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*Mediterranean model of mass media means reception.*

*Greek example*

**KEY WORDS**

Greece, media, media system, press, television, audience

**ABSTRACT**

Theoretical assumptions of the Mediterranean media model according to Hallin and Mancini were verified based on the media market situation in Greece. In order to do this, used was research on Greek media recipient (TV particularly) preferences and behaviour, carried out by the state Audiovisual Media Institute in 2007, entitled *National research of mass media reception in Greece 2007*. In the first part of the article the research results are presented, generally characterizing Greeks as consumers of media content. The second part focuses on an analysis of Greek viewer's attitudes toward various news broadcasts, transmitted by different stations. The third part of the article discusses the growing influence of modern data transmission technologies (the Internet, mobile technology) on the functioning and reception of traditional media. Additionally, the paper mentions "new media" issues, not encompassed in the model.

Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini delineated standard models of media systems, taking into consideration a series of factors which have a significant influence on the functioning of media institutions. Among the most imperative are the descriptions of media markets in different countries (including economic power of companies owning the press as well as audiovisual broadcasters), the escalation of political parallelism, or the formal and informal connections between media and political systems, level of journalist professionalism, and a characterization of the role of the state in the functioning of media markets<sup>1</sup>. The three outlined models are: the Mediterranean model (polarized pluralism), the North-Central model (democratic corporationism) and the North Atlantic model (liberal). The Greek media system analysed in this article is an example of a Mediterranean standard, being closest to its theoretical model<sup>2</sup>. It includes the following characteristics: low press readership, high level of political parallelism, journalism with a focus on commentary and ideological engagement,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. D. Hallin, P. Mancini, *Systemy medialne. Trzy modele mediów i polityki w ujęciu porównawczym*, Kraków 2007, p. 21–45.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 71.

lower level of professionalization and professional emancipation, as media are often subjected to the political process including a high level of state interventionism into market structures<sup>3</sup>. The presented above theoretical assumptions will be confronted with media practices of modern Greece. As verification used will be detailed research on media content recipient preferences and behaviours (TV particularly) carried out by the national Audiovisual Media Institute (AMI) in 2007 and published a year later as *National research of mass media information reception in Greece 2007*<sup>4</sup>. The research was to provide insight on how Greeks make use of the available TV broadcast offer as well as of other media, what are their preferences and habits and which medium is their main source of topical information. The research encompassed a representative sample of 2 995 people above 15 years of age, with statistical error estimated at 1.8%, with average time of interview lasting 26 minutes.

The article is divided into three parts. The first presents research results generally characterizing Greeks as consumers of media content. The second part focuses on an analysis of Greek viewer attitudes toward evening news broadcasts on different channels. The third part discusses the growing influence of modern data transmission technologies (Internet, mobile technology) on the functioning and reception of “traditional” media. The study is to show how theoretical assumptions of the Mediterranean model compare with the reception of mass media by Greek audiences. Additionally, the paper mentions “new media” issues, not yet encompassed in the model. Finally, the article is supplemented with an annex which presents in graphic form (tables) the most important research results.

### **Greeks as consumers of media offer**

The first decade of the 21st century has brought about in Greece as well as in other countries imperative changes on the media market and, as a result, changing relations with recipients. The analysis of research by AMI shows that Greek society is losing interest in traditional media such as radio, press and TV, and the stations cannot count on audience loyalty so enjoyed in the 1990s. The majority of people do not watch news broadcasts in their entirety and they change channels without sentiment when they are not satisfied with what is offered. Even if they are, they may still switch from channel to channel to see what else is on. TV watching has ceased to be an activity in itself to which all attention was paid. Now, it is a medium which is more of an addition to other daily life activities. The TV is on while people

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> *Εθνική Έρευνα για τα Μέσα Μαζικής Ενημέρωσης στην Ελλάδα το 2007*, Αθήνα 2008. If not marked otherwise, all data in this article will be from this research.

are eating their meals, talking or reading<sup>5</sup>. Still, TV in Greece remains to be the dominant mass medium of communication, hence the authors' focus on it in the research.

The available data shows that in all European countries TV is the main source of topical information for people<sup>6</sup> and its domination is even more apparent when it comes to entertainment content. In Greece, viewing rates are among the highest in Europe, as many as 74% of its inhabitants watch it daily, while only 33% listen to the radio and 10% read the press. In comparison, 1% of Greeks never watch TV, 31% don't listen to the radio and 50% do not read newspapers. On average, Greeks watch TV more than 6 times a week, they turn on the radio 4 times a week and read the press less than twice a week. For nearly half the Greeks (46%), TV is their only source of information and entertainment, for 7% it is radio, and for 1% – the press, which is close to statistical error. Only 4% of respondents supplement content obtained from TV by press. This data is a striking example of low press readership, the lowest in Europe, estimated at about 77 titles per 1000 inhabitants (data from 2006). In other words, only 7.7% of Greek society buy newspapers<sup>7</sup>. Based on this example, we can confirm the model characterization of Mediterranean systems in which there is a general advantage of TV over other media<sup>8</sup>.

The above shown dependencies are supported by responses to a question about people's favourite source of information. In this case, 69% of Greeks chose TV, 9% – radio and 7% – press. In comparison, in 2001, the percentage for TV was 4% lower while for the press it was higher by 5–6%<sup>9</sup>. The Internet has a relatively low influence on public opinion, with only 3% of respondents choosing it as their preferred source of information. Also, just 1% of those surveyed chose socio-political magazines which means that this type of press is only a kind of journalistic form for exchange of opinion. It should be noted that the role of the press as a favourite source of information increases on weekends (from 7% to 11%), while it decreases as far as TV (from 69% to 67%). It turns out that when people have time off work, they have more time to read. The above results correspond to those from other Mediterranean countries such as Portugal, Spain and Italy. This means that the position of TV as the main source of information is, at least in this region, indisputable. What is more, in contrast to Scandinavian countries, Germany and Great Britain, the influence of TV on public opinion is in no way counterbalanced by the printed media. Greek authors criticize press publishers' and

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση και η στάση των Ελλήνων προς τα ΜΜΕ*, Αθήνα 2009, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example D. Hallin, P. Mancini, *Systemy medialne...*, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. X. Παπαζής, Ε. Πολίτη, *Εφημερίδες – πολύ σκληρές για να πεθάνουν*, „Συγκρότητες” 2008, No. 1, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> In press readership ranking for Europe, Mediterranean countries are in last four places, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece (in last place). For more see Appendix, table 1. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. D. Hallin, P. Mancini, *Systemy medialne...*, p. 25.

radio broadcasters' activities as doing little to change this entirely disadvantageous situation. The predominant method of trying to boost press sales is to attach to magazines and newspapers free of charge supplements (such as CDs and DVDs), which are rarely of journalistic character. It is usually films which puts people back in front of the TV. As far as radio, broadcasters are increasingly doing away with costly news stations and services, and are replacing them with cheaper music options<sup>10</sup>.

Another imperative factor supporting the high influence and growing domination of TV is people investing in more, newer and better quality TV equipment. In nearly half Greek households (49%), there are 2 TV sets, while 26% own 1, 17% – 3, and 4% – four or more!<sup>11</sup> There are virtually no households without TV sets and the average Greek family owns two. What is happening is growing individualization of this medium's use. In more and more homes, each family member watches what he or she wants individually, regardless of others. Gradually, TV has overcome this technological advantage of press and radio, which was much easier received individually. Progress in this area results in Greeks watching even more television; 47% watch 2–3 hours a day and one in five – 4–5 hours. At weekends it is even more and all in all every day Greeks watch on average 3 hours and 18 minutes<sup>12</sup>. Among the most popular programmes, there are news broadcasts, Greek shows and foreign films. It should also be noted that Greece, in accordance with the Mediterranean model, is a country in which the length of time spent in front of the TV screen is among the highest in Europe<sup>13</sup>.

In the context of the above remarks, interesting is data on subjective satisfaction obtained from the Greek TV programme offer. According to media experts and sociologists, Greek TV does not enjoy a very good reputation. It is said that domestic broadcasters “predominantly attract viewers with sensational character of their programmes”<sup>14</sup>. Detailed research, carried out in 1999, of the five most popular Greek channels (1 public and 4 commercial) shows that between 8 pm and 12 pm noted were, on average, three to four violent scenes per minute. This included both, information and entertainment (films, shows)

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση...*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Over 4% of respondents did not specifically answer this question. In comparison, in Poland (2005) the statistics are as follows: 60% of households have 1 TV set, 33% – 2, 8% – 3 or more. Cf. A. Piekut, *Wstępna informacja nt. rodzajów kosztów, które będą musiały ponieść gospodarstwa domowe przy wprowadzaniu telewizji cyfrowej oraz rodzajów korzyści wynikających z efektywnego przeprowadzenia procesu konwersji w Polsce*, Warszawa 2005. In 2007, 2.9% of households did not have any TV sets. Cf. *Dochody i warunki życia ludności Polski (raport z badania EU-SILC 2007 i 2008)*, Warszawa 2009, p. 91.

<sup>12</sup> What is interesting, telemetric research shows that Greeks spend in front of the TV over four hours a day, therefore their declarations are understated. More details of research can be found in the Appendix, chart 2.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Πολιτική και ΜΜΕ. Η περίπτωση της Νότιας Ευρώπης*, Αθήνα 2004, p. 47–48.

<sup>14</sup> D. Hallin, P. Mancini, *Systemy medialne...*, p. 127.

programmes but, interestingly, it did not include verbal violence<sup>15</sup>. In comparison to research carried out three years earlier, the percentage of violent scenes increased by 60%<sup>16</sup>. Researchers note that particularly dangerous for young people is the presentation of aggressive behaviour as the only way to resolve interpersonal conflict. This regards not only films but also news services in which these types of scenes seem more attractive than resolution of conflict via mediation<sup>17</sup>. Meanwhile, recipients of Greek TV seem to be of quite the opposite opinion. When asked to assess on a scale of 1 (the worst) to 10 (the best) their satisfaction with presented content, 61% marked between 8 and 10 while only 3% – between 1 and 4, with the average estimated at 7.9. It is not the goal of this article to explain the sociological reasons for these divergences but it should be noted that Greece is a country in which aggression both, verbal and physical, is present in public discourse on a much larger scale than in other parts of Europe. Within this decade only there have been several terrorist attacks there, with bombs exploding near banks, courts, police stations and ministries. In 2006, there was an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate a minister and a year later a leftist terrorist group fired at the American embassy in Athens with a high caliber launcher. Each year, numerous strikes take place of different scope and magnitude, combined with street manifestations in large cities during which popular are clashes with the police. We can infer then that from an average Greek's point of view TV content filled with sensational information, so criticized by media experts, is not something that is outrageous. The article, however, will not focus on this issue in any greater depth.

### **Reception of news broadcasts**

Lately, in Greek political discourse all the more often criticized is the editing and presentation of materials in news services, especially those broadcasted on commercial stations. What is evident is the absence of a broad and balanced take on reality which is being replaced with emotional content and image as well as theatrical drama. One reason for this is growing competition for mass audiences. All the more so, the news is fast pace, full of aggressive and sensational tone, with the offered analysis being more superficial and not allowing viewers deeper reflection. Journalist materials are becoming more chaotic and sloppy, with projected images having little to do with the accompanying commentary<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> For more see Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η βία στην ελληνική τηλεόραση*, Αθήνα 1999, p. 11–17.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 16. The main source of violence, according to the research are American films and shows, reports from regions at war in news broadcasts and commercials (about 8%).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση...*, p. 29.

On Greek TV, a large majority of main news services is broadcasted at 8 pm. This is a traditional time dating back to when the public television monopolist used to air its news. When the market was freed and commercial broadcasters started entering it, they experimented with different hours for the daily news but in the end they gave in and decided to compete directly with public TV<sup>19</sup> at 8 pm. Presently, over half of Greeks (54%) are of the opinion that this is the best possible time for airing the news, while 22% would prefer 9 pm and only 6% – 7:30 pm or earlier. Greek viewers are not only deeply loyal to 8 pm but also to the ritual of watching the news; with 54% stating that they view them 6–7 times a week, 1 in 4 – 3–5 times and only 12% – do not watch them at all. Such high ratings show that Greeks are disciplined viewers, even though news services are long in Greece, lasting between 45–90 minutes on all stations (somewhat over an hour on average), the average viewer watches them for 55 minutes. However, observed also was a change in audience preferences since presently only 30% are of the opinion that 60 minutes is an optimal length for news casts, 55% would like them to be shorter and only 4% – longer than an hour. What is interesting, media experts also postulate for shorter broadcasts as they are of the opinion that this is one reason why the news is so sensational and more entertaining than informational in character. Journalists, so as to fill air time, “will discuss a 30 second police report for over 5 minutes”<sup>20</sup>. On the other hand, in order to keep viewers watching one channel, without flipping over to the next, they refrain from more in-depth reflection on socio-political events, afraid they would bore the average Greek who does not read serious newspapers and, hence, is not used to focusing his attention on matters presented in a balanced manner for a longer period of time. Paradoxically, shortening news services altogether would result in not enough time for presenting some sensational, populist topics of *human interest*.

It is common knowledge that a good political/information programme should offer various, often opposing points of view presented by invited guests, with the host of the programme making sure that approximately equal amounts of time are allotted to each guest to present his opinion. However, research shows that only 27% of the surveyed think that these kinds of programmes are interesting and 71% believe that such are not particularly attention drawing. In other words, the diversity of opinions presented by politicians, experts and objective journalists is not something that is valued by the average recipient. Interesting is also another paradox observed on Greek television, that is the fact that in such programmes

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<sup>19</sup> The situation is similar to the American market where the three largest stations broadcast their evening news at 6:30 pm. See also: M.M. Kolonko, *Telewizja bez maski*, “Rzeczpospolita” 2010, No. 170 (23.07), p. A14.

<sup>20</sup> Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση...*, p. 30.

the journalists or hosts often speak more than the invited guests themselves. Another common practice is constant interrupting of the guest, even at the very start of his response<sup>21</sup>. Such practices as well as the criticized by specialists superficiality of relations, chaos and sensational nature of journalist statements, omitting valuable, analytical content, do not generally result in more negative assessment by Greek viewers. Nearly three fourths (74%) of respondents are satisfied with what is presented during the evening news casts and only 16% are disappointed with the offer. Additionally, public television has little influence on political debate in Greece (the two main public channels have a combined audience rating at around 10%, the lowest in all of Europe<sup>22</sup>), which means that the tone is set by commercial broadcasters who are more likely to accustom their news programmes in order to fit viewer preferences. As a result, journalists often take the liberty to polemicize with politicians and boldly comment on their statements. Greek viewer preferences survey as well as the analysis of news services confirm media experts theories which state that, “Greek journalists are generally greatly engaged politically and biased in favour or against particular views”<sup>23</sup>. The result is high political parallelism in Greek media, delineated by mutual relations between media companies and journalists with the world of politics. It can be said that television is not just a forum for public debate but its active participant, with this state of affairs not questioned by the Greek public. This, in turn, can lead to media’s excessive influence on the democratically elected state authorities, beyond the regular sphere of *pro publico bono* control. It should also be mentioned that only 10% of those Greeks who do not watch the news (1% on the entire population) state that the reason for this fact is lack of news objectivity. This is just another incentive for greater political parallelism and unhealthy relations between media and politics.

Furthermore, viewers were asked whether they ever change channels when watching the news and if they ever feel that their time was wasted after watching a broadcast. Among the surveyed, 48% answered that yes, they switch to other channels and 51% said rarely or never. As far as the second question, 63% answered yes, they feel like they’ve wasted time and 35% said no. It can be inferred that such responses correspond, on the one hand, with a general characterization of an average Greek viewer in front of the TV and, on the other, with the *infotainment* character of modern news broadcasts, which can be further analysed from a social and economic perspective. Frequent changing of channels (*zapping*) or switching in the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Πολιτική και ΜΜΕ...*, p. 102–103.

<sup>23</sup> D. Hallin, P. Mancini, *Systemy medialne...*, p. 98.

middle of a programme largely stem for modern consumer society character, expecting quick, easy entertainment and avoiding situations which require intellectual effort or are time consuming. Telemetric research shows<sup>24</sup> that the modern viewer is not able to focus his attention on a given topic for more than 5 minutes, with younger viewers – no more than 3 minutes<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, anything important that one wishes to communicate must fit into the 3–5 minute time span (social dimension). Greek journalists are under even greater pressure since all news broadcasts begin at the same time and if the viewer is bored, he can easily switch over to the competition. Once public television monopoly was overcome, commercial stations, with profits rather than quality in mind, decided to cater to viewer preferences knowing that if they were not satisfied, they would change the channel (economic dimension). As a result, commercial stations maintain a high level of viewer satisfaction but it means more entertainment, sensation and journalist engagement in political debate, as mentioned above. Moreover, what we are witnessing is news broadcasts becoming increasingly similar to each other and generally all of lower quality. In assessing Greek viewer preferences and behaviour, it should be noted that aspirations for satisfaction and time well spent (at the same time avoiding more difficult issues or content, *vide* low press readership or switching TV channels) do not correspond to a high quality public debate. This should definitely be an issue which public authorities should address, especially those responsible for media order. The present state of affairs is as such, “Greek viewers watch news broadcasts as if their main goal was entertainment”<sup>26</sup>, with commercial stations having no interest in changing this situation.

Respondents who declared that they watch news services on television were asked to list those topics or issues which they look for in such programmes. Among the answers listed there were: social issues (13%), economic (11%), health, quality of life (10%), political (9%), unemployment (8%). Striking in this case was the fact that as many as 34% were not able to name one topic in which they were particularly interested in. This confirms the view that the average Greek viewer is not particularly engaged in active consumption of news content, with his choices and assessment largely based on pleasure of which the source would be the news’ entertainment side. Also, those respondents who marked that they do not watch news broadcasts were asked why. They answered as follows: lack of interest in such information (37%), lack of time (22%) and boredom/annoyance with content (22%). It should be noted that only 4% answered that they obtain topical information about the world from other media.

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση...*, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34.



## Consumers of media content and new technologies

Discussion on Greek society attitudes regarding new technologies of mass communication should be preceded by general data regarding access to such, including broadband Internet connections, necessary for the reception of various advanced forms of network broadcasting. According to the newest report by the European Commission on the uniformity of European electronic networking market, broadband connection in Greece is available to 17% of the population, the lowest of all “old” EU countries (the average is 24.8%, the highest, Holland and Denmark, are at 38% and Poland, as well as Romania and Bulgaria, are at 13–13.5%, as of January 2010)<sup>27</sup>. It should be noted that over the last four years, availability of fast Internet has increased 12 times, in January 2006 it was estimated at 1.34%, in January 2008 – at 9.11% and in January 2009 – 13.4%<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, over the last year noted in Greece was the third largest increase in broadband line connections set up in the entire EU (3.6 lines per 100 inhabitants)<sup>29</sup>.

As far as mobile access to the Internet, the Greek market is not very developed yet. The penetration rate is only 2%, with the EU average at 5.2%<sup>30</sup>. It should be noted, though, that broadband Internet pricing is very competitive in Greece. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Greece has the lowest average price for access to the Internet in view of purchasing power of all countries belonging to the organization, at 18.68 Euro (in comparison, in Poland and Germany – €26, in Spain – €32.5, Czech Republic – €34.8, Portugal – €53.5 and Turkey – €91)<sup>31</sup>. All in all, it can be said that the perspectives for access to speedy Internet are quite good in Greece. Even though the country is presently struggling with a serious economic crisis, resulting in temporary shrinking of the economy as well as the purchasing power of the average household, the introduction of reforms and institutional change (mostly via strengthening the position of the Minister of Communication and facilitating the work of EETT, the Electronic Communication

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<sup>27</sup> The Communication from the Commission to the Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region Progress Report on the Single European Electronic Communications Market, 2009 (Report No. 15) SEK(2010)630, Brussels 2010, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Commission staff working document accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region Progress Report on the Single European Electronic Communications Market (15th Report), Vol. 1, Brussels 2010, p. 211.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> The Communication from the Commission..., p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Analiza cen usług stacjonarnego dostępu do Internetu w Polsce na tle krajów Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2010, p. 18.

Office) should result in greater market competitiveness, greater bandwidth capacity and better access to fast Internet<sup>32</sup>.

The most popular form of using “media” character content available via the Internet is the reading of blogs and other similar pages, created by either professional journalists working for traditional media or by regular people writing on the Web. As many as 48% of Greeks who have access to the Internet (12% of citizens over 15 years of age) regularly read these types of materials. Listening to Internet radio is in second place, practiced by 34% of internauts (8% of the population), and in third – reading website versions of the printed press, by 32% (nearly 8% of all). The least popular is watching TV over the Web, as indicated by 13% of Internet users (or 3% of the “15+” population). Concluding, it can be said that presently Greek media preferences via the Internet do not differ significantly from those in other countries<sup>33</sup>. It seems that classic models of media systems, those regarding traditional media, are being broken down and they cannot be used to categorize the different countries according to their Web usage and the relations between media and the public.

Presently, the role of the mobile phone in the reception of media content is less significant than that of the computer connected to the Internet, which does not mean that it should be ignored in view of its potential (especially if we take a look at the capabilities of modern smartphones or iPad devices). At this time, 17% of mobile phone users in Greece use them to listen to the radio (or 13% of the population over 15) and 1% watch TV (or 0.5% of citizens). The data shows that listening to the radio via a mobile phone is more popular than via the Internet, which seems to be good news in the context of the planned digitalization of television and making the TV signal available in the DVB-H format, which would be a base for the creation of a uniform mobile TV market<sup>34</sup>. In Greece, television via mobile technology is presently available only on a technological test basis, not on commercial. Therefore, it is impossible to assess its factual popularity. Taking into consideration, however, positive Greek attitudes regarding the reception of media content via mobile phones, based on mobile radio popularity, the onset of digital DVB-H format multiplex (or another, available from the phone) would seem to be a successful endeavor<sup>35</sup>.

Moreover, the development of 3G and faster (HSPA+, LTE, etc.) mobile technologies will benefit the expansion of stream transmission of television materials. For example, since 2000 accessible in Greece is multimedia music television, MAD TV, with a regular

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Commission staff working document..., p. 208.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση...*, p. 36.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. [www.sat.gr/show.cfm?id=104&obcatid=30](http://www.sat.gr/show.cfm?id=104&obcatid=30) [accessed: 11.08.2010].

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση...*, p. 37.

programme offer as well as ready video clips available *online* in the *videostreaming* technology for the computer or the mobile phone with fast Internet. It is popular enough that it can finance itself solely from advertising profits. Every month it receives as many as 550 000 entrances generated by 300 000 unique users<sup>36</sup>. Another interesting project by this broadcaster, making use of the television-Internet-mobile technology synergy triangle, is the building of their own virtual mobile technology operator (MVNO) named “Mo’Mad” offering services on a *pre-paid* basis and targeting people between 13–17 years of age. Aside from basic mobile services (regular connections, SMSs, MMSs, Internet connections), the operator has a special offer for his clients, based on the basic profile of MAD TV activity. As part of this offer, owners of the SIM “Mo’Mad” card have access to exclusive video materials, mp3 files, music news or tickets to concerts co-organized by the station. This is the first of this kind of initiative in Europe, established by a TV broadcaster of music character. Presently, the MAD TV offer is a leader on the market as far as mobile technology users in their *prepaid* target group.

Positive, especially from the point of view of mobile technology operators and TV broadcasters, is the picture we obtain from the above observations. It can be further strengthened as a result of analysis of the question regarding which device is absolutely indispensable to Greeks in their daily lives. It turns out that in first place there were two winners – the TV (33%) and mobile phone (32%), with car in third (30%). Much further down there were: radio (9%), computer (6%) and newspapers (3%). This is a society with a very positive attitude toward new communication technologies, which will not go unnoticed by media groups in their planning of future progress strategies. Special attention should be paid to mobile technology and access to fast Internet as it has a chance to become a portable device with access to all “traditional” media. As shown above, Greeks chose devices which are associated with “portable” reception of media (TV with mobile phone and car), which gives us a general characterization of this society. Low score for the press also supports our earlier observations, in accordance with the model, indicating little popularity of the press in Southern Europe.

The last question in the research regarded Greek household possession of digital audiovisual devices. The most popular is a DVD, owned by 70% of households, then – a VCR (39% of families) and in third place – digital camera (or camcorder), owned by 33% of households. Much less popular are operators offering access to modern television reception

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<sup>36</sup> For more see: [www.mad.tv/madprofile.pdf](http://www.mad.tv/madprofile.pdf) [accessed: 28.07.2010].

forms. Only 9% have paid cable TV (ie. channels such as Nova, Filmnet, Supersport), satellite digital TV is owned by 7% of households and digital ground TV – by 6%. This is not surprising since it was in November 2008 when Greece introduced digital format DVB-T reception and the switchover from analogue to digital transmitter is planned for the year 2015<sup>37</sup>. On the other hand, surprising is why this society, so attached to television as a medium, is reluctant to obtain cable or satellite TV. It seems that economy is the determining factor here. For most Greeks, ground television and the basic cable offer are satisfactory enough that they do not wish to pay extra money in order to have a wider offer. As a result, as many as 83% of Greek households do not use any of the above mentioned three additional TV offers. Moreover, other paid services such as *pay per view* (PPV) or *video on demand* (VOD) are also not very popular among Greek viewers. As one media expert noted, “Greek viewers are not used to paying for access to television as it is something they never had to do in order to use this medium”<sup>38</sup>.

### Conclusion

The presented above research results largely confirm the general assumptions of the Mediterranean model. In other words, the reception of mass media means by Greek society, the way content is consumed and assessment of media are similar to what has been expected by media experts, based on empirical research carried out earlier. The research shows that Greek viewers predominantly expect entertainment from media. Assessment is influenced by the level of perceived pleasure and a feeling of well spent time. This also applies to information programmes and news broadcasts. It seems that this kind of consumer attitude, geared at quick pleasure, does not favour the creation of content which requires deeper reflection or concentration. This is not a welcome trend from a well functioning democratic system point of view which requires public activity from its society. As far as new communication and information broadcasting technologies which have an increasingly growing influence on “traditional” media, in this area Greek audiences demonstrate surprising trust and interest. The state is quickly trying to make up for its technological backwardness, making efforts to speed up the building of a network enabling access to broadband Internet. The question is whether this will result in positive changes in average Greek viewer preferences for media content or whether it will reinforce the present. What is at stake is not

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. The Communication of the Greek Ministry of Transport and Communications, [www.minpress.gr/minpress/en/index/currevents/draseis\\_new\\_technologies\\_digitaler.htm](http://www.minpress.gr/minpress/en/index/currevents/draseis_new_technologies_digitaler.htm) [accessed: 3.08.2010].

<sup>38</sup> Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Η χρήση...*, p. 43.

only the quality of the media broadcasts but also the quality of the entire socio-political system.

## APPENDIX

Table 1. Number of press titles and press readership in select European countries

Country	Number of press titles	Readership (per 1000 inhabitants)
Finland	55	548
Sweden	93	536
Great Britain	104	406
Austria	16	385
Luxemburg	5	352
Holland	35	346
Germany	382	345
Denmark	31	344
Ireland	6	275
France	81	190
Belgium	28	186
<b>Spain</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Grece</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>77</b>

Source: X. Παπαζής, Ε. Πολίτη, *Εφημερίδες – πολύ σκληρές για να πεθάνουν*, „Συγκρότητες” 2008, No. 1, p. 49.

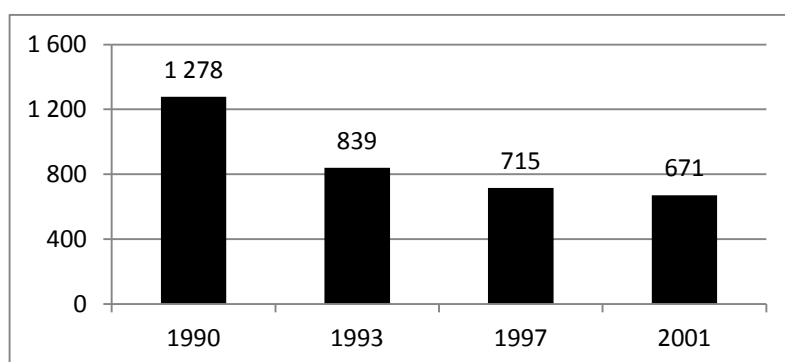


Chart 1. Daily press circulation in Greece (in thousands)

Source: Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Πολιτική και ΜΜΕ. Η περίπτωση της Νότιας Ευρώπης*, Αθήνα 2004, p. 39.

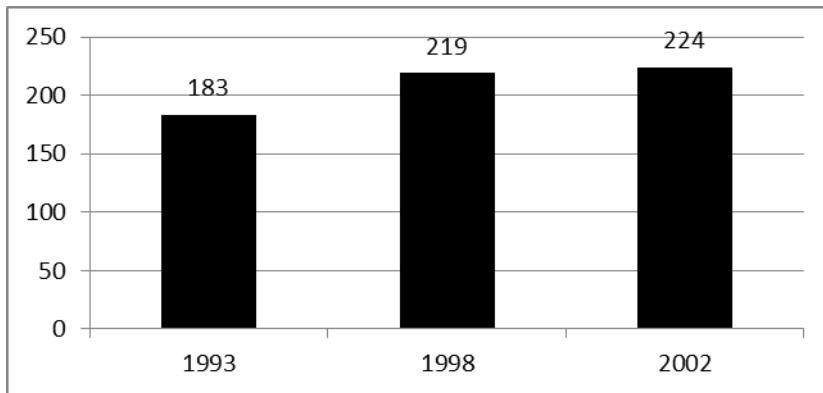


Chart 2. Daily TV viewing in Greece (in minutes)

Source: Σ. Παπαθανασόπουλος, *Πολιτική και ΜΜΕ. Η περίπτωση της Νότιας Ευρώπης*, Αθήνα 2004, p. 48.

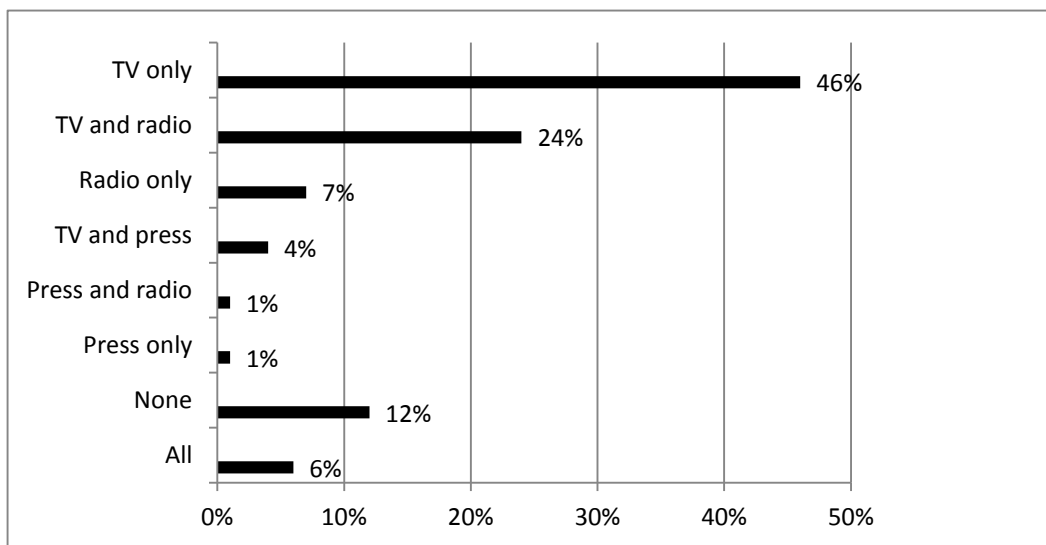


Chart 3. What medium (TV, radio, press) do you use on a daily basis?

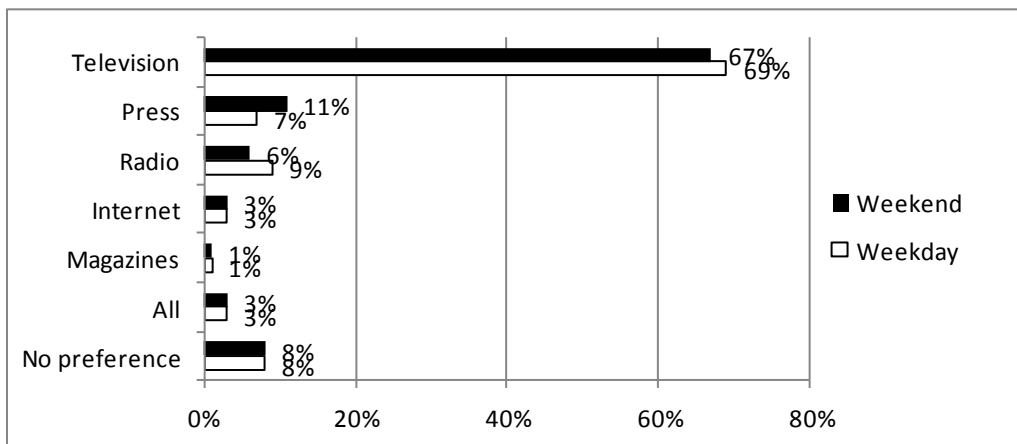


Chart 4. What is your favourite source of information?

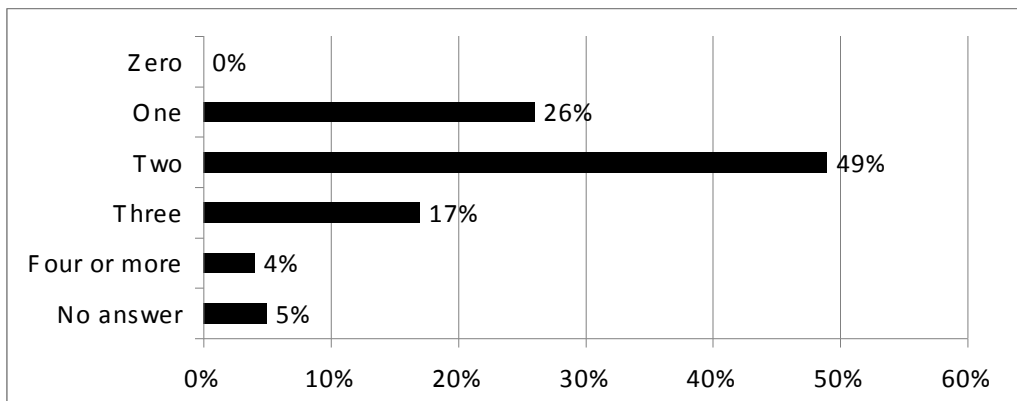


Chart 5. Number of TV sets in a household

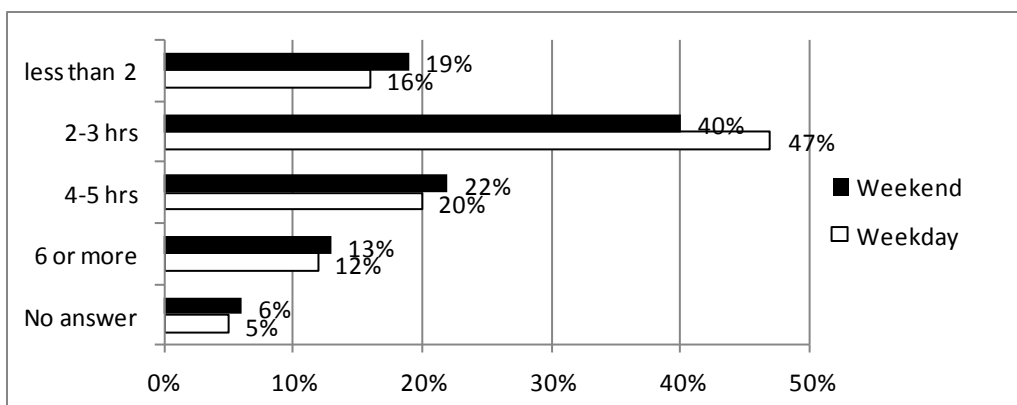


Chart 6. How many hours a day do you watch TV?

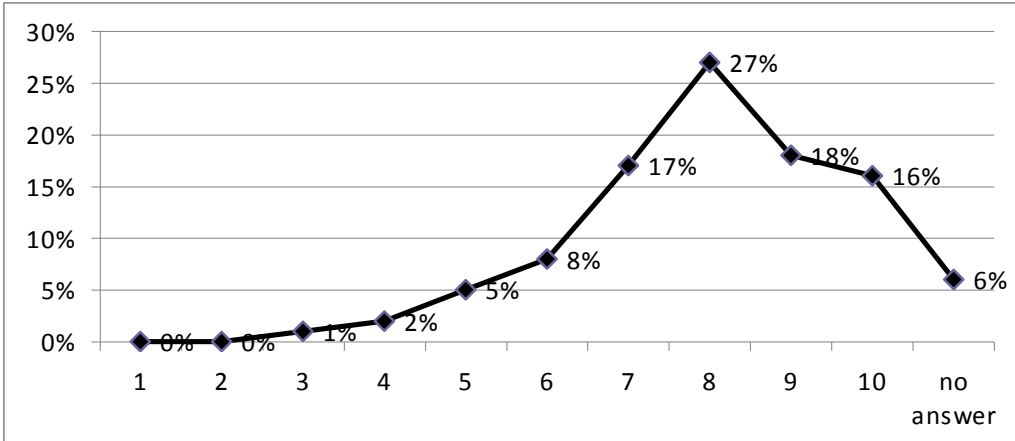


Chart 7. Viewer satisfaction after watching TV (1– completely unsatisfied, 10 – completely satisfied)

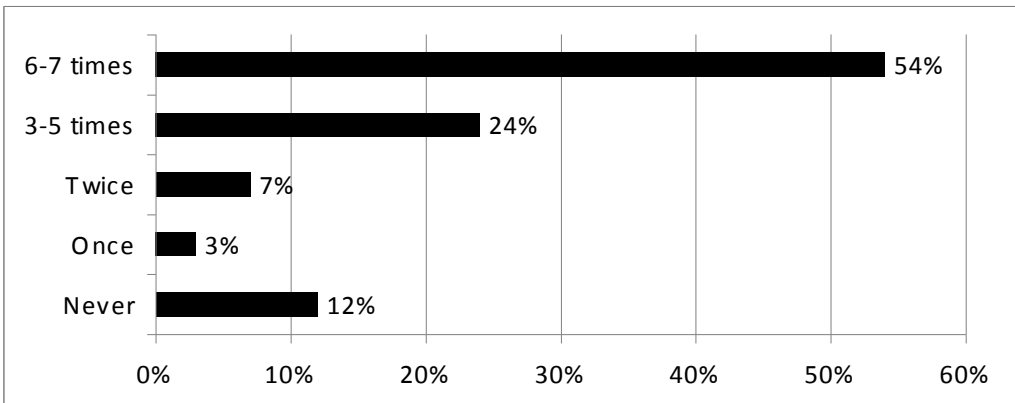


Chart 8. How many times a week do you watch news broadcasts?

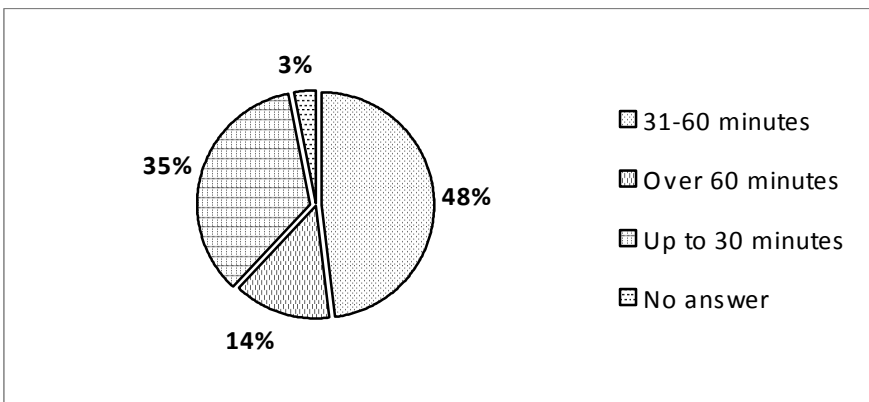


Chart 9. How much time do you spend on watching the evening news?



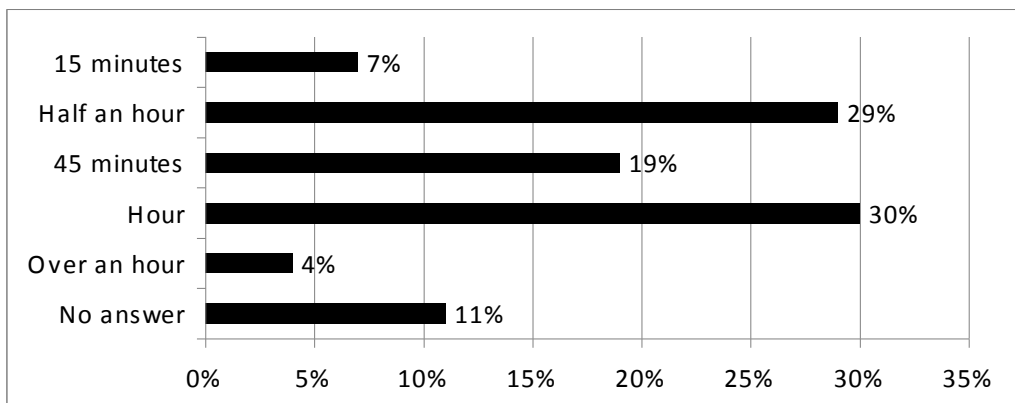


Chart 10. How long should a news broadcast last on TV?

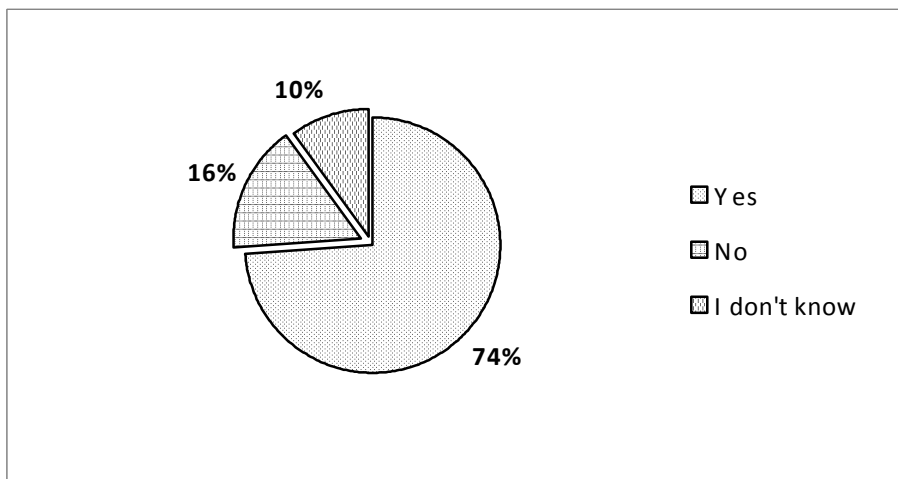


Chart 11. Are you satisfied with the evening news you watch?

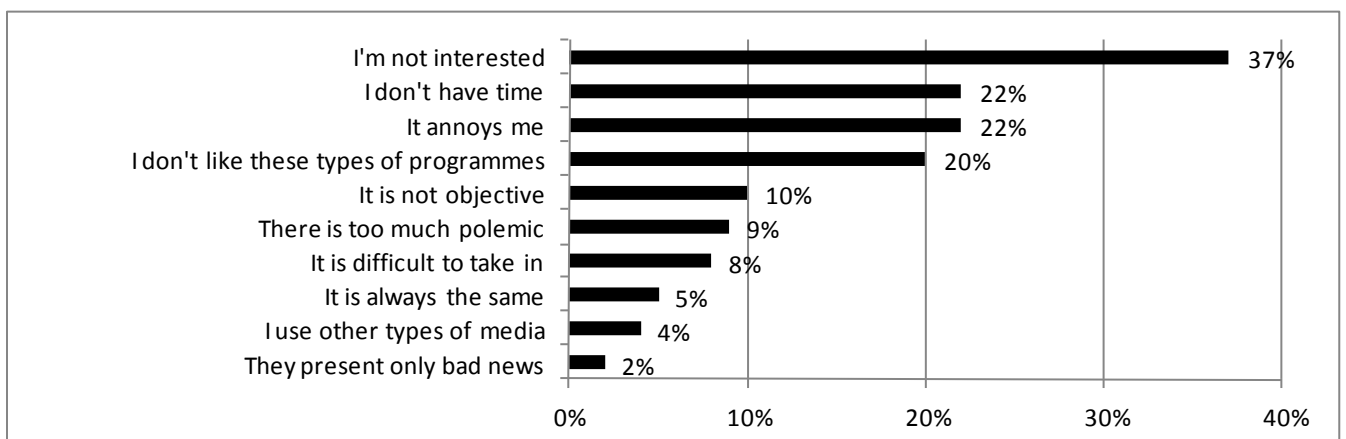


Chart 12. Why don't you watch the news on TV?

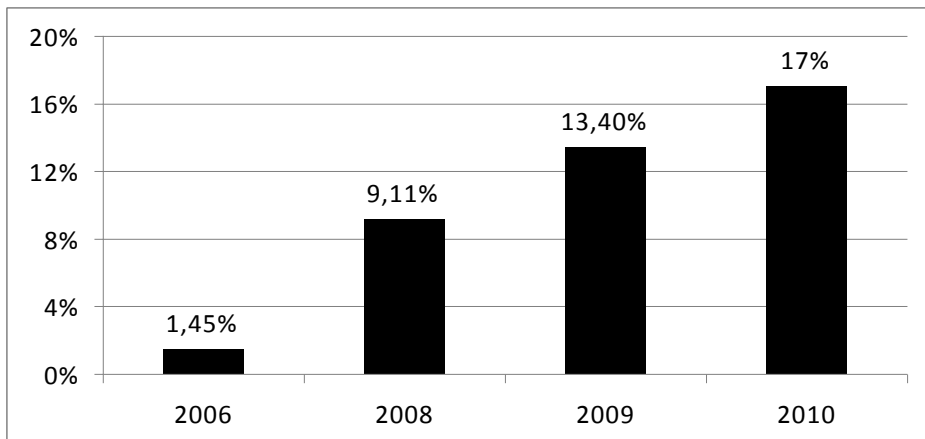


Chart 13. Level of broadband Internet access

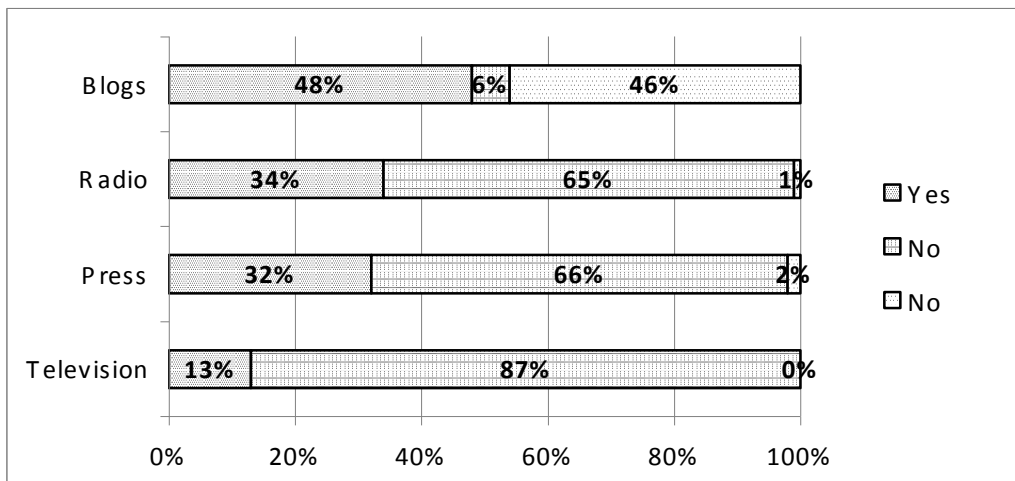


Chart 14. Do you use the following Internet media?