

## THE TELEVISION OF NICHE

Margareta ANDREESCU<sup>1</sup>

1. Lecturer, PhD, Dept. of Communication, Public Relations and Journalism, "Apollonia" University of Iasi;  
Redactor TVR Iasi, Romania  
Corresponding author: marga.andreescu@tvr.ro

### Abstract

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Approaching the television of niche from a comparative point of view represents a new perspective, as, on a national level, this has not been done yet. There have not been identified sources which have approached the problems of these channels with a complex monitor grid. Although there are numerous works dealing with aspects proper to the domain of television, information regarding the television of niche is by far a few. In the present paper we will try to point out what are the peculiarities of these channels. In order to make an analysis of the regional televisions, it is important to identify and present the concepts and notions which define the specificity of this type of television. It is a fact that, at present, television in Europe is affected by the economy recession. The paper does not try to offer solutions or models adjusted to the present context, it endeavours to present a first analysis regarding the place of these channels on the audio visual market.

**Keywords:** *general interest, specialised or nice, focussed, public, niche, news, films, sport, music.*

In the last years television has gained an important role in the domain of the communication means. Even when one speaks about mass media, one has in view only the television, also named «the queen of the communication means». This means of mass media has been based on several theories which are important for communication phenomenon. Studies in this domain have pointed out the fact that, beginning with the year 1980, all the other media means started to redefine themselves in relation to the TV. Television imposes dictatorship, and is a trend setter and establishes the priorities on mass-media market. Its success is secured by the present facts it continuously promotes. Mass-media gathers information from all possible sources, its target being getting the public opinion. The development of television has transformed information circulation into a phenomenon which, sometimes, has an aggressive impact on the individual and society. TV channels are continuously transmitting

information, especially news, they are rapidly changing, therefore, they are considered to be perishable products. That is why, television has the following characteristics: it has a public characteristic, is commonplace and familiar, is designed for a large audience and addresses anyone. It also uses an advanced communication technology and has the means to be accessed by many viewers at the same time.

The landscape of the Romanian television is permanently changing. To survive, programs will be made according to diversified structures. Channels that do not adjust themselves to a present moment will have to close down.

Studies show that television imposes its own law in the public space, determining even the chances parties or political persons may have. Cristina Tudor Popescu says that the value of a politician depends on telegeny. «Starting with 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1989, Romania is led by Television. You are not present on TV, you do not exist.»[1]

Television has always been linked to a political event. While in Israel the public channel was launched at the same time with the parade which celebrated the victory in the 1967 war, in Romania television began to write its history during the Revolution in 1989. Several years after the post December events, there have been a large number of 24 Hour-News channels.

Although such news is focussed on the same event it is not as if made on carbon paper. It is different due to the editorial policy, the structure of the grid, the type of size, among other things.

The present paper does not aim at offering solutions or models adjustable to the present context, it tries to make an analysis regarding the place television has on the Romanian audio-visual market.

## THE CONCEPT OF NICHE

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Television diversification appeared at the same time with cable and satellite transmission. According to the topics of the grid, the programs of TV channels are divided into three categories:

- general interest (the grid includes information, entertainment, cultural, sport, economy programs);
- focussed (it offers the public programs structured on two or three topics);
- specialised or niche.

The concept of niche appeared in the business world by means of marketing, including identification on a single segment, which is well defined by consumers. In Romania, there is no study regarding these TV channels.

## INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

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In 1972, HBO experimented the concept of niche as going to the movies was common for Americans. Taking advantage of the public need for comfort, this channel has spread in more than 60 countries in the world.

Later on, the public interest in music was taken into account and in 1981 in New York MTV channel was launched. Afterwards the interest in science and technique led to the setting up of Discovery Channel in 1985. After that, the sport channels developed.

On the first of January 1993, Euronews, the first news channel financed by EU, was founded, a channel that defined its identity by «no comment» groups of news.

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

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At a first glance, the Romanian audio-visual domain is characterised by a large number of channels, with a legislation adapted to EU norms

and the editorial independence is guaranteed by law. Nevertheless, a deeper analysis proves that television has a weak independence. Niche channels also appeared in Romania. Some of them are focussed on sport or films, others have a general interest. In 1998, PROTV launched the channel Acasa. In 2001, Reality TV appeared being destined to news. In 2002, B1TV appeared focussed on the public of Bucharest. In 2004, PROTV launched PRO CINEMA, and in 2006, Dan Voiculescu Trust set up Euphoria, a channel for women. TVR also tries to capture the public interest entering the news niche in 2010, when TVRInfo appeared. As a result of the poor financial situation this channel was closed down in 2012. Cultural niches do not exist in Romania. In 2012 the cultural program was closed down, some people saying that its setting up was a mistake because cultural programs should be included in the grids of TVR1 and TVR2. Audience rates show that the most representative Romanian niche is that of news.

It is a fact that, television in Europe is affected by the economy recession. But we live in a time of rapid changes. Newspapers disappear, tens of publication mushroom over night on line, editors do not publish on paper any more, but on blogs and the favourite TV programs are watched on mobile phones on trams or in the underground. Changes in mass media are numerous and spectacular and borderlines between different means of communication fade away.

The landscape of the Romanian television is submitted to continuous changes. To survive, programs will be designed on more and more diversified structures. Channels that do not adapt themselves to the requirements of the moment will close their gates.

## Endnotes

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1. Popescu, Cristian Tudor, *Bătălia pentru TVR este falsă*, Adevărul, 30.03.1995.