, who wanted, according to the statements made during a press conference, "to be able to express themselves freely", to break the information monopoly held by Neptun TV Constanța.

Constantin Țițineanu, one of the directors of TV Constanța TV - CTV testified that the preparations for the launch of CTV were made in a record time, benefiting from the technical contribution of the staff (Țițineanu) which was familiar with the development of local / regional television in Dobrogea. According to the first director of the television station, the Constanța TV project was started in 2006, being an initiative of the National Liberal Party. He recalled that "I was contacted by the management of PNL Constanța who proposed to me to take over this television station, because within the next four months the license granted by C.N.A. was going to expire, I accepted the challenge" (Țițineanu).

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The launch of another television station was recorded by the local / regional press, along with the other editorial projects that were to appear on the audio-visual market. According to testimonies made by one of the founders of the station, who wished to remain anonymous, in the report prepared by Active Watch, CTV introduced video journalism. Bogdan Bulbeș, director of programs at CTV Constanța in the period 2008-2010 said that "the ones who did the fieldwork (...), filmed, and then the material was downloaded almost in an unedited form and the image spoke for itself, to the detriment of various opinions being expressed. (...) we first introduced the system by which viewers could send materials from their mobile phone" (Martin).

At the time of launch, CTV was the only local television station because Neptun TV had obtained the permission to broadcast via satellite in 2007, thus becoming a national coverage television. The need to have more television stations in the community and, implicitly, more informative and varied programs has attracted investments locally and projects were initiated by the national coverage trusts which had expanded locally. The press in the community noted: "Sorin Ovidiu Vântu has expanded his media business to Constanța as well. SC 'Realitatea Media-Realitatea' TV, in turn, won two licenses, one for Constanta and one for Cernavoda. SC 'ABC Media' S.A. - National TV obtained a license for the Constanța municipality. Cristian Burci, through S.C. 'Amerom București' SRL, also obtained a broadcast license from CNA for Constanța. Last but not least, S.C. 'Media Group' was a novelty on the local market. Constanţa Liberals have also made their own project, which would be called Constanța TV" (Siclitaru).

The pressure felt by the expiration of the validity period of the license granted by the National Audiovisual Council influenced the preparations for launching the television station, which were made in record time. For a better management of working time, a television management system was implemented which provided, among other things, the abandonment of cassettes in favor of hard disks, which represented another novelty for local / regional televisions.

The program director during 2008-2010 believes that the TV station Constanța TV was superior to other channels which existed in the same period. The program grid included non-stop news programs, namely "News Alert" and, very rarely, "Breaking-news". This stage has been described as "fine, productive and alert" (Bulbeș). The program grid included talk-shows between news programs, debates, medical and economic shows, or those dealing with education or maritime transport issues. There were 14 news programs daily, three lasting one hour, the rest lasting 10-15 minutes. Eight field teams were in charge of providing the information, while two editors monitored news agencies. The main programs in the grid ("Who sees you in the morning", "Watch time", "Subject of the day", "Last round", "Reconstitution", "Public hearing", "Words and deeds", "Second instance" , "Salary and Pension", "Return to the arts", "Accents", "Money speaks", "Pass grade", "Ambient", "Quo Vadis" and "Voice of the Earth") reflected the problems that the local community was facing and not only. In addition to all these standalone shows, the CTV program grid included documentaries

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purchased from partners from abroad (Hagi) and surveys on the most important topics of the moment, carried out by the editorial team.

The first broadcast of the day on CTV started at 07:00. For three hours, the public in Constanta had the opportunity to find out what the local and national newspapers were writing and to watch reports, comments, traffic updates, and reporters' interventions on certain important topics. Also, the project "My Town" was initiated, in which the editorial team was present in all the districts of Constanta. Alex Baran, a TV programmer at CTV and Neptun TV, recalled that "the morning was not very dynamic, but more likely static. Subsequently, the show acquired a more dynamic format through the possibility of the presenters to move to the studio. We tried to be among the best" (Baran).

After three years, under the influence of the effects of the economic crisis, the patronage of Constanța TV announced that the television is in a financial impasse, as it became unable to make monthly payments, which is why some creditors (Coman) filed for the bankruptcy of CTV. According to articles published in the online press, the television station broadcast documentaries while its employees had not been paid for three months (Coman). Throughout this period there were negotiations for the acquisition of the station by another investor, but to no avail, the closure being taken into account by one of the shareholders[7] due to lack of interest and mismanagement.

"(...) Even though they announced more than a month ago that they would be meeting on April 1, the shareholders of Constanta TV cannot manage to meet" (Samoilă).

Before the television was shut down, the morning show was made by a presenter and the sound artist who directed the broadcast. At the same time, the program grid was managed with reduced staff, the number of live broadcasts being reduced, the 24 hours of broadcasting being covered with reruns and recordings. Despite the negotiations with the unions and the promises made by the employer, Constanta TV stopped broadcasting in 2010. According to the report prepared by Active Watch, a year later the television went into insolvency and the license was taken over by Dobrogea Media Vision. In March 2012, C.N.A. withdrew the broadcasting license of the TV station (Martin).

Conclusions

The financial support of a television station is influenced by the revenues generated by the marketing and advertising departments and it is natural that as long as the local economic environment is sustainable, the community benefits, which means that more jobs are created. Using tax money, cultural acts, sports competitions and events that the community can enjoy should be initiated, and the contribution of a television station is important for the development of the education and information segment of the population. The advertising market should be able to produce this exchange, because, if the local economic environment is sustainable, advertising contracts so important for the

[7] The leader of the Liberals from Constanta, Gheorghe Dragomir.

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existence of a television station also appear. As long as this interdependence is not achieved, the lifetime of a television station with local or regional coverage is fragile and subject to the risk of disappearing from the community.

With the purchase of small cable companies by powerful companies, from a financial point of view, some television stations no longer have their place in the packages offered by the new service providers. At the same time, the editorial and financial competition imposed by the investors who opened stronger television stations has made its mark, along with the political interest. The structure of the television stations set up in the 1990s can be characterized by: a restricted program grid, televisions with video-text licenses, reruns due to insufficient staff and, last but not least, institutional economic frailty.

Another difficulty is related to the lack of staff, especially in the case of county level stations. The main obstacle is the commute of the employees, because the television stations do not have the financial resources necessary to settle the transport expenses for the commute of their employees. In addition to the lack of specialized staff, there is a lack of long-term fidelity on behalf of the editorial team, the desire to migrate to national stations places local / regional stations in the position of training and professional transition schools.

Local TV stations are facing financial problems because of the lack of material support from the community. The amounts that the economic agents could invest in advertising are small, incomparable with the funds attracted from advertising on national coverage TV stations. Secondly, the amounts paid quarterly to copyright collecting bodies exceeds the budget of a local television and according to the documentation interviews, a solution could arise if an "open doors"[8] policy was adopted at county or national level.

A solution could also arise if the economically powerful agents would choose to invest in the form of advertising contracts with local stations to the detriment of national ones, because the money would remain in the local community. In addition to the lack of specialized staff and financial problems, another problem facing local television is that of political influence. As we have said in this research, there are also television stations that manage to maintain editorial independence, albeit with difficulty.

Another handicap of local television is the very presence in the community. In addition to disseminating information or editorial output with a small staff, being present in the community entails, to the same extent, responsibility and frustration. The impossibility of providing feedback to the public requesting the "help" of local television in problems which, most of the times, fall within the (in)competence of the state administration or institutions can demonstrate a lack of material resources. In the view of a certain category of public, local / regional television stations play the role of the

[8] The term "open doors" refers to openness on behalf of the decision factors towards adopting solutions to simplify legislation in the field.

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"savior" and the journalists must play the role of the priest, psychologist, lawyer, judge, doctor or even that of the policeman.

The hypothesis that 30 years after the fall of communism in Romania, the tendency to establish local / regional television stations is declining, and the number of institutions capable of resisting the media market is decreasing due to financial problems, due to the lack of sustainability seems reasonable but requires further exploration. All this illustrates the dynamics of the local / regional audio-visual in Dobrogea, and exiting the media market or the reorganization of the way these business models operate shows that, soon, the local / regional radio and television will no longer exist in their current form.

At the same time, it is obvious that we are facing a paradigm shift generated by the lack of financial investments in certain communities, but also by the development of technology. The first affects the financial resources of local / regional radio and television stations, and the second affects the way the message is transmitted. Thus, the local / regional audiovisual media landscape will no longer exist in its current form, the tendency of disappearance of these mass media being predictable, visible and unstoppable.

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