

## “Traditions” from Folklore Studies to Media Product and the Beginnings of Broadcasting in Romania

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**Abstract:** The rhetorical logic of the discourse which is currently building the image of the junction between *tradition* and nation (and of the concepts thus required) is also due to processing this discourse in the media. That is to say that the connection between media communication and the political instrumentalization of traditions as a domain of national constructs has offered proper soil for shaping the political and ideological narratives based on nation.

The use of some concepts, such as *nation*, *national culture*, *traditions* and *folklore* in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and their instrumentalization as radio products, created the premises and particularly the pattern of some specific discursive constructions regarding the nation-state. These were meant to be integrated, embraced and, especially, reproduced on a large scale. Therefore, the discourse focused on national identity – with all its constitutive elements (the state, the language, the history and traditions) – could disseminate a unique hypostasis, shaped under political control, which thus legitimated it. From 1928, the year when the first radio programs were broadcast, until directly after the 1950s, when the recording of the radio programs on magnetic tape was a common professional practice, the only documents that could be considered today are the written texts of the radio programs (conferences, educational or informative programs, political, agricultural news, etc.).

Between 1925, when The Romanian Society of Radiotelephony was established, and 1948, the year when the communist regime officially came into power, Romanian radio programs broadcast discourses on a broad range of topics and for a large audience. The present study focuses on the ethnological one. We are interested in how the ethnological discourse rooted in the aforementioned time period also built a media hypostasis for addressing the entire society, and in how programs dedicated to “traditions” bear the signs of this structuring process.

**Keywords:** media, broadcasting, traditions, Romania, national culture

Why are the emergence and development of media also important in a historical approach to ethnology in Romania<sup>1</sup>? At the very least because the rhetorical logic of the discourse that is currently building the image of the junction between *tradition* and nation is also due to the processing of these two concepts in the media.<sup>2</sup> That is to say that the connection between media communication<sup>3</sup> and the political instrumentalization of traditions as a domain of national constructs offered fertile ground for shaping the political and ideological narratives based on nation. The public use of some concepts, such as *nation*, *national culture*, *traditions* and *folklore* as well as their instrumentalization within a radio discourse in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century created the premises and, more precisely, the pattern of some specific discursive constructions regarding the nation-state in order to be integrated, acknowledged and, especially, to be replicated on a large scale.

Therefore, the discourse focused on national identity – with all its constitutive elements (the state, the language, the history and traditions – could disseminate a unique hypostasis, politically controlled, and thus legitimated. Once integrated, its extensive multiplication could also be a proper context in which some forms of popular solidarity (McLUHAN 2001: 324:7)<sup>4</sup> were emerging and developing with unprecedented speed. Starting from common ideological turning points (belonging to the idea of national appurtenance), this discourse was totally under the control of a central power,

<sup>1</sup> The present paper is the result of the research project entitled “The National Culture and its Avatar, the Folklore.” A Study on Forms, Metamorphoses and the Function of Folklore as a Domain of Media Culture in Romania, a research project hosted by the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant.

<sup>2</sup> In “Russia in the Microphone Age. A History of Soviet Radio, 1919–1970,” Stephen Lovell comments upon this aspect in the introductory pages: “The underlying conviction of this book is that a media-centered approach has much to add to our understanding of Soviet history. This is not an obvious or uncontroversial contention. It might seem that technologies of communication played an illustrative rather than formative role in the Soviet era. All branches of cultural production were closely supervised, and none more so than radio, which was minutely censored and conceived as the mouthpiece of power. But culture was not simply the handmaiden of politics; it was more akin to a valued senior employee. If this was a mass-media dictatorship, some of the media in question were of recent origin and hence still uncharted territory for Bolshevik rhetoricians.” (LOVELL 2015:1)

<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank the *Written Archive* department of the *Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society* (*Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune*), which is hosting my archive research for this project. Without the highly professional help of this team, my work in this archive would not have been possible. This paper is based on documents issued between 1925 and 1945.

<sup>4</sup> “In the post-Stalin era, however, yet another ambiguity of radio came to the fore. As Marshall McLuhan put it in one of his evocative formulations, twentieth-century radio was a ‘tribal drum’. This quintessentially modern medium was atavistic in the sense that it built group solidarity (and shaped collective action) through aural affect: without radio, the ‘somnambulism’ of Hitler’s followers would be impossible to explain.” Yet McLuhan also acknowledged another attribute of radio: “its power to address the listener individually in ‘high definition’. In certain contexts, perhaps, this made radio the weapon of totalitarian propagandists; in others, however, it served to fragment (or segment) the audience.” (LOVELL 2015:11–12)

the state.<sup>5</sup> The strategic importance of radio is also proven by the control imposed by the state from the very beginning, in 1925 (DENIZE 1998:31).

Paul Starr, referring to this matter in the US and to the role radio broadcasting played in the ascension of political power in the USA at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, shows how media communication could shape fundamental political decisions (what he calls “constitutive”), and, implicitly, institutional dynamics: “The communications media have so direct a bearing on the exercise of power that their development is impossible to understand without taking politics fully into account, not simply in the use of the media, but in the making of constitutive choices about them. By constitutive choices I mean those that create the material and institutional framework of fields of human activity. My premise here is that the constraints in the architecture of technical systems and social institutions are rarely so clear and overpowering as to compel a single design. At times of decision – constitutive moments, if you will – ideas and culture come into play, as do constellations of power, pre-existing institutional legacies, and models from other countries. (...) Constitutive choices emerge in a cumulative, branching pattern: Early choices bias later ones and may lead institutions along a distinctive path of development, affecting a society’s role and position in the world.” (STARR 2004:1–2)

In Europe, the scope of the strategic importance of radio broadcasting was fathomed during the First World War. The promptness shown by the Romanian state in developing radio broadcasting was consistent with the European trend.

Eugen Denize signs a history of the beginning and development of radio broadcasting in Romania. The book consists of several volumes published between 1998 and 2002 (DENIZE 1998; 1999; 2000; 2002), which offers the political, social, and technological context around the emergence of radio centers in Romania, then around the founding and development of the Romanian Society for Radiotelephony (*Societății Române de Radiotelefonie*) (1925–1928). In the first chapter, Denize makes a perceptive remark: “everywhere, as well as in our country, the beginning of radio broadcasting was dominated by scientific and technical aspects, the first and the most important obstacles being in this area of its development. Once these obstacles are overcome, the focus will move towards the economic social, political and cultural aspects, towards the message radio conveyed to the community through the content of its programs. Without losing its technical and scientific dimension, radio becomes mainly a political and cultural tool, with both a positive and a negative meaning attached to it. It becomes the main mass communication medium and, therefore, the main means of influencing public opinion.” (DENIZE 1998:9–10).

<sup>5</sup> Perfectly understood by the political power of the time: “(...) in 1926, the Board preparing the functioning of the *Radiotelephonic Broadcasting Society* (*Societatea de Difuziune Radiotelefonică*) published a propaganda brochure with the title “Radio Broadcasting. Clarifications Regarding the Need and Use of Radio Broadcasting.” (...) it reads: “Radio broadcasting is meant to have the same importance as the written press, over which it has the advantage of immediacy and of personal and direct expression.” “In difficult times, the entire nation can listen to the voice of their enlightened leaders, who will show them the path of redemption; an infinite army can be inspired by the voice of their commanding officer or, invisible yet present, can reach any soldier... This is a huge opportunity for a community to find unity in feelings and aspirations, to vibrate together at the same time, to join their efforts for reaching a common goal.” (DENIZE 1998:45, quote from *Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune* file 1/1926, page 1)

In July 1925,<sup>6</sup> the assembly of deputies voted for the law regarding the “installation and use of radio-electrical stations and channels”, a law which also determined from the very beginning the state monopoly on radiotelegraphy. Within its legally granted authority, the Romanian Radiophonic Society (Societatea Română de Radiofonie) will have the right to decide (its Administration Board) upon the type and content of radio programs such as conferences, lectures, concerts and commercials. This first article of law concerning radio broadcasting mentioned that “50% of the part that must be given to the state from the company’s net profit will be used to start a special fund to finance national propaganda and culture through wireless telephony.” (DENIZE 1989:35).

From 1928,<sup>7</sup> the year when the first radio programs were broadcast, until right after the 1950s, when – because of its quick evolution – the recording of radio programs on magnetic tape was a common professional practice, practically the only documents that could be considered today are the written texts of the radio programs (conferences, educational or informative programs, political, agriculture news, etc.), most of them handwritten and all of them being signed by their author.

Between 1925,<sup>8</sup> when the Romanian Society of Radiotelephony – Societatea Română de Radiotelefonie (later called the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society – Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune) was launched, and 1948, the year when the communist regime officially came into power, Romanian radio programs broadcast scientific discourses, but also targeting a wider audience not limited merely to specialists or those interested in science. Of all discourse types, the present study is focused on the ethnological one. The way in which ethnological discourse built a media hypostasis for addressing the entire society has roots in the aforementioned time period, and programs dedicated to traditions (radio conferences and more) bear the signs of this structuring process. Ironically, due to the technical conditions of that time, most speeches, announcements and lectures created to be delivered orally have survived only as written texts. The written forms of those speeches were closely related to their oral delivery as they had to be approved beforehand. The signs of their approval (notes, stamps, comments) can be seen today on the documents preserved in the written archive of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society (RRBS) – Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune (SRR). These are the first radio products which marked the media domain of traditions. Archived in written form, but meant to be orally delivered, these texts have one more characteristic: they only

<sup>6</sup> 1925 is also the year of the first Romanian language radio broadcast, on the occasion of the Luna Bucureștilor (The Month of Bucharest) exhibition, followed by the others on the 19<sup>th</sup> November and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of December. (DENIZE 1998:31). Even so, the first official radio broadcast of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society took place on 1 November 1928.

<sup>7</sup> The development of radio broadcasting in Romania belonged to a wider process which, as I mentioned before, covered the whole of Europe between the two World Wars. Radio France broadcast the first program dedicated to the general public in December 1921, and in 1930, *l’Institut National Belge de Radiodiffusion* INR was founded. BBC (British Broadcasting Company) began operating in 1922, and in 1927 the British Broadcasting Corporation gained monopoly control of the airwaves. The military, political and also commercial importance of radio broadcasting started to be evident from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the First World War (LOVELL 2015:17–18, mainly referring to Russia).

<sup>8</sup> However, the real beginnings of radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony in Romania date from the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely the year 1908, rapidly developing during the First World War (DENIZE 1998:10).

started to be accessible to the public after the fall of the communist regime. The close connection between the communist narrative discourse aimed at building the nation/nationhood and the discourse of the previous regime was thus left behind and the mutual formative possibilities of collective memory and of the archive (APPADURAI 2003) were fractured. Only after the 1990s could the comparative analysis of media productions (namely, radio programs) created before and after the establishment of the communist regime give access to fully understanding the process of shaping the media discourse of national specificity.

For methodological reasons, the present paper will deal with the first 10 years of the organisation mentioned above, namely 1925–1935, keeping in mind that official radio broadcasting only began in the year 1928. For a general overview of the development of radio broadcasting in Romania during its first 10 years, and particularly of media folklore, certain aspects should be mentioned. This was the time when a program structure was designed and when the language and the mode of address were shaped to be appropriate not only for radio communication, but also for some specialized programs (for example, those dedicated to children or those for people living in rural areas).

The first radio broadcasts in 1928 covered a few areas: news and the stock market, weather, sports, music programs (both classical and traditional music, singers and musicians). Radio conferences were aired from the very first day (the first one dates from the winter of 1928 and was addressed to women) and soon became very popular. During the first months of operation, children’s programs, reading sessions (from the work of classic and contemporary authors), and medical advice made their debut. The first comedy show was aired in December 1928 (DENIZE 1998:53). The structure of the programs was changed only in 1937<sup>9</sup>, when new rules were adopted regarding the organization and functioning of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society - Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune. Also established around that time was a department coordinating the programs (including “spoken programs – dedicated to literature in general, conferences, news, official statements, press releases, reportages, daily news, theatre; and *the musical programs* – [music] in general, mainly coverage of the concerts of the Radio orchestra, musical library – comments, discs” DENIZE 1998:74).

The first reference to what we currently label *folklore-related programs* is a special note in the report written by the administration council in March 1932 (referring to the activity in 1931).<sup>10</sup> This report is signed by Dimitrie Gusti<sup>11</sup> (president of the broadcasting company between 1930 and 1933) and mentions “a new format of radio programs, including national celebrations, European cultural life, broadcasting in French and in English,” as well as “two programs dedicated to traditions.” Moreover, this report also

<sup>9</sup> In 1936, Pamfil Șeicaru, considered the most important Romanian journalist between the two world wars, joined the administration board.

<sup>10</sup> Report of Administration Board, issued in 1930, for 1929, doc. 3/1930, Written Archive of RRBS - Arhiva Scrisă a SRR.

<sup>11</sup> D. Gusti was the main contributor to the creation of a new Romanian school of sociology. He was the founder of the Sociological School in Bucharest, president of the Romanian Academy between 1944–1946, Minister of Public Instruction, Culture and Arts between 1932 and 1933, and professor at Iași and București Universities. He founded and ran the Association for Science and Social Reform (1919–1921), the Romanian Social Institute (1921–1939, 1944–1948) and the Social Sciences Institute of Romania.

includes the first programmatic statement of the role radio should play within Romanian culture and society, and related to this role, the categories of “media products” that should be created and promoted. Regarding the program discussed and completed in the previous year, Gusti wrote: “Romanian radio broadcasting is a means of entertainment, but more a form of real culture through a series of daily conferences called *Radio University*, broadcast on the same day and at the same time, and approaching several domains: education; health and mass culture; science; literature, language and folklore; social sciences and foreign politics; art and music; philosophy and religious life; history, geography and tourism. The most prominent scholars of the country have come to the microphone, enabling the inhabitants of the most remote areas of the country to become enlightened from the cultural focal point of Romanian radio.” The reasons for the program structure are also mentioned in this report: “programs for students – Saturday afternoon; hours dedicated to villagers – Sunday afternoon (the state contributed to this program through the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Care); coverage of Romanian and foreign news; music: operas, symphonic concerts, vocal, instrumental and dance music, favoring Romanian music whenever possible.”<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, a ‘media domain’ focused on rural areas had already been shaped by 1935–1936. From 1928 to 1948 (the year when the communist regime officially rose to power), in a radio broadcasting network which also included Radio Moldova or Radio Basarabia,<sup>13</sup> interest in rural areas and traditional peasant communities became gradually more varied in programs like the following: *De vorbă cu sâtencele* [Talking with the women in the village], *De vorbă cu sâtenii* [Talking with the men in the village], *Gazeta sâteanului* [The peasant’s magazine], *Ora satului* [The village hour], *Ora serviciului social pentru sâteni / Serviciul social pentru sâteni* [The social service hour for villagers / Social service for villagers], *Program pentru sâteni* [Program for villagers], *Săptămână satului* [Village week], or even in the conferences within the Radio University, such as *Cărturarii satelor* [The scholars of villages], *Mărturii ale trecutului în folclor* [Traces of the past in folklore] or *Satul românesc* [The Romanian village]. Besides broadcasting ‘conferences’, the radio programs also hosted interviews and dialogues between a journalist and villagers (the audience). Their content was diverse, referring to activities, objects and rhymed texts. However, they were also praising village life. The educational purpose is obvious, even when skim-reading the content of the programs. It was a strategy which had been built for 20 years, until the communist regime came into power. Moreover, the direct connection between peasant culture and the national culture project could not only be decoded in the content of the radio programs but also in their titles. Media language codes use concepts which are important for the discourse of national specificity: “Romanian village,” “villagers,” “folklore,” “proof” and “past.” These elements rebuild the scholarly discourse of national identity/specificity and its main topics (ancestral, continuous and specific characteristics) as media products.

The diversity of the programs in the first 20 years of radio broadcasting shows two distinct areas in the media domain of rural life, a domain in the process of being

<sup>12</sup> Report of Administration Board, issued in 1930, for 1929, doc. 3/1930, Written Archive of RRBS - Arhiva Scrisă a SRR.

<sup>13</sup> Other political and social requirements the radio broadcast had to meet were also to cover the political, cultural and social aspects emerging after the 1918 Union of Transylvania with Romania.



constituted: firstly, the outcome of the interest in villages is represented by the programs dedicated to educating, instructing, emancipating and “civilizing” the inhabitants of villages, namely programs similar – from the political point of view – to sociological intervention.<sup>14</sup> Then there were also programs – such as the Radio Conferences or those promoting the literature considered representative of Romanian culture, the topics of which mainly exploited traditions as an already constituted area of folklore studies, for example the series *Mărturii ale trecutului în folclor* [*Traces of the past in folklore*], *Cărturarii satelor* [*The scholars of villages*], or *Satul românesc* [*The Romanian village*].

Therefore, between 1925 and 1935, the former media domain mentioned included: in 1932, the first two editions of the series *Cuvânt pentru săteni* [*Words for villagers*] and *De vorbă cu sătenii* [*Talking with villagers*], in 1933, *Băutura* [*The Drinks*], in the series, *De vorbă cu sătenii* [*Talking with villagers*], and *Bugete țărănești* [*Peasants’ budgets*] and *Bunăstarea economică* [*Economic prosperity*], in the series *Program pentru săteni* [*Program for villagers*]. The series *Cunoștințe folositoare* [*Useful knowledge*] started in the same year within the program *Ora satului* [*The hour of the village*],<sup>15</sup> which, between 1933 and 1935, included: *Păstrarea fructelor peste iarnă* [*How to preserve fruit during the winter*], *Mijlocul de salvare a recoltelor* [*How to save the crops*], *Primejdia focului* [*The danger of fire*], *Socoteli pentru plugari* [*Calculations for ploughmen*], *Sănătate de sărbătorile Crăciunului* [*Health at Christmas*], *Păstrarea sănătății morale* [*Preserving moral health*], *Oameni sălțați din rândurile țăranimii* [*People coming up from the village*], *Gospodăria țărănească* [*Peasants’ household*], *Realizări culturale la sate* [*Cultural achievements in villages*], *Cei șapte ani de-acasă* [*Early education* (recurrent topic)], *Grădinile și loturile școlare* [*Gardens and school plots*], *Cum ne putem îmbunătăți găinile* [*How to improve our chickens*], *De ce ne îmbolnăvim* [*Why do we get ill?*], *Alăptarea artificială a copiilor și hrana lor până la 4 ani* [*The artificial feeding of babies and food for children up to 4 years of age*], *Povețe sanitare cu privire la băile de soare* [*Medical advice regarding sunbathing*], *Lupta împotriva secetei* [*The struggle against drought*], *Accidente cu muniții găsite* [*Accidents caused by found ammunition*], *Cum să ne apărăm vitele noastre de bolile molipsitoare* [*How to protect cattle against infectious diseases*], *Accidente la munca câmpului* [*Accidents while working the land*], *Băile și apele de leac* [*Baths and healing waters*], *Păcatul cel mare* [*The greatest sin*], *Despre scarlatină* [*About scarlet fever*], *Ce trebuie să vadă sătenii când vin la oraș* [*What should villagers visit when travelling to the city?*], *De ce trebuie să se ferească sătenii*

<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the participants in Gusti’s campaigns organized between 1930 and 1932 were to be assigned different time slots, meant to promote field research in a systematic and cumulative manner. Among the first such programs we would like to mention: *Valoarea monografiilor lui Gusti* [*The value of Gusti’s monographic works*], made by geographer Ion Conea (Written Archive of RRBS, 6/1932, doc 23, 11 pages.), *Universitatea și Serviciul social la sate* [*University and social service in the Countryside*] (Written Archive of RRBS, 6/1932, doc. 60, 7 pages.), or *Dunărea de jos etnografică* [*Ethnographic Lower Danube*] (Written Archive of RRBS, 8/1932, doc 4, 4 pages.), both made by Emanoil Bucuța.

<sup>15</sup> This type of radio program, named *Viața satului* – *Village life*, then constantly called *Ora satului* – *The village hour*, started in 1933 and was produced and broadcast until the fall of the communist regime. As the written documents related to the radio program show, it usually covered the following topics: “Useful knowledge,” “Talking with the men in the village” / “Talking with the women in the village,” and they played music on vinyl records. Later on, after 1938, other topics were added: “The villagers’ letters” and “The villagers’ magazine.”

*când vin la oraș* [What should villagers avoid when travelling to the city?], *Farmacia gospodarului- buruienile de leac* [The villagers' pharmacy – healing plants], *Băutura și alcoolismul* [Drinking and alcoholism]. The educational purpose of this category should be connected with the social and political program of rural emancipation, with interventionist sociology and also with Gusti's campaigns, supported by King Carol II. The practical advice given (medical, behavioral, agrarian, and generally related to managing the household) as well as maintaining the same broadcasting time were meant to secure the loyalty of the target audience. Moreover, one of the effects of this social and ideological policy was that it opened the opportunity to centralize control over the information disseminated in rural areas.

The latter domain mentioned (yet the first one chronologically) included programs such as: *Dansurile noastre populare* [Our traditional dances] (1932, Flora Capsali), *Folclorul și literatura cultă* [Folklore and literature] and *Ce este folclorul* [What is folklore?] (1932, Artur Gorovei), *Încondeierea ouălor de Paști* [Painting Easter eggs] (1932, Al. Tzigara Samurcaș), *Ceramica la români* [Romanian pottery], (G.M. Cantacuzino), *Țesături și scoarțe* [Woven fabrics and carpets], and *Fântâne, cumpene, popasuri* [Fountains, well poles, resting places] (1932, G.M. Cantacuzino), *Folclor muzical* [Musical folklore] (1932, G. Breazu), *Basme în versuri culese din popor* [Versified fairy tales] (Universitatea Radio, 1933, Aurel Filimon), *Hora românească* [Traditional Romanian round dance] (1933, Horia Furtună), *Loviștea, țara de pe Olt* [Loviștea, the county on Olt River] (1933, Ion Conea), *Aportul folclorului în poezia românească* [Folklore's contribution to Romanian poetry] (1933, Ion Pillat), *Dorul în creația poporană* [The feeling of longing in traditional folkloric creations] (1934, N. Crevedia), *Ideea destinului în poezia populară* [The idea of destiny in traditional poetry] (1934, Dan Botta), *Vrăjile de ploaie* [Charms for rain] (1934, Ioan Aurel Candrea), *Sensul dramatic al poeziei populare* [The dramatic meaning of traditional poetry] (1934, the Radio University series, Dan Botta), *Specificul oltenesc* [The specific features of Oltenia] (1934, the Radio University series, Radu Gyr), *Gluma țărănească* [Peasant jokes] (1934, the Radio University series, Horia Furtună), *Din psihologia țăranului român* [From the psychology of Romanian peasants] (1934, signed by C. Rădulescu-Motru). Most of the titles mentioned belong to the series named Radio Conferences. This program category directly connects folkloristics – in its (Herderian) quality of discipline, meant to produce the proofs of national specificity – with media production (then, consequently, with media market). An imagined rurality (ANDERSON 1983), a celebrating rurality (as ethnographic museums had already legitimized its representation) becomes not only scholarly reference in shaping national specificity, but also a source for media production. These are the radio programs we are especially interested in because they initiated models for the narrative codes which, later on, during the communist regime, staged *folklore* as a media product.

In parallel with diversifying the radio discourse about rural areas, also visible is the interest of radio hosts (most of them prominent personalities of the time) in creating a type of discourse meant to reach out not only to a small segment of intellectuals or bourgeoisie, but to a wider category of audience, soon to be extended to all inhabitants of the country. This purpose is explicitly mentioned in a radio conference with the title "The psychology of the radio listener," signed by N. Bagdasar (corresponding member of the Romanian Academy). This approach meant an important change in rhetorical



(academic) practice: firstly, the speaker’s image was suspended, as they were using only their discourse and voice on the radio, and secondly, the audience and their relation with the speaker became wider and more diversified. This conference text brings up the matter of the accessibility of the media discourse, of its ability to communicate with a larger and more diverse audience.

Therefore, in line with the interwar political and social project aimed at emancipating the rural population, the strategy of shaping the incipient media culture was an elitist one, at least until the beginning of the Second World War. Due to the intellectual and cultural resources engaged in this project, the emerging media discourse would exclusively use what is considered to be the intellectual elite of interwar Romania. However, it is an elite (programmatically) called up to build their discourse mainly according to the accessibility criterion.

Following this brief approach to the beginnings of the radio broadcasting in Romania, several remarks could be made.

Firstly, when traditional communities are configured by radio programs, there is a programmatic dissociation between rural life and peasant culture, the latter being rendered by concepts such as *traditions* and *folklore*. Then, while the former media domain (the one referring to rural communities) shaped in this manner is systematically related (in broadcasting schedules) with educational programs dedicated to children/students and, consequently, with the pedagogical and social-educative approach of the media products, the latter (the one referring to *traditional* peasants’ culture) is integrated within cultural programs, meant to promote a widely accessible national culture. The causes of this dissociation could primarily be found in the logic of the given media discourse, closely linked to the political and social program focused on the emancipation of rural areas, and the (media) effect of this dissociation was the highlight of the gap between *rural life* and *tradition*. It was only meant to exploit the methodological dissociation between rurality as a sociological fact and tradition as a political and cultural construct already operated by the paradigm of folklore studies, and yet its visibility grows gradually after becoming a principle of media production.

Secondly, we should also note the dissociation effect between entertainment and traditions, built through the cultural and political program promoted in Romania in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The programs dedicated to rural life were not meant only to entertain, as they are entirely educational and informative.<sup>16</sup> This dissociation was maintained until the Communist regime came into power, and constantly decreased until it disappeared, especially after 1956, the year when television began to operate in Romania.

This dissociation, once publicly and nationally (at least as a project) stated, influenced the relation between the construction of the image of the traditional culture (in fact, of the traditional cultures), as a media object, and its receivers, the public.

Translated from Romanian by Anca Remeta

<sup>16</sup> The entertainment shows have a special slot, “Happy Hour,” first broadcast by Bucharest Radio on 9 January 1929. It promoted an urban type of entertainment and for more than two decades was hosted by two comedians, Stroe and Vasilache. After Vasile Vasilache’s death in 1944, Nicolae Stroe continued the live show on his own, and it also became very popular during the communist regime.

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