

THE 2022 CULTURAL CONSUMPTION BAROMETER

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIC PERSPECTIVES



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Democratic Perspectives

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Content

- 1. Introduction and Methodology 5
- 2. Dynamics of non-public cultural consumption. Particularities of cultural consumption among young people 13
- 3. Effects of participation in cultural activities on the quality of life and social well-being. 43
- 4. Participation in cultural activities as one of the explanatory factors of democratic citizenship 67

Introduction and Methodology

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1. Introduction

The Cultural Consumption Barometer returns after a three-year hiatus due to the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's edition aimed to evaluate the changes in cultural consumption practices and to analyse the relationship between culture and democracy, for the first time in Romania.

The chapter *Dynamics of non-public cultural consumption. Particularities of cultural consumption among young people* highlights the increase in the Internet consumption up to the level of TV consumption, as well as the evolutions in music consumption and in the practice of reading books in electronic format. The analyses at the level of the youth category confirm the results of other studies that have shown not only the advantages, but also the negative impact of Internet use.

The chapter *Effects of participation in cultural activities on the quality of life and social well-being* highlights the benefits associated with the reasons for participation in cultural activities in the public space. The research hypotheses regarding the social and emotional benefits associated with watching movies at the cinema, attending music or film festivals and those regarding the direct or indirect benefits associated with going to the library or visiting a museum were confirmed.

At the level of non-public cultural consumption, the comparisons between the 2022 edition of the Cultural Consumption Barometer and the 2019 edition highlight the following:

- An increase in music consumption at least once a year, from 85% in 2019 to 96% in 2022;
- An increase in the consumption of TV programmes at least once a year, from 92% in 2019 to 97% in 2022;
- A change in book reading practices (in general): from 61% at least once a year in 2019 to 56% in print format, and 28% in electronic format, in 2022, respectively;
- A change in newspaper and magazine reading practices at least once a year, which have shifted to online formats, from 57% and 58% respectively in print format in 2019 to 77% in print and online format in 2022;
- An increase in the Internet use at least once a year, from 70% in 2019 to 85% in 2022;
- An increase in the use of the Internet for visiting the websites of museums/libraries, festivals/theatres/pages with cultural events, from 12% at least once a year in 2019 to 40% in 2022;
- An increase in the use of the Internet for purchasing books, CDs, theatre tickets, tickets to cultural events etc., from 16% at least once a year in 2019 to 26% in 2022;
- An increase in the Internet use for watching movies or TV programmes broadcast online (Netflix, HBO GO, Voyo, etc.) from 37% at least once a year in 2019 to 51% in 2022;
- An increase in the use of the Internet for reading books, manuals, articles etc., from 24% at least once a year in 2019 to 47% in 2022;
- An increase in the use of the Internet for social networks from 79% at least once a year in 2019 to 88% in 2022.

8 Introduction

At the level of public cultural consumption, the comparisons between the 2022 edition of the Cultural Consumption Barometer and the 2019 edition highlight the following:

- An increase in visiting a historical monument or an archaeological site from 45% at least once a year in 2019 to 59% in 2022;
- A decrease in participation in theatre performances from 29% at least once a year in 2019 to 20% in 2022;
- A decrease in watching movies at the cinema from 35% at least once a year in 2019 to 26% in 2022;
- A decrease in going to the library to read / borrow books from 28% at least once a year in 2019, to 17% in 2022;
- A decrease in visiting a museum, exhibition or art gallery from 38% at least once a year in 2019 to 30% in 2022.

The results of the 2022 Cultural Consumption Barometer confirm the prolongation of the cultural consumption dynamics identified in the 2020 and 2021 editions of the study *Trends in Cultural Consumption during the Pandemic*, which signalled the predominant orientation of cultural consumption towards the online environment and the non-public space. The analyses show that the consumption gaps between different social and demographic categories are maintained, with a tendency towards a lower participation of women, the elderly, rural people and those with a low level of education and income (below the national average).

Comparative analyses from the pre-pandemic and pandemic years (2019 and 2021, respectively) highlighted sharp decreases in cultural consumption in the public space, which recorded the lowest level for cultural and artistic activities (below 25% for most cultural consumption practices), with visible differences between the various types of public consumption.

These declines are the result of the ban on activities in closed and open public spaces, a measure taken in the first

months of 2020 and maintained at various levels until close to the end of 2021.

In the period 2020-2021, outdoor cultural activities recorded the lowest decreases in consumption, as compared to those practised in closed spaces. However, a significant return of consumers is noted in the case of watching movies in cinemas and attending theatre performances.

The study *Trends of cultural consumption during the pandemic*, editions 2020 and 2021, recorded the existence of high percentages of non-consumers in the public space, who not only did not participate in cultural activities during the pandemic, but also do not intend to participate in the future, regardless of the situation. The percentages for non-consumers are extremely high - 74% for going to the library to read / borrow books, 69% for watching a movie at an outdoor cinema, 68% for attending entertainment shows, 66% for attending music shows (of any kind) and theatre performances in closed spaces.

Beyond the loss of consumption habits and practices due to the reluctance to be in closed spaces with many unfamiliar people, the reluctance towards direct cultural participation has other sources, too. Some of the explanations for non-participation are the consequences of cultural consumption barriers, manifested for all categories of consumers/public, regardless of whether we consider the stable/loyal audience, the occasional/potential public or the non-public/non-consumers.

According to the document produced by the European Commission – *A Report on Policies and good practices in the public arts and in cultural institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture* – the barriers to cultural consumption may be: „physical (especially for people with disabilities), financial (e.g. entrance fees, public transport tickets), geographical (for people living in rural areas), but they may also be more intangible, such as barriers in culture (interests, life choices, linguistic barriers), in terms of attitudes

(the institutional atmosphere), and in perceptions (e.g. the perception of cultural institutions as exclusivist, the refusal of some forms of cultural expression, or the low priority given to cultural participation)”¹. The barriers mentioned in this report published in 2012 are activated and reflected differently in statistical measurements, depending on how the authorities and states decide to intervene in order to reduce or eliminate them, either through policies and strategies, or through punctual action directions and measures, operationalised in national or regional programmes, as appropriate.

The non-public is the category most affected by all cultural, social, financial and physical barriers for which all solutions are applied, with a greater emphasis on cultural literacy/ education, as consumption practices and tastes are built over a long time and there is a need for constant programmes from childhood to post-adolescence.

In the period 2020-2022, the Institute for Cultural Research and Training conducted the most extensive analysis of the activities, organisations, infrastructure and trained personnel in the public and private areas of the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) active in Romania. This Analysis revealed a vast field of cultural action, which we were able to compare to the consumption practices identified and measured over the years. Along with the cultural consumption barriers, which require financial support for infrastructure or funding, a more complicated problem has recently emerged, directly related to the ability to understand and connect cultural symbols and metaphors with cultural identity values. These difficulties in reception inhibit both critical and creative thinking, affecting consumers and creators alike.

The mentioned analyses were used in the drafting of a new Strategic Vision on the field of culture in Romania 2023-2030 (SSDC 2023-2030), a vision that changes the approach

of private organisations and public institutions producing culture, while also explaining the role and functions of culture in society and proposing action and development models by triggering their economic potential at regional and local level.

The solutions to remove the physical and geographical barriers identified in the SSDC 2023-2030 include the orientation towards the local community and the building of the cultural offer in relation to the interests and expectations of the local public. Financial barriers can be removed through specific programmes addressed to economically vulnerable groups.

The barriers reported as growing in recent years and heightened after the pandemic period are nonetheless the barriers of understanding– the cultural barriers that presuppose a sufficient education for consumption at an average level. Solutions to remove cultural barriers include the increase of the interest in culture and of the understanding of cultural products and artistic creations, through a special education of children and young people, as well as of adults. Cultural education does not aim to attract young people to cultural or artistic professions, but above all to contextualise the most significant milestones, to show their contribution to development and to turn cultural practices into habits to be preserved throughout life.

Cultural education helps to improve communication and resolve conflicts, it can put creative abilities on a constructive track, which contributes to social well-being.

The chapter *Participation in cultural activities as one of the explanatory factors of democratic participation* shows that cultural consumption practices are a stimulating factor for democratic citizenship. The results of the analyses highlighted the direct relationship between the index of (public, non-public or online) cultural participation and the ability to accumulate social capital through civic engagement. Furthermore, the hypotheses regarding the

¹ *A Report on Policies and good practices in the public arts and in cultural institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture, 2012, p. 39, available at https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/policy/strategic-framework/documents/omc-report-access-to-culture_en.pdf*

directly proportional relationship between the cultural participation index and the values of openness to otherness, tolerance and social mobilisation were partially confirmed.

The links between the consumption of culture and the democratic participation become even more obvious when we statistically analyse consumption behaviour in direct relation to consumption motivations. The active life of communities, especially urban ones, can easily be taken over by predicates that require action – going to work, school or to the gym, going shopping, etc. – actions from which the reflexive act is gradually eliminated. The consumption of culture produces a suspension from this daily life and becomes a powerful source of self-motivation for each individual. The time dedicated to thinking, reflection, evaluation and self-positioning very often represents the spiritual disconnection necessary for any individual and is associated with «free time», recognised as beneficial for the well-being of citizens. Most of people's free time is used to get disconnected from everyday life, to compensate for accumulated tensions, as well as for self-development. Very often these needs are solved by association with the consumption of culture, not necessarily in its explicitly artistic forms only, but also in its educational form, which covers the need for information, knowledge or understanding/deciphering social contexts and one's own role. The advantages of cultural consumption reside in the fact that it produces the necessary disconnection, while also enriching a symbolically significant personal universe, through metaphors or connections, depending on the individual.

In an action-obsessed, overcrowded society, where public subjects become intrusive through the multiplication of means and technologies of communication, escape becomes necessary. Paradoxically, the more the pressure of the active material world grows, the more imperative the desire for withdrawal becomes, taking the form of letting

off steam, aimed at quickly covering the gaps created. The speed, the urgency and the fear towards an ever more action-populated environment may also alter the quality of the free time dedicated to the consumption of culture. Very often, this time becomes exclusively a frantic search for an entertainment-type escape, with no complications, no additional efforts of consciousness, but with immediate effect. The entire gear of entertainment industries - which massively proliferate against the background of social tensions - relies on the lack of critical attitude towards the quality of acts and products made superficially, with minimal effort.

In addition to the traditional information that allows the comparison over the years of statistical data on public and private consumption of culture, the 18th edition of the Cultural Consumption Barometer tries to tackle the less visible connection between the functions of culture as an overall field and the social behaviour within a fluid historical reality in which traditional norms and values have somewhat lost their stability. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many of the flaws in the social organisation at national and international levels and created a vacuum of social action that has set in quite suddenly in some geographic areas, paralysing the usual dynamics. The two years of restrictive measures, which it is not clear to us whether they helped or deepened the social and economic problems and differences, have however produced a visible positive effect at the level of citizens: everyone was forced to reconsider - at least partially - their own values, work behaviours and priorities. The brutal disruption of habitual socialisation and cultural consumption behaviours, shaped over two centuries of evolution, may become the most significant case study of the 21st century. The post-pandemic effects are in the process of stabilisation and it is difficult to decipher or estimate if and how they will resettle within the parameters of the same dynamics.

2. Methodology

The *Cultural Consumption Barometer study - 2022* edition is a survey on various topics related to culture, on a nationally representative sample. The survey aims to reveal the patterns of cultural consumption and to collect data on topical issues, in relation to the cultural landscape in Romania.

Each edition of the Cultural Consumption Barometer includes two major categories of collected information:

- category I – of questions that remain unchanged for each edition and allow making multiannual comparisons regarding the public and non-public cultural consumption;
- category II – of thematic sections that allow for specific analyses on various topical issues (among the thematic sections addressed in previous years, we mention: tangible and intangible cultural heritage, written culture, the effects of the economic crisis on cultural consumption etc.). In this edition, the thematic section investigated the relationship between cultural consumption and democratic citizenship.

The sample is nationally representative for the population aged 18 and above. The approximate volume is 1035 people, with a maximum margin of error of +/-3.1% at a 95% confidence level. The application of the questionnaires was carried out using the CATI method, on a simple, random sample, by generating phone numbers with a valid format on the territory of Romania, using the RDD (Random Digit Dialling) method.

Socio-demographic data were recorded for each respondent, which allowed for the validation of the sample structure: gender, age, education level, locality size (cities of over 200 thousand inhabitants, cities between 100 and 200 thousand inhabitants, towns between 30 and 100

thousand inhabitants, towns under 30 thousand inhabitants, communes) and development sub-regions.

Besides statistical analyses, the authors of this volume have added comparisons or highlighted key elements, resorting also to a rich documentation from the specialised literature that usually accompanies most topics.

Dynamics of non-public cultural consumption.

Particularities of cultural consumption among young people

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Content

- 1 Introduction 17
- 2. Methodology 17
- 3. Theoretical background 18
 - 3.1 The effects of television programmes consumption on human development . . 19
 - 3.2 From TV to computer 20
 - 3.3 The impact of Internet consumption on social and professional life among young people. 21
 - 3.4 *The prosumer* or the consumer-creator of Internet content 24
- 4. Non-public consumption at national level in 2022 26
 - 4.1 The functions of cultural consumption for activities in the non-public space . . 27
 - 4.2 The use of the Internet in 2022 at the national level depending on the sector of activity of the respondents. 32
 - 4.3 The activities of creating, editing, uploading and downloading content at national level 33
 - 4.4 Average descriptive profile of Internet content handlers 36
 - 4.5 Internet use among 18-35 year olds (iGen) and levels of trust and social participation. 37
- 5. Conclusions 37
- 6. Bibliography 38
- 7. Annexes 40

1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of cultural consumption practices in the non-public space (e.g. reading, watching movies etc.) and specific Internet consumption practices identified at the national level in 2022. The latter can consist of both practices of cultural content consumption and entertainment consumption practices.

In this edition we have paid particular attention to the use of the Internet for the purpose of creating and editing content, as well as to downloading or uploading material on the Internet. The main objective of the analyses was to identify the specifics of these practices at the level of the

2. Methodology

In this chapter, we have carried out statistical analyses regarding non-public cultural consumption, especially Internet consumption, as the main trends specific to the year 2022. We have also compiled a profile of respondents who download or upload content (materials, information, video photos, etc.). We emphasize that in this analysis we aimed to identify the level at which these practices are spread, but we did not follow the type of content (cultural or non-cultural) that people handle through the Internet. Analyses are presented as frequencies, cross-data, or descriptive profile.

The analyses take into account the main activities specific to consumption in the non-public space (Internet consumption, watching TV programmes, listening to music, watching movies via video streaming, reading, playing games on the computer, laptop, console or phone, reading newspapers or magazines). The results were also reported to the main socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, level of education, residential environment, ethnicity and income).

national population, given that social networks are not only spaces for online consumption, but also virtual spaces where people can contribute and handle digital content. Another objective of the analysis was to create a descriptive profile of those who use to perform such activities online and to identify the main socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. To these objectives of the analyses another one is added, which aimed to measure the Internet consumption (especially the consumption of social networks, games, etc.) and the level of social apathy of young people depending on certain democratic values to which they adhere: social trust, tolerance, civic participation and involvement, etc.

In the case of the activities that the respondents carried out on the Internet in 2022, we decided to classify them into four distinct categories, taking into account the main function they perform: *predominantly cultural function*, *predominantly recreational function*, *predominantly informative-educational function* and *mixed function*¹ (activities that fulfil multiple functions). The predominantly cultural activities category included: visiting websites of museums/libraries, festivals/theatres/cultural events pages and buying books, CDs, theatre tickets, tickets to cultural events. The category of predominantly recreational activities included: watching movies or TV programmes broadcast online (on specific platforms, such as Netflix, HBO GO, Voyo, etc.), online shopping of any kind and computer/laptop/phone/console games. The

¹ The syntagm "mixed function" refers in the context of this chapter to a synthetic structuring, which had the main purpose of simplifying the presentation of data. This category does not refer to the fact that a consumption practice causes overlaps regarding the functions it fulfills, but refers to the fact that a type of practice can fulfill several functions simultaneously, in relation to the motivations and purpose for which people choose to consume.

category of predominantly informative/educational activities included: professional activities (e-mail, video conferences, etc.) and educational activities: reading books, manuals,

3. Theoretical background

According to all editions of the Cultural Consumption Barometer, watching audio-visual products on TV and consuming Internet in general are the two main practices most frequently performed at national level. Although the Internet and the computer have technologically surpassed the capabilities of television, both forms of consumption have remained the most practiced activities in the non-public space. Since the mid-20th century, television has allowed people to see a multitude of events (the unfolding of events and various current affairs), news and media productions without having to go to see them on site. Television offered the possibility of information through the exclusive use of mental processes based on visual perceptions (which involved the formation of opinions and attitudes based exclusively on visual perception mediated by minimal texts), thus causing fundamental changes in the communication process itself, moving information and communication from the sphere of the word to the area of images. The development of television was not only an extension or a continuation of the way in which people knew world events, which had previously been achieved mainly through writing or audio (radio), but it „represented an anthropogenetic tool, a medium that generated a new anthropos“².

Author Giovanni Sartori³, introduces the concept of *video-child* in one of his analyses of the evolution of television⁴, in order to explain its role of the latter since the stage of human formation – the stage of childhood. It explains the impact of

2 Sartori, Giovanni. *Homo Videns: Imbecilizarea prin televiziune și post-gândirea*, 2006, Humanitas, Bucharest. p. 26.

3 Ibidem.

4 Ibidem.

articles and participating in online courses or tutorials. The category of mixed-function activities included the use of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)

the television in relation to the primary formation mechanisms with which humans come into contact, especially in the stage where they absorb information from the environment in which they are socialized. In this primary stage the human is still unable to critically evaluate the content or the manner in which he/she is exposed to any type of content. Exposure of children to learning through entertainment or images (TV) is treated by the author as a *first school*⁵⁶ (a fun form of information absorption), and the child thus receives his/her first informative patterns⁷ - that is, the mental prototypes by which he or she ends up guiding themselves later, almost all their life. Starting from an informative model/pattern, based mainly on images, children will not develop, or will later develop very hard other practices, including the practice of reading, and will no longer show interest in the written word/written culture, but they will especially seek interaction, information and entertainment through the mechanism of sight and image. The risk involved in developing predominantly through exposure to images produced by television is that the stimuli to which people respond in adulthood will generally be based on the electronic image.

Information and knowledge have been marked for a long time by literacy through the written word, by reading, by the development of imagination and by mechanisms of abstraction (generated by the individual capacity for imagery association, inclusively). The development of television led to the development of „a culture of entertainment, a culture of

5 Here in the sense of media literacy

6 Ibidem.

7 Ibidem.

the image"⁸ and blocked this mechanism, replacing it with ready-made (fabricated) information.

Television was, indisputably, a revolution in informing and exploring worlds that we would not have been able to see otherwise. Social events, information and the aesthetic universe reached masses of people through the image. Although a growing number of people have become more informed and aware of the social life, the predominantly visual communication has led to a lower level of comprehension and, in particular, suppressed the capacity for abstraction, specific to written culture and information. Without going into too much detail about the cognitive processes that determine the operation with symbols or abstractions, we must recall here that human language is composed of symbols that engage mental representations of things we have previously seen or experienced. Much of the human vocabulary (cognitive or theoretical)⁹ is composed of abstract words, which have no counterpart in concrete / physical reality (e.g.: happiness, nation, democracy, etc.). Knowledge or formation processes through the written word raises/generates ideas, through a conceptual (abstract) language¹⁰. Learning through images, i.e. through a perceptual language, is defined by a significantly smaller number of words, symbols or meanings/metaphors. Watching television impoverishes the emotional and cognitive experience and forms a lifelong need to be entertained and amused by images, especially images translated/explained or conditioned by content that is exposed/provided to us visually.¹¹ In other words, we see, know and recognise what is *exposed / presented* to us, without expressly making the effort to interpret or decipher the associated symbolism.

8 Ibidem, p. 28.

9 Ibidem.

10 Ibidem, p. 34.

11 Ibidem.

3.1 The effects of television programmes consumption on human development

Studies conducted on both children and adults regarding the consumption of programmes on television have indicated that the first effect is the installation of a form of mental passivity¹², manifested in behaviour and attitudes. Neuropsychologists have analysed the effects that long-term TV watching has on the brain and cognitive activity. They measured brain activity while watching television and identified that the left hemisphere of the brain (the critical part of the mind, which is responsible for deduction, logic, analysis, syntax of a language¹³ etc.) is inhibited, greatly reducing its activity. The right hemisphere (the non-critical part of the mind, responsible for emotions) takes over almost all active mental functions during the time frame of television exposure. The connection between the two hemispheres is made in the first years of life, and the consumption of programmes broadcast on television is one of the behaviours that can fracture this connection, so that an adult person, who has watched television for a long time, will rather be attracted by „entertaining activities, which introduce the mind to the same state of passivity, of relaxation"¹⁴. People are not fully aware of the information they are recording when they watch television, because one of the effects television has is to induce the brain into a mental phase similar to hypnosis. The researcher J. Jacoby identified, in a study carried out on the consumption of television programmes, that of the 2700 people he tested, 90% could not correctly remember what they saw on television after a very short period of time (of the order of minutes) after they have watched a programme¹⁵.

12 Gheorghe, Virgiliu; Criveanu N. and Drăgulescu A. Efectele micului ecran asupra minții copilului. Publishing House of the Institute of Psychosocial and Bioethics Research, 2018, Bucharest.

13 Ibidem, p. 142.

14 Ibidem, p. 26.

15 Ibidem, p. 13.

Most of those who watched a news programme could not remember even a quarter of the news they watched on TV after the programme ended. But one of the most harmful effects that neuropsychologists have identified is related to the fact that, over time, watching TV affects the development of the functioning of the prefrontal cortex¹⁶. The prefrontal cortex is the centre responsible for higher mental processes (attention, motivation, curiosity and creativity, etc.). Marie Winn¹⁷, a researcher specializing in addictive behaviours in humans, identified that the time children spend watching television (non-verbal/visual activities), as a form of free time consumption, significantly reduces the development of language, writing and reading. In a study conducted by two researchers from Leyden University in the Netherlands¹⁸, they identified that watching television inhibits and decreases enjoyment of reading or writing. Watching TV does not require as much mental involvement as reading, which causes children to give up reading because it is perceived as too difficult an activity¹⁹. The explanations for this situation are related to the speed of the sequence of sounds and images flowing on the screens. During the formative period, children seek to understand the meaning of the information/things they are exposed to. The rapidity of the sequences of transmitted images and sounds does not allow for their analysis, so it becomes impossible to understand or deepen what is seen²⁰. The repetition of this situation, where the mind is not allowed to understand the information or message, determines the passive, indifferent, superficial and uncritical attitude that people reach in adult life.

16 Ibidem, p. 14.

17 Marie Winn, *The Plug-In Drug/Television, Children, and the Family*, 1985, available at https://www.npsd.k12.nj.us/cms/lib04/nj01001216/centricity/domain/110/tv%20the%20plug-in%20drug_00001.pdf

18 Gheorghe, Virgiliu; Criveanu N. and Drăgulinescu A. *Efectele micului ecran asupra minții copilului*. Publishing House of the Institute of Psychosocial and Bioethics Research, 2018. Bucharest, p. 35.

19 Idem, p. 35.

20 Sartori, Giovanni. *Homo Videns. Imbecilizarea prin televiziune si post-gândirea*, 2006, Humanitas, Bucharest, p. 40.

In this analysis, we do not intend to analyse the content or quality of the materials or information that people find on television, but we want to emphasise the fact that systematic exposure, especially during childhood, to realities mediated exclusively audio-visually, determines limitations in terms of the development of language, vocabulary, imagination, thinking or the capacity for abstraction.

3.2 From TV to computer

In a few decades, technology has created a new technological revolution, marking the beginning of the cyber era, which led to the development of a so-called „multimedia” world, in which television no longer had supremacy in global coverage²¹. Computers have reintroduced and unified not only the word, the sound, and the images into people’s reality in other ways, but have also introduced alternate, virtual realities. Unlike television, which generally offered images of reality or adaptations or reinterpretations of reality, in a dislocated manner (so that you could see images of a reality you are not present at), the computer created the possibility of seeing *imaginary images*²². The reality created by computers „is a reality created on the screen and it is reality only on the screen”²³ because the virtual has created, enlarged and merged realities beyond the measure of what was possible before their existence, but these realities are not realities as such. The „cyberworld”²⁴ that the Internet creates is a digital universe that people can individuate and continually reset „through an almost infinite decomposition and recomposition of images, shapes and figures”²⁵. People actively participate on the Internet in networks, which are connected and reconnected, which also determines a hierarchy of networks and information, which changes social structures, reaching the

21 Idem, p. 24.

22 Idem, p. 24.

23 Idem, p. 24.

24 Idem, p. 43.

25 Idem, p. 43.

point where it configures or reconfigures our relationships with objects, spaces or relationships with others. The use of various technologies and devices has already entered our daily routine.²⁶

3.3 The impact of Internet consumption on social and professional life among young people

In this section we shall present a series of issues related to Internet consumption and its impact on young people. The time and consumption practices on the Internet do not only affect the lives and habits of young people from the viewpoint of cultural or leisure consumption practices, but also affect the lifestyle in general and the way they relate to aspects such as work, education or civic involvement.

A number of studies conducted in the US have shown that time spent on the Internet has affected young people's attitudes towards work and education. The employment rate decreased after 2000²⁷. Between 2000 and 2016²⁸ fewer and fewer young people were registered as employed. The number of those who enrolled in college and those who entered the labour market dropped significantly. Instead, the number of free hours that teenagers and young people have at their disposal in a week has increased. The question the researchers asked was related to this phenomenon and the increasingly passive attitude of a generation of young people who are neither in school, nor active in the workforce. The results indicated²⁹ that these hours are

spent playing computer games, at least among men. Hurst³⁰ also observed in his studies that young people find it comfortable to live with their parents or other family members, as long as the latter can support them financially or materially. Alarming, the number of working hours that young people could devote to work or the number of hours spent at school have been replaced by leisure and entertainment activities. From 2000 to 2015, the average number of hours spent playing games online increased by more than 25%³¹, thus reaching an average of 11 hours per week.

Young people born after 1995 - referred to in some studies as "iGen"³² - from the USA are mostly dissatisfied with the social system in which they live and avoid any kind of work, because they are demoralized and consider that success is unattainable for them. Such beliefs are studied by the psychological sciences, being classified into two types of personal beliefs in relation to society: internal locus of control/external locus of control³³. Percepția asupra vieții, care este generată de controlul intern, este percepția de viață care este generată de controlul intern. The perception of life that is generated by internal control is built around the idea that people are in control of their own destiny and decisions. The approach involving external control refers to the fact that people are completely controlled from the outside and their destiny depends on the decisions of others (the political environment, society, corporations, etc.). The young „iGen” people increasingly manifest this view of life and place all the responsibility of their lives in the spectrum of external control. Some studies have indicated that this phenomenon is also related to the increasingly high levels of anxiety and depression³⁴ registered among the „iGen” youth. These young people are less interested in political or civic life, or they are interested in certain topics that coincide with one moment or another of their lives and become of interest because they become viral on the

26 Wellman, B. și Haythornthwaite, C. (2002). *The Internet of Everyday Life*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

27 Twenge, M Jean. *Generația internetului sau iGen: de ce copiii, adolescenții și tinerii din zilele noastre sunt mai puțin rebeli, ceva mai toleranți, categoric mai rar fericiți și aproape deloc pregătiți pentru maturitate?*, Baroque Books&Arts, 2017.

28 Ibidem.

29 Ibidem, p. 224.

30 Ibidem.

31 Ibidem.

32 Internet generation.

33 Idem, p. 244.

34 Ibidem.

22 Theoretical background

Internet and arouse attention or interest for a limited period of time.

Internet consumption is somewhat cheap and affordable. The content that can be accessed on the Internet is by far the most diverse of all forms of content, regardless of whether we consider consumption in the public or non-public space, in conventional reality. The Internet provides unmoderated content, without any kind of evaluation, other than that made by the end consumer. There is no critical entity that provides feedback for what is available on the Internet. People are free to access or not access any content available on the Internet. For the young „iGen“, who spend more and more time on the Internet, their distance from traditional forms of consumption is an aspect to consider in a way that can anticipate the future changes in the leisure practices of current and next generations of young people. Even if at this moment we are still discussing a differentiation between consumption in the real space and consumption in the virtual space, the frequency with which young people spend more and more hours of their spare time on the Internet will generate their increasingly pronounced withdrawal into the virtual space. As we have shown above, the generation of young people who are today under 30 years of age shows a feeling of rejection of the values and mechanisms according to which the society in which their parents lived, for example, functioned. This has determined a form of refuge for young people in the virtual environment, far from what they consider to be no alternative to ensure their personal success anyway. The youth of the USA³⁵ believe in a high proportion that the education and work of their parents or grandparents (baby boomers) did not give them the life they wanted or thought they could get and thus this life model did not prove to be a model to follow, because it did not bring success to their parents³⁶ either them.

35 Ibidem.

36 Here in the sense of young people's perceptions of their parents' lives.

In one study³⁷ conducted among Indonesian teenagers (15-18 years old), the authors measured the impact of Internet consumption and Internet addiction among them. The authors identified that there are several addiction thresholds, and young people who have a high level of addiction very often experience a low level of frequency of communication in the school environment, both with other colleagues and with teachers or other categories of staff the school. The study also showed that these adolescents are less active in class, do not engage in dialogue, engage much less often and are less active in extracurricular activities. They are also indifferent to the activities organised by the school. In terms of relationships with other teenagers, „young Internet addicts have difficulty being competitive with their friends in a healthy way“; they feel envious when „their friends achieve something and rarely congratulate them when they achieve a goal“.³⁸ These teenagers tend to be more withdrawn, ask questions less frequently because they are afraid, and they are less focused on what is being discussed at school. As regards their relationships with the others, young Internet addicts are less open to talking with their friends about what they feel and experience, they feel inferior when they have to adapt to the rules of a group, and when their ideas or desires they are not accepted by a group, they feel frustrated³⁹. Internet addiction causes a reduced ability to work well in a team, to socialise, it determines a decrease in interest in the community environment, in civic activities and in relationships with others.⁴⁰

The mobile phone and the technology related to this device have facilitated the development of communication,

37 Ah. Yusuf. Praba Diyan Rachmawati și Diana Rachmawati. 2020. *The correlation of Internet addiction towards adolescents' social interaction*, International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health, available at https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/ijamh-2020-0110/html?lang=en#_ijamh-2020-0110_ref_024.

38 Ibidem.

39 Ibidem.

40 Ibidem.

and, with the possibility of connecting these devices to the Internet, there have been some changes in communication practices. On the one hand, the introduction of smart phones has reduced conventional communication practices, and on the other hand, it has offered a wide variety of new forms of communication, interaction and handling of digital content. The mobile phone has created a new digital consumption environment, and young people have been very receptive to these new technological forms.

Among all age groups, young people use mobile phones the most. A study conducted in the USA⁴¹, among young people born between 1995 and 2012, showed that most of them sleep with their phone under their pillow or somewhere within reach, close to the bed. The last thing they do at night is check their social media pages and the first thing they do in the morning is check their cell phones. *„Smartphones are unlike any other medium of communication, infiltrating our lives almost every minute, even in our sleep, when we are not aware. And when we are awake, the phone entertains us, helps us communicate, seduces us.”*⁴²

Even though the mobile phone was originally used for predominantly verbal communication, after it was equipped with Internet and access to a lot of audio and video messaging applications, its function of facilitating verbal communication almost disappeared. This phenomenon is all the more visible among young people, who increasingly prefer communication through written messages and less voice communication.⁴³ Phones are almost not used at all for phone calls by young people. In 2015, teenagers talked on the phone for about 45 minutes⁴⁴ every day, while in 2020 most conversations

have been replaced by messages and online chat services. In the same study, the data show that young people spend an average of six hours a day on the Internet, and that is just in their free time. The time spent on the Internet is divided between activities such as: surfing the Internet, chatting, writing messages, video messages and playing games on the Internet. The study also showed that, on average, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and with a lower standard of living spend more hours on the Internet than young people from backgrounds with more material possibilities. And the number of hours spent on the Internet increases from one year to the next. For example, in 2015, young people spent on average twice as much time on the Internet as young people of the same age did in 2006.⁴⁵

A number of sociological studies have highlighted that technology and the Internet are already aspects of social life that have a significant component in the way we understand or explain social reality. Online networks have a responsibility in the vast construction of the way we accumulate information about ourselves, about the others and the world. Networks are dynamic matrices of information through which people observe other people, communicate, make new „friends”, edit and upload content, crop, post, mix information or content, display content, etc. This phenomenon is described by Jenkins et al⁴⁶ as a form of *online participatory culture*⁴⁷, *where users, in addition to increasingly consuming content, are also increasingly participating in the creation of content in networks.*⁴⁸

41 Twenge, M Jean. *Generația internetului sau IGen: de ce copiii, adolescenții și tinerii din zilele noastre sunt mai puțin rebeli, ceva mai toleranți, categoric mai rar fericiți și aproape deloc pregătiți pentru maturitate?* Baroque Books&Arts, Bucharest, 2017.

42 Idem, p. 68.

43 Ibidem.

44 Ibidem.

45 Idem, p. 70.

46 Apud Jenkins, H., Clinton, K., Purushotma, R., Robinson, A. J., & Weigel, M. (2006). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century*. MacArthur Foundation. available at <http://www.digitallearning.macfound.org>.

47 Ibidem.

48 Ibidem.

3.4 *The prosumer* or the consumer-creator of Internet content

The concept of prosumer was used by Alvin Toffler in the 1980s in his work *The Third Wave*⁴⁹, referring to the fact that producers and consumers - which were very clearly delimited in the industrial period - no longer had the same clearly delimited roles in the post-industrial period. The term *prosumer* is a term composed of the terms „producer“ and „consumer“. Unlike the time when consumers and producers were clearly separated by the mechanisms and tools of consumption and production, today the *prosumer* has the opportunity to create according to his wants and needs. Technological innovation has given people the ability to create and generate custom content. In the context of this chapter, we will present this possibility of being *prosumer* in relation to the use of the Internet and to the consumption practices that have changed the roles of producer and consumer. Technology has provided mechanisms by which people can interact with production processes and make, according to their own wishes, adjustments or changes in relation to a product/service. Philip Kotler⁵⁰ called this process product augmentation, where more and more people could intervene to a greater or lesser extent in the production process and decide on the final product/service.

For a long time, for example, video productions or photographs were accessible only to professional producers who had specific knowledge and access to technology. With the development of technology and the Internet, anyone could take a video or a photo, which they could later share on the Internet or through other technologies. In fact, we are talking about more than the development/evolution of technology, in the sense that technology has become easy/accessible/much easier to handle and operate.

Technology has produced devices or programmes that have

49 Ibidem.

50 Philip Kotler (1986) „The Prosumer Movement : a New Challenge For Marketers“, in *NA - Advances in Consumer Research Vol. 13*, ed. Richard J. Lutz, Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, pp.: 510-513.

adjusted the level of complexity of controls or operation in such a way that people have been able to easily adapt to the controls of these devices or programmes. But these practices are rather compulsive/unanticipated and cannot be treated similarly to the production practices of professionals or of people who have acquired production skills. On the other hand, the Internet can be a form of „unloading“, based on the need for expression, for the prosumer of cultural or artistic content, who is not validated and who intentionally avoids a specialized critical validation. The prosumer uses digital media to create an environment in which he or she exhibits artistic needs that are unfulfilled and fragile from an aesthetic or cultural point of view.

In the same sense, prosumers are also an effect of spatial or material limitation. Sometimes socialising practices are blocked by too great physical distances, by the level of crowding and, most often, by an association with an expensive consumption. Most often young people lack material means and consequently prefer the virtual environment for socialising.

Today, people can upload and modify online/digital content at an unparalleled rate and unprecedented manner. For example, a person may take photos and upload them to a digital platform, where they are displayed for consumption, and that person, in turn, is a consumer of content provided by other people and in relation to which they are a consumer. People are *prosumers*⁵¹ to varying degrees and can also be involved in the online environment at different stages of interaction: they can comment on or like other materials on the Internet or upload materials to online communities where they can be both producers and consumers. The reasons why people do these things differ and are related to: the desire to communicate, the desire to be part of a community or group, the desire to participate with something personal and create their own content (blogs, video materials, audio), the desire for entertainment and amusement, etc.⁵² Barry Wellman

51 Ibidem.

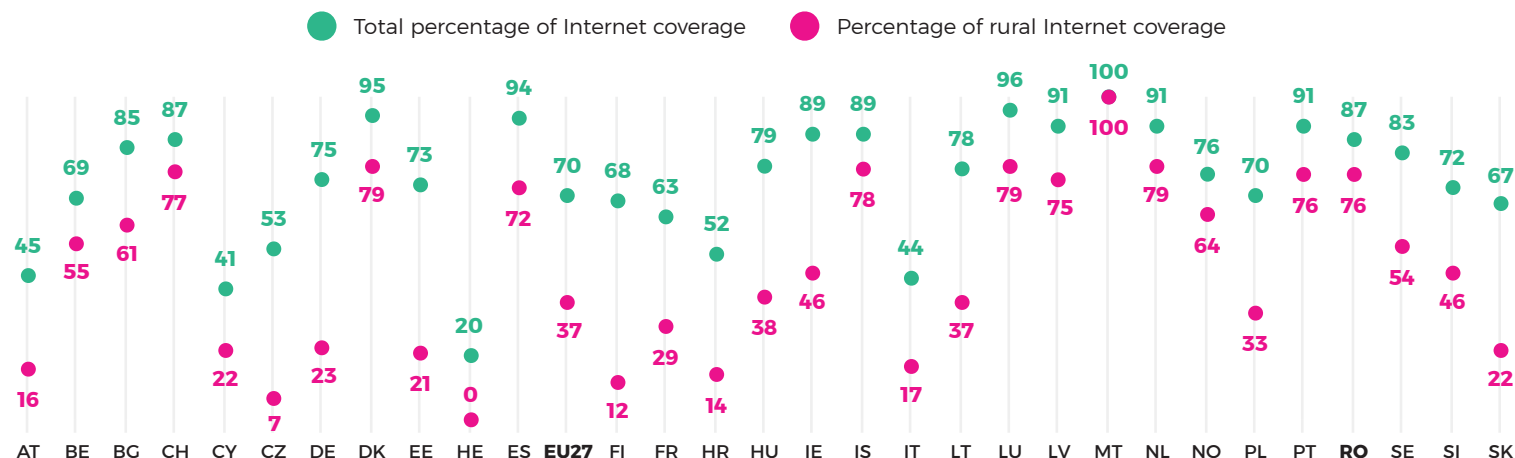
52 Tabea Beyreuther, Christian Eismann, Sabine Hornung și Frank Kleemann (2013), *Prosumption of Social Context in Web 2.0* ' in *Customers at Work*, pp.223–224.

defines virtual communities as „networks of interpersonal ties that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging and social identity”⁵³, and online interactive platforms as: „computer-mediated spaces or virtual places”⁵⁴. Some authors are of the opinion that all this technology-mediated diffusion between producers and consumers will produce major social changes. Robert V. Kozinets argues that „With the diffusion of social networking technologies, collective innovation of consumers is taking on new forms that are transforming the nature of consumption and work, and with these, society.”⁵⁵

The diversification of technology and devices that can be connected to the Internet can drive the growth of Internet

consumption, along with the increasing diversification of practices that can be performed on the Internet. In addition to the functions of information and communication, the Internet is the main medium where more and more people spend their time, investing their time particularly in practices that are mainly entertaining. According to statistics on household access to the Internet⁵⁶, in Romania, 87% of urban households have access to high-speed Internet, while in rural areas 76% of households have a fixed or mobile Internet subscription. From this point of view, Romania has a better level of coverage than other EU states with a general level of development even better than ours.

Graph 1. Internet coverage level in Europe



Source: Eurostat, 2021.⁵⁷ The level of Internet coverage in Europe.

53 Apud Tabea Beyreuther, Christian Eismann, Sabine Hornung and Frank Kleemann (2013), *Prosumption of Social Context in Web 2.0 in Customers at Work*, p. 224.

54 Idem, p. 224.

55 Robert Kozinets et al. (2008), in Edward Comor, 2011, *Contextualizing and Critiquing the Fantastic Prosumer: Power, Alienation and Hegemony*, University of Western Ontario, p. 1.

56 70% of homes in the EU have high-speed internet – but a digital divide persists, World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, 2022, available at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/09/eu-high-speed-internet-digital-divide/>.

57 Eurostat, 2021 *High-speed internet coverage, by type of area*, available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SDG_17_60__custom_3216954/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=00d8bc75-e0bc-4684-9b35-d38676d893fc.

The Internet has also made possible an experience that did not exist before its spread - that of sharing moments of our private lives with people we do not know. Through the possibility to upload video or audio material with personal content, the Internet has caused a change in what constitutes privacy and personal space, inclusively. Personal experiences have become public and viral, and people, more than ever, consider this practice an exposure of privacy that they are totally okay with. From funny, joyful and playful experiences to less happy experiences - such as death or illness, people today share almost every kind of human experience on the

Internet, on an extremely intimate and personal level. If someone had suggested in the past that a person provide images or recordings of moments or events in their private life, this would have generated reactions of reluctance or rejection, under the sign of violation of the right to privacy. On the Internet these things are considered today as a form of personal expression, which resides in the need for validation and visibility, associated with the idea of success and achievement on a personal level. The more visible a person is through their actions, the more often he or she is associated with achievement or success.

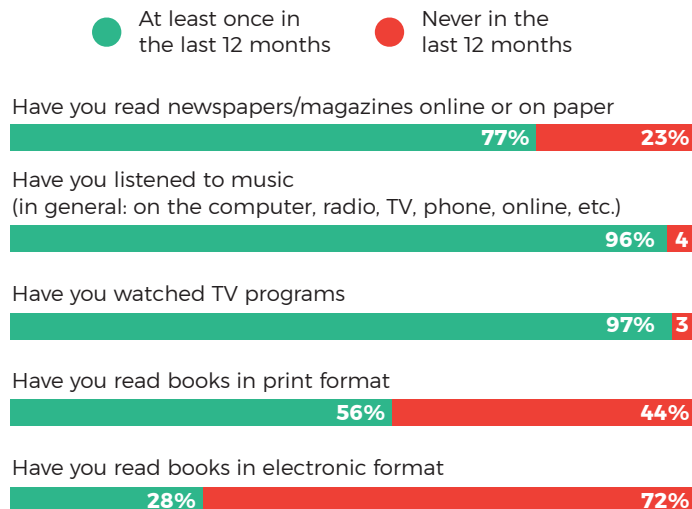
4. Non-public consumption at national level in 2022

In this section we will present the main results for the year 2022 regarding non-public cultural consumption and Internet consumption. In this edition we have chosen to focus on the increasingly frequent behaviour of creating, editing and distributing digital content, manifested by people on the Internet. Creating, copying, cutting and (re)uploading video or audio materials on the Internet are practices that have become common, even among age groups other than young people. In the chapter, we will also present a descriptive profile of the respondents who perform such activities often and very often, in order to understand the phenomenon and the trends regarding this behaviour.

For a better interpretation of the data on consumption practices in the non-public space, we synthesised a series of percentages regarding the variables including the frequency with which people practiced different activities in the year 2022, on a dual structure, so that, regardless of the frequency with which these practices were carried out (daily, weekly, monthly and at least 1 time in the last 12 months), they were cumulated as percentages in the „Yes“ option, and the answer option never in the last 12 months became the „No“ option.

According to the results, in the last 12 months, on average, 96% of people watched TV programmes or listened to music, while 77% of people read newspapers or magazines in physical format or online.

Graph 2. Cultural consumption practices in the domestic space



In addition to the general presentation of the results recorded for non-public consumption in the year 2022, in this section we also tracked a series of changes in consumption percentages, depending on the pre-pandemic period and the pandemic period, for those cultural practices for which we registered changes. We followed this evolution for the 2018⁵⁸-2021⁵⁹ period.

The main differences we have identified for the period 2018-2022 are recorded for: music consumption, for which consumption increased by 15% (from 81%, to 96%), book reading in print format, which decreased from 65% to 56% (9%), **consumption of books/articles or other written materials in digital format**, which increased by 11%, from 17% to 28%, and consumption of programmes on **television**. Compared to the pre-pandemic period, TV consumption has decreased by 2% among those who watch TV programmes daily, from 72% to 70%. In recent years, TV watching has seen a series of consumption declines, but this phenomenon can be explained by the increase in Internet consumption and increasingly diverse and accessible streaming services.

These data should be interpreted with caution, because the indicators presented rather describe a consumption trend over four years, but the collected indicators were not identical and the methodologies used were different. But the general conclusion we want to highlight is that the reading trend is decreasing for the book in classic format and there is an increase in interest for the book in electronic format.

In 2022, in relation to the frequency with which the respondents performed various activities in the non-public space, most often they watched TV programmes (70% daily

and 20% weekly), listened to music (64% - daily) and read newspapers or magazines online or on paper (26% - every day).

4.1 The functions of cultural consumption for activities in the non-public space

The practices and activities that we have analysed and presented previously serve several types of functions. From an anthropological point of view, each type of cultural practice can fulfill one or more functions. The main functions that cultural participation or consumption can fulfill are: „*communication, transmission of knowledge (education), shaping of personality (identity-related), socialisation, formation of behaviour patterns, social stratification (by distinction), relaxation (leisure)*.”⁶⁰ In order to simplify the presentation of these functions, and because each practice has a higher or lower input of education and knowledge, we have presented cultural activities in relation to two primary functions they fulfill – the function of knowledge and the function of entertainment. All cultural practices contribute with most of the functions in consumption processes, but in different proportions. According to the function matrix below, people tend to perform activities that lean towards entertainment functions. Watching TV programmes, surfing the Internet, taking pictures, processing and editing video or photo materials and listening to music are practices that mainly fulfill entertainment functions and less educational or knowledge functions.

58 Matei, Ș and Hampu V, *Forme de participare culturală. Barometrul de Consum Cultural. Dinamica Sectorului Cultural în anul Centenarului Marii Uniri*, Universul Academic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018.

59 Matei Ș., *Consumul cultural non-public în perioada de izolare. Tendințe ale consumului cultural în pandemie*, Universul Academic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2020.

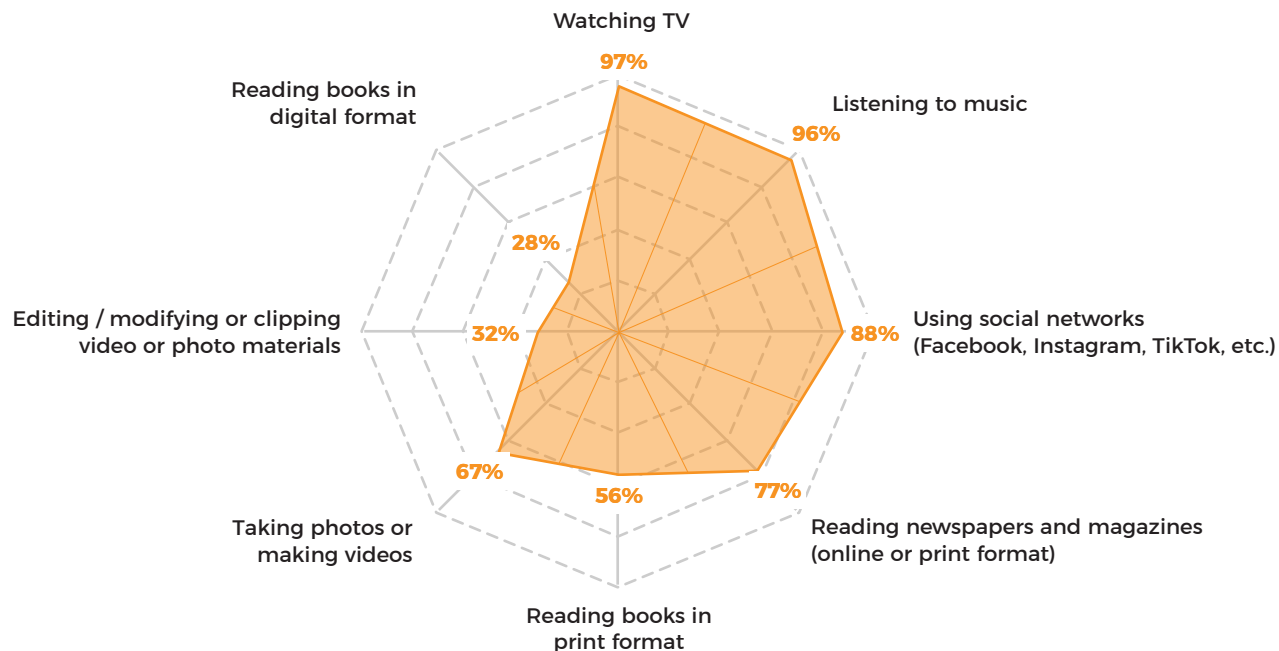
60 Croitoru, Carmen and Marinescu Becuț, Anda. *Barometrul de Consum Cultural. Experiența și practicile culturale de timp liber*, Universul Academic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019, p. 7.

Table 1. The main functions fulfilled by various non-public cultural consumption practices

| In the last 12 months, how often...? | Mainly fulfills the function of education / knowledge | Mainly fulfills the function of entertainment / relaxation |
|---|---|--|
| Have you read newspapers/magazines online or on paper | x | |
| Have you listened to music (in general: on the computer, on the radio, TV, phone, online) | | x |
| Have you watched TV programmes | | x |
| Have you read books in print | x | |
| Have you read books in electronic format | x | |
| Have you taken photos or recorded video | | x |
| Have you edited/cropped/modified pictures or videos | | x |
| Have you used social networks | | x |

Based on the results of the analyses, which we highlighted above, the highest percentages of consumption are recorded for activities that fulfill the function of entertainment and/or relaxation. Watching TV programmes, listening to music and spending time on social networks are activities performed by over three quarters of respondents in 2022. The only activity with a main function of education or knowledge that recorded higher consumption values is reading newspapers and magazines.

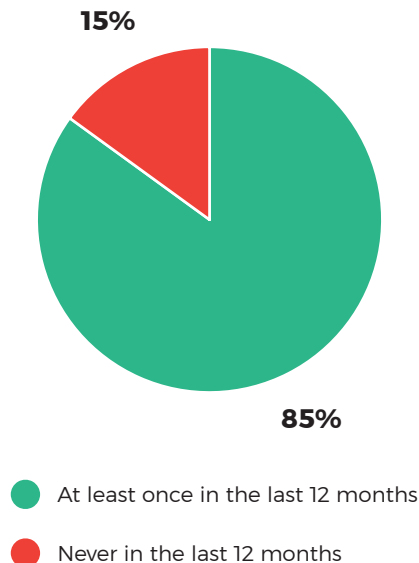
Graph 3. The main cultural consumption practices in relation to the function they fulfill



4.1.1 Internet consumption and content creation-distribution behaviour

At national level, the Internet consumption recorded high consumption values. The practice of surfing the Internet is widespread among respondents: 85% of them have used the Internet at least once in the last 12 months for various activities.

Graph 4. Frequency of Internet use in the last year



Regarding the main activities performed on the Internet in the year 2022, 88% of respondents accessed social networks, 69% used the Internet for online shopping, for completing professional or school tasks (56%) and for entertainment activities (51%). From the viewpoint of predominantly cultural activities performed on the Internet, 40% of the respondents used the Internet to visit the websites of museums, libraries, theatres or festivals. From this perspective, the practices from the pandemic period did not disappear with the lifting of

restrictions, but were added to some socialisation practices, where they did not replace them. Compared to the data recorded in 2021, this percentage increased by 17%, from 23% to 40%. And in the year 2022, the main activities performed on the Internet are those of a predominantly recreational or mixed nature (social networks, online games, movies, online shopping, etc.), as well as those of a predominantly informative / educational nature (reading manuals, books or watching tutorials online).

Table 2. The main activities performed on the Internet according to their nature

| Activities with a predominantly cultural nature | Percent |
|---|---------|
| Visiting the websites of museums / libraries, festivals / theatres / pages with cultural events | 40% |
| Buying books, CDs, theatre tickets, tickets to cultural events, etc. | 26% |
| Activities with a predominantly recreational nature | |
| Watching movies or TV programmes broadcast online (Netflix, HBO GO, Voyo, etc.) | 51% |
| Shopping of any kind | 69% |
| Playing computer/laptop/phone/console games | 31% |
| Activities with a predominantly informative/educational nature | |
| Professional, school activities (email, video conferencing, etc.) | 56% |
| Reading books, manuals, articles, etc. | 47% |
| Participating in online courses or tutorials | 30% |
| Mixed function activities | |
| Using social networks (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) | 88% |

Methodological note. „Yes“ answers were taken into account.

4.1.2 The use of the Internet at national level in 2022 for social networks, depending on the area of activity

We started from the hypothesis that due to the pandemic the time spent on social networks has increased, and people are spending more time on social networks in the year 2022 and not just in their spare time or in their recreational time. Except for cases where they were not active in the labour field, more than half of the respondents had the opportunity to work from home. This analysis was intended to identify whether due to the pandemic, which has created the context of working from home, there are differences in the frequency with which people use social networks, depending on where they spend their time (in an institutional/organizational setting or at home) – i.e.: whether those who spend more time at home tend to consume social networks more often, unlike those who work from their workplace.

The time dedicated to professional activities overlapped with the time dedicated to recreational activities. The increase in the number of hours spent on social networks has determined an intersection/overlapping of work hours with hours of relaxation or entertainment/recreation. More than 80% of the people use social networks (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) during working hours, regardless of whether they work from home or in the office, while young people who spend most of their time in a day at school use the Internet (social media included) in a proportion of 100% during class hours. The hypothesis that people tend to use social media more often when they spend more time at home is not valid. People equally use the Internet for these networks both at home and at work.

These results are useful for cultural suppliers and cultural institutions, which can thus better understand consumer behaviour and identify channels of reaching the public more often. Not only do people spend a lot of time on social media during their spare time, but this practice is also present

during work or school hours. Consequently, social networks can be very useful media for promoting and communicating the cultural offer.

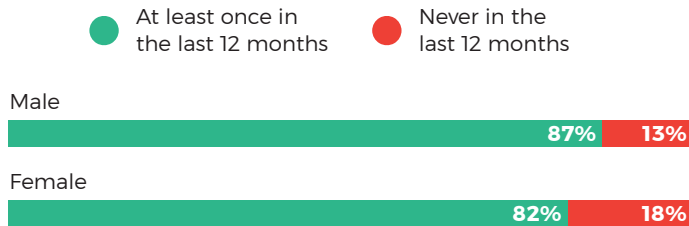
Table 3. Table regarding the time spent by respondents on social networks, depending on the time spent at home or at work

| Outside of rest hours, in the last 12 months, you have spent the most time: | | |
|---|------|-----|
| For using social networks (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)] For what activities have you used the Internet in the last 12 months? | Yes | No |
| At work, physically (at the office or in the field) | 87% | 13% |
| At home | 88% | 12% |
| At school | 100% | 0% |

4.1.3 Internet use in 2022 at national level, according to socio-demographic characteristics

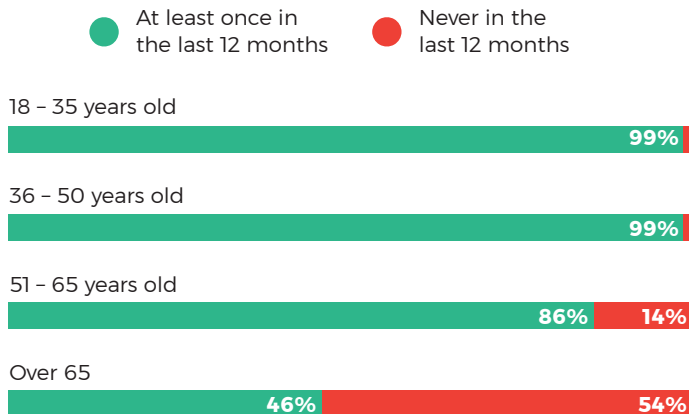
Next, we shall present the main results regarding the Internet consumption in relation to socio-demographic variables. For these analyses, we took into account the following variables: gender, age, residence area, education level, income, ethnicity and the respondents' sector of activity. The results indicate that men spend more time on the Internet than women: 74% of men spend time on the Internet every day, as opposed to 69% of women who spend time on the Internet daily. The difference between the two genders is 15%. Compared to the year 2021, the Internet consumption has increased by 3% among men, while for the percentage of women it has increased by only 1%.

Graph 5. Frequency of Internet use depending on the gender of the respondents



The frequency of Internet use decreases with age. While 99% of young people between 18 and 35 and adults (36-50) used the Internet at least once in 2022, 46% of seniors over 65 used the Internet at least once. As compared to the year 2021⁶¹, consumption rates increased by 3% among 18 to 35-year-olds, but decreased among those above 65. One of the possible explanations for this decrease in consumption percentages among the elderly is related to the fact that in 2022 all the restrictions that were imposed during the pandemic were lifted, which reduced the need for online communication.

Graph 6. Frequency of Internet use depending on the age of the respondents

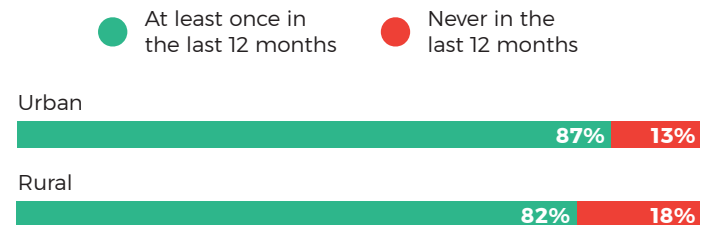


61 Croitoru, Carmen and Marinescu Becuț, Anda. *Tendințe ale consumului cultural în pandemie. Edition II, 2021*. Accessible at https://www.culturadata.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Tendinte_consum_cultural_ed2RO.pdf

As for the residential environment, the ratio between urban and rural Internet consumption is maintained when compared to both the pandemic period and the years preceding it, in the sense that the level of consumption is higher in the urban environment compared to of the rural environment. A percentage of 87% of those in urban areas have used the Internet at least once in the last 12 months, while 82% of those in rural areas have done it at least once in the last 12 months. It should be noted that only 18% of people from rural areas have not used the Internet at all in the last year, only 5% more than people from urban areas (13%).

At European level, Eurostat data show that rural areas generally have less Internet coverage, even for more developed states. While in 2013, in Europe, only 4% of rural households had access to the Internet, in 2021 the percentage increased to 37%⁶².

Graph 7. Frequency of Internet use depending on residence area



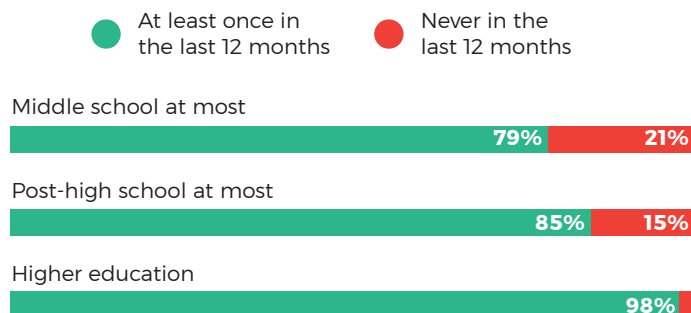
As regards the Internet consumption by level of education, people with a medium and high level of education use the Internet more often: 98% of people with higher education have used the Internet at least once in the last 12 months. Although the level of Internet use is also related to the level of education,

62 Eurostat, 2021, *High-speed internet coverage, by type of area*, available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/SDG_17_60__custom_3216954/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=00d8bc75-e0bc-4684-9b35-d38676d893fc.

32 Non-public consumption at national level in 2022

high percentages of Internet use exist for all levels of education, but less so for people with no schooling, who rarely use the Internet or do not use it at all.

Graph 8. Frequency of Internet use depending on education level



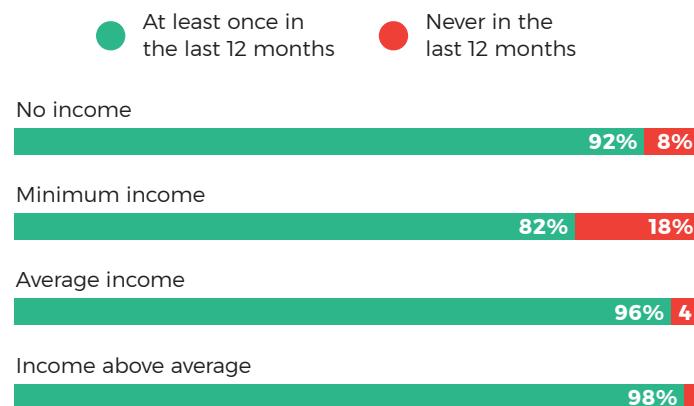
From the viewpoint of ethnicity, the Internet usage rate is similar for Romanians and Hungarians. However, we recorded differences for people of Roma ethnicity, who use the Internet almost half less than people of Romanian or Hungarian ethnicity. These differences can be related to multiple causes and explanations, but two of the most possible causes relate to the degree of access to technological infrastructure and the degree of digital literacy, but also to the standard of living or the school dropout rate.

In terms of Internet use relative to income, people with no income and with low and medium incomes generally use the Internet less than people with above average incomes. People with minimum income use the Internet the least compared to all other income categories. Moreover, a series of statistics presented at the World Economic Forum (2022)⁶³, shows that one of the biggest impediments to connecting households to the Internet is related to costs and barriers created by financial resources. Relative to income levels and Internet access,

63 https://www.weforum.org/?src=DAG_2&gclid=Cj0KCQjw27mhBhC9ARIsAIFsETGqS_B6plifXPb3XhQO0FIKswTkMRTehKDA5pOdzsNV8THYhRBbiskaApUBELw_wcB.

Internet subscriptions are up to 18 times more expensive in low-income countries than in developed, high-income countries. In other words, poorer countries feel more strongly the costs of accessing an Internet network in relation to income, compared to more developed countries.

Graph 9. Frequency of Internet use depending on income level

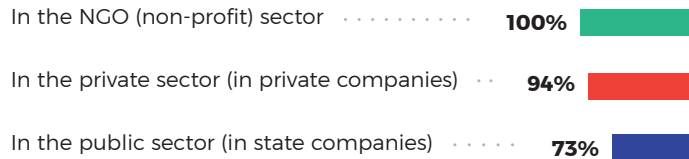


4.2 The use of the Internet in 2022 at the national level depending on the sector of activity of the respondents

One of the variables we introduced for this edition was the respondents' sectors of activity, which we analysed together with the Internet consumption variable. For a better visual representation of the data, the answer options: daily, several times a week, once a week, 1-3 times a month and less often than once a month, were re-coded in the „Yes“ variant, and the answer option never was re-coded into „No“. Thus, according to the graph below, 100% of people active in the NGO sector use the Internet. People in the private sector use the Internet in a percentage of 94%, and those

in the public sector in a proportion of 73%. In terms of frequency, 88% use the Internet every day, 84% of those in the private sector use the Internet daily, and 57% of those in the public sector use the Internet with daily frequency. The most notable differences are between the NGO sector and the public sector.

Graph 10. Internet usage rate by activity sector

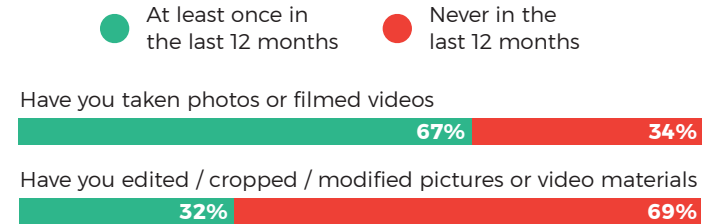


4.3 The activities of creating, editing, uploading and downloading content at national level

The activities that people can perform in the digital environment are extremely diverse, but for the present analysis we have chosen to test two of the variables through which the actions related to content can be most easily identified: creating and editing photos or video materials. Thus, 67% of the respondents took photos or filmed video materials, and 32% edited (cropped / modified) pictures or video materials. Regarding the percentage of those who take photos or film videos, we have the highest percentage increase compared to all other types of activities analysed for cultural consumption in the non-public space. According to the Cultural Consumption Barometer⁶⁴, only 30% of people used to take photos or shoot a film/video footage in 2018. The percentage for these practices increased by 37% in the time frame 2018-2022.

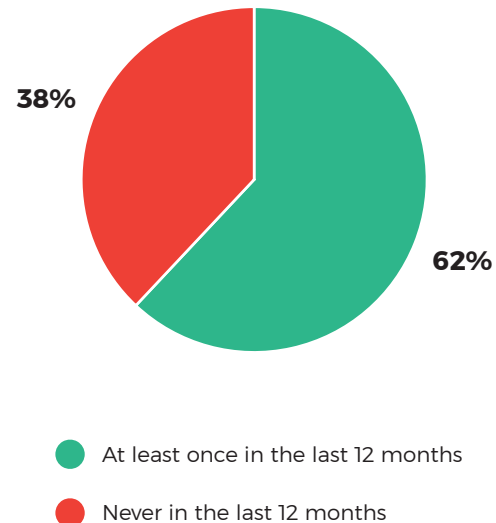
64 Matei, Ş and Hampu V. Forme de participare culturală. Barometrul de Consum Cultural. Dinamica Sectorului Cultural în anul Centenarului Marii Uniri. Universul Academic Publishing House, 2018, p. 165.

Graph 11. The frequency with which respondents made or edited video or photo materials in the last 12 months



As regards the activities performed on the Internet, 62% of respondents stated that in 2022 they downloaded photos or audio-video materials from the Internet at least once.

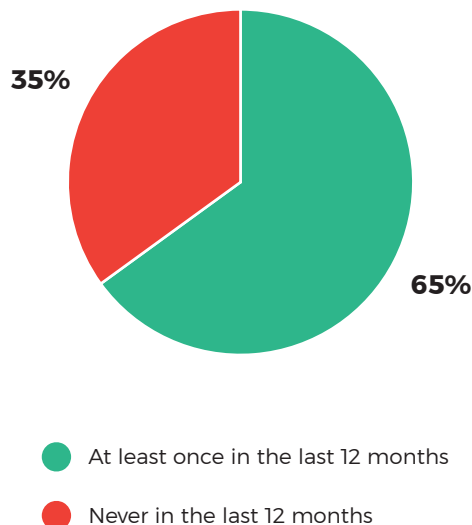
Graph 12. The frequency with which respondents have downloaded materials from the Internet in the last 12 months



Regarding the behaviour of uploading and distributing video, image or audio content on the Internet, 65% of the respondents have performed these activities at least once in 2022.

34 Non-public consumption at national level in 2022

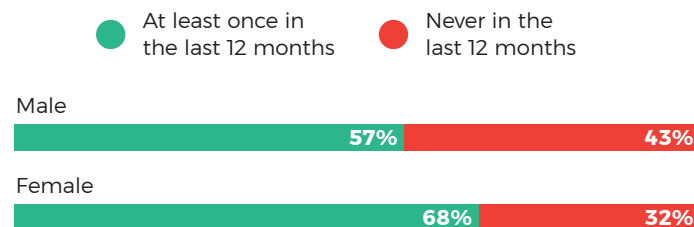
Graph 13. The frequency with which respondents have uploaded materials to the Internet in the last 12 months



This section presents the main results regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents who used the Internet to upload or download audio or video materials or content.

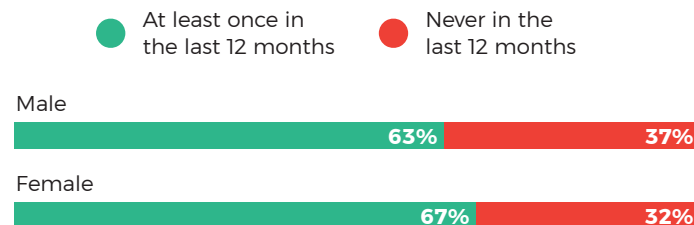
According to the obtained results, men and women performed the uploading activity in similar percentages. Significant differences appear for the frequency with which women and men download pictures or materials from the Internet, in that the percentage of women who download materials from the Internet is higher. A percentage of 68% of women have downloaded materials from the Internet at least once in the last 12 months, as compared to 57% of men.

Graph 14. Frequency with which respondents have downloaded materials from the Internet in the last 12 months, by gender



The situation is similar for the percentages of women who upload pictures or audio-video materials on social networks or other Internet pages. The percentage of women who have uploaded material to the Internet is higher than the percentage of men. Although most activities on the Internet are generally performed more often by men, when it comes to the practices of downloading or uploading content on the Internet, women are the ones who perform them more often.

Graph 15. Frequency with which respondents have uploaded materials to the Internet in the last 12 months, by gender

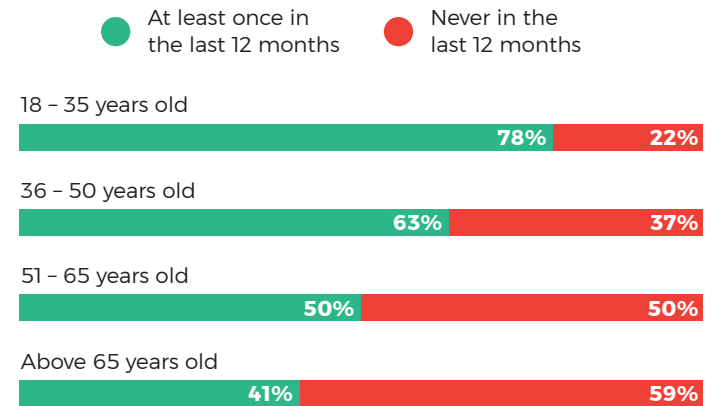


At international level, the statistics are similar to those we have identified at the national level for Romania. Several studies that have analysed online behaviour by gender have identified that women are much more active on social media platforms than men, especially on visual platforms.

For example, the Pew Research Centre⁶⁵ conducted a series of statistics for the US, which showed that Internet platforms that use mostly images or video content have a higher number of female users. Not only do women spend more time on social media or visual platforms, but they also use them for more diverse purposes than men generally do. Gender studies describing online behaviours show that there is a demographic dominance of women on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, etc.), with a predominant preference for visual platforms⁶⁶. Men are more interested in online content from online forums or blogs or other platforms that host discussion forums.⁶⁷ At national level, the trends regarding these practices are similar to those recorded at international level.

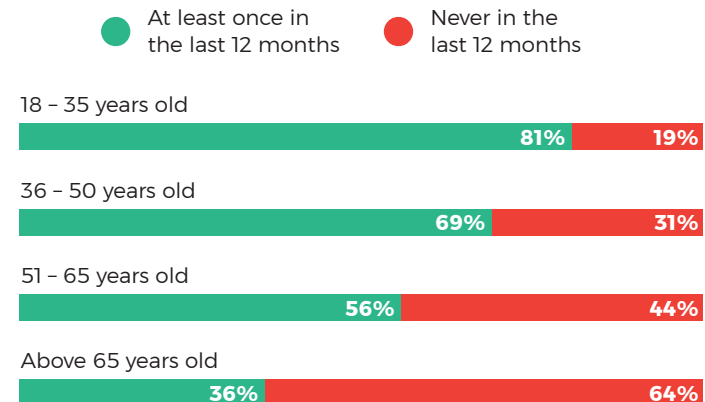
At national level, in terms of age, young people between 18 and 35 years old are the ones who practice most both downloading materials from the Internet and uploading materials to the Internet, and they perform these activities with the highest frequency. In terms of content downloading, 78% of young people have downloaded materials at least once in the last 12 months. People in the other age groups perform this practice quite frequently, too. 63% of 36- to 50-year-olds have downloaded materials from the Internet at least once in the past 12 months, and 50% of people above 50 years of age have performed downloading activities.

Graph 16. Frequency with which respondents have downloaded materials from the Internet in the last 12 months, by age



Young people are also the ones who most often (81%) upload materials to social media platforms, but even older people did not record small percentages for this practice. Cumulatively, 56% of people aged 51 to 65 and 36% of people above 65 have uploaded photo or video materials to the Internet in 2022.

Graph 17. The frequency with which respondents have uploaded materials to the Internet in the last 12 months, by age



65 Pew Research Centre, *Social Networking*, 2013, available at https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/files/2014/01/Social_Networking_2013.pdf.

66 Nestor Gilbert, *Who Runs the Social Media World: Men or Women?* 2014, Finances Online, available at <https://reviews.financesonline.com/most-popular-social-media-sites-review/>.

67 Monica Anderson, *Men catch up with women on overall social media use*, Pew Research Centre, 2015, available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/08/28/men-catch-up-with-women-on-overall-social-media-use/>.

In terms of residence area, the uploading and downloading of materials are practices specific to people from the urban areas and to those from the rural areas to approximately the same extent, the percentage differences between these categories of respondents being insignificant.

Relative to the level of education, people with higher education have downloaded materials from the Internet in a proportion of 78%, those with a low level of education have downloaded materials in a percentage of 62% in 2022, and people with an average level of education (post-high school at most) in a percentage of 56%. In conclusion, people with higher education performed this activity more often, as compared to people with a low or medium level of education. The situation is similar for uploading materials on social networks or other sites, too. People with higher education performed this activity in a manner similar to people with a low level of education (63% people with higher education and 64% people with medium or low level of education).

4.4 Average descriptive profile of Internet content handlers

In this section we shall present a descriptive average profile of people who upload and download materials on social networks (TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, etc.). This profile was built by taking into account the category of respondents who mentioned that they perform this activity on a daily basis. We included in the analysis several indicators regarding the main socio-demographic aspects, the main consumption activities in the public space, the main activities in the non-public space, the level of social tolerance and the level of social trust (at interpersonal level).

The results obtained show that, in general, people who download and upload any type of content online are more likely to be women, aged between 18 and 35, living in urban areas and having a medium and high level of education.

Among the activities performed in the public space, they mostly prefer walking in the park, going to the mall, going to restaurants and cafés or meetings with friends or family. Respondents almost never attend local events or celebrations, rarely go to the theatre or opera performances, and, outside of rest hours, spend most of their day at work (physically) or at school. From the viewpoint of consumption practices in the non-public space, these respondents most often prefer listening to music at home, watching programmes on TV or on streaming platforms, taking photos and filming. Furthermore, they frequently use the Internet to visit the websites of libraries, museums and search for cultural events; they shop online and use social media daily. As for the information they follow on the Internet, the news presented online are followed most often, particularly pieces of news shared by friends or family. From the viewpoint of the level of interpersonal trust, these respondents have the most trust in their group of friends and in their family members, they have very little trust in the news on television, have a very high trust in the news shared by acquaintances on the Internet and show a very low level of trust in online news shared by unknown people in this environment.

Regarding the level of social tolerance, these respondents are generally tolerant people in terms of the level of acceptance towards people of other nationalities, towards people with LGBTQIA+ identity (who have a different sexual orientation or gender identity) or towards people of a religion different from their own.

4.5 Internet use among 18-35 year olds (iGen) and levels of trust and social participation

Starting from the analyses previously presented, in the section dedicated to the theoretical context regarding the youth population in the United States, we aimed to identify the profile of young people in Romania, from the point of view of social trust, the level of tolerance and the level of civic engagement, in relation to the frequency of Internet use. The hypothesis we want to verify is related to the extent to which young Romanian people who spend a lot of time on the Internet and social networks are rather distrustful, have a low level of civic participation and have low trust in the people around them. Young people between 18 and 35 years old have used the Internet daily in a proportion of 94%. From the viewpoint of the level of trust in relationships with others, 63% of young people trust their family very much, but they do not trust or have very little trust in the people in the neighbourhood/village or commune where they live. 67% of young people have very little or no trust in people they meet for the first time. For 54% of young people who use the Internet every day, the analysis

showed very little trust or lack of trust in people who are of another nationality. In general, these young people have little trust in the news, regardless of whether it is broadcast on radio, TV or online, with the mention that they rather trust news on social networks than news on other websites. The level of civic engagement is low and they are more intolerant towards people with LGBTQIA+ identity, as compared to other social categories. Young people believe that protecting the environment is an essential aspect, but they agree to a lesser extent that it is important for the country to align itself with the measures and directives of the European Union in this field. They also do not consider the preservation of national identity essential. Most of these young people have not signed and do not intend to ever sign any petition with social or political content and are not interested in participating in street demonstrations.

The recorded results indicate a social apathy among young people, especially in relation to the values obtained for the measured and presented variables. Even though our study did not aim to identify how the Internet influences or determines causal links between aspects regarding levels of trust and social participation, we can, however, conclude that the trends in Romania are similar to those recorded in other countries

5. Conclusions

In comparison to the years before the pandemic, the percentages of television programme consumption and Internet consumption did not undergo notable changes, remaining at a high level. However, we can point out a change in trends, in the sense that Internet consumption is on the same trend as watching programmes on TV. As regards the other types of cultural practices performed in the non-public space (reading, listening to music, watching movies, etc.), we identified a series of differences for the period analysed (2018-2022), i.e. an increase for the consumption of music and of books/articles or materials

in digital format and a decrease for reading books in print format.

The practices performed most often on the Internet in 2022 are activities with a predominantly recreational character (e.g.: watching movies or TV programmes broadcast online) and activities with mixed functions (using social networks). An interesting aspect that we identified in this edition is related to the fact that more than three quarters of the people use social networks (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) during working hours, regardless of whether they work from home or in the office, and young people who spend the most time in a day at school,

according to a schedule, use the Internet for social networks almost all day.

From the viewpoint of practices on the Internet that have a predominantly cultural function, people used the Internet most often to visit the websites of museums/libraries, festivals/theatres/pages with cultural events. Compared to the data recorded in 2021, the percentages have increased, and a possible explanation is the fact that people also learned this habit during the two years of the pandemic, when they searched for information on the Internet more often.

Regarding the main results depending on the socio-demographic indicators, it is important to emphasise that men spend more time on the Internet than women on average, but women are much more active on social media platforms as compared to men. The frequency of Internet use decreases with age, people from rural areas use the Internet similarly to people from urban areas, people with a higher level of education and with higher incomes use the Internet more often compared to people with no education or with low incomes.

Creating and editing video or audio content on the Internet is a common practise, even among age groups other than youth. More than half of the respondents have taken photos or filmed video materials, have downloaded photos or audio-video materials from the Internet at least once in the last year,

and over a quarter of them have edited / cropped / modified photos or video materials in the last year. Regarding the behaviour of uploading and sharing video, image or audio content on the Internet, more than half of the respondents have performed these activities at least once in 2022.

We also analysed the Internet use behaviour among young people (between 18 and 35 years old) separately and identified that young people, especially those who spend a lot of time on the Internet and social networks, have a lower level of social trust (even in the people of the neighbourhood or commune where they live), they show a lower level of tolerance, they are almost disinterested in social or civic participation, they agree less with the fact that it is important to align the measures in the country to those of the European Union, they are less tolerant towards certain social categories (e.g. people with LGBTQIA+ identity). In general, young people who spend a lot of time on the Internet show a more passive, indifferent and socially-absent attitude. Moreover, as we have demonstrated in the theoretical context of this study, several researches conducted on the youth segment have shown that the impact of excessive Internet consumption is rather negative and causes a reduced ability to work together with others, to socialise, and it also causes a decrease in the interest in civic activities and in relationships with others.

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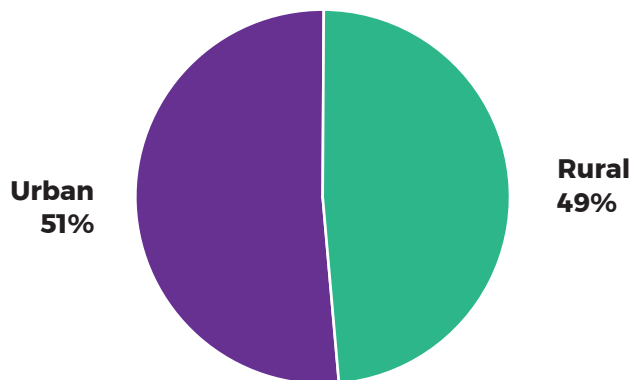
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7. Annexes

Graph 18. Internet usage rate depending on residence area



Graph 19. Internet usage rate by ethnicity



Table 4. The frequency with which the respondents downloaded pictures or audio-video materials from the Internet depending on the residence area

| | | In the last 12 months, how often...? [Have you downloaded pictures or audio-video materials from Internet pages/social networks?] | | | | | | Total |
|----------------|-------|---|--------|---------|--------------------|------------------------|------|--------|
| | | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | At least once/year | Never in the last year | NC | |
| Residence area | Urban | 7,7% | 21,6% | 21,4% | 12,5% | 36,2% | 0,6% | 100,0% |
| | Rural | 7,2% | 25,4% | 15,7% | 11,9% | 39,6% | 0,2% | 100,0% |
| Total | | 7,5% | 23,3% | 18,9% | 12,2% | 37,7% | 0,4% | 100,0% |

Table 5. Internet consumption depending on the level of education

| How often have you used the Internet in the last 12 months? | Daily | Several times a week | Once a week | 1-3 times a month | Less than once a month | Never | Total |
|---|-------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|
| No schooling | | | | | | 100% | 100% |
| Elementary school (4 grades) | 63% | | 12% | | | 25% | 100% |
| Middle school = (8 grades) | 68% | 9% | 2% | | 1% | 20% | 100% |
| High school - first level (10 grades) | 72% | 10% | 7% | | | 11% | 100% |
| Post-high school education/ apprentice school | 59% | 8% | 2% | 4% | 2% | 25% | 100% |
| Short-term university studies/college | 88% | | | | | 12% | 100% |
| Undergraduate studies | 89% | 5% | 2% | 1% | | 3% | 100% |
| Master's university studies | 98% | 2% | | | | | 100% |
| Postgraduate studies | 84% | 8% | | 8% | | | 100% |

Effects of participation in cultural activities on the quality of life and social well-being

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Content

- 1. Abstract 47
- 2. Introduction 47
- 3. Methodology 51
- 4. Participation in cultural activities in the public space 52
 - 4.1 The socio-demographic profile of the participants in cultural activities in the public space 53
 - 4.2 Participation in theatre / film / music festivals 57
 - 4.3 Types of access to theatre festivals 58
 - 4.4 The main reasons for participating in various cultural activities 59
 - 4.5 Participation in leisure activities in the public space 60
- 5. Conclusions 61
- 6. Bibliography 62
- 7. Annexes 63

1. Abstract

In this chapter we analyse the different forms of participation in cultural life in the public space, at national level. The main objective of the analysis is to capture the profile of the participants in various cultural activities in the public space, depending on certain variables, in

order to identify how people choose to spend their spare time. Another objective of the chapter was to identify the reasons and benefits of participating in cultural activities, in order to support the development and implementation of cultural policies or projects.

2. Introduction

Three years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need to support the cultural sectors for their sustainable recovery. The cultural consumption trends identified during the pandemic show that there is a need for a rethinking of the way in which culture is perceived and valued by public authorities. The UNESCO report, developed during the pandemic, highlights some key aspects that should be improved for a rapid and sustainable recovery of the cultural and creative sectors, with the support of public authorities, and these aspects mainly refer to the development of new strategies that regard culture as essential for a socially and economically sustainable future. Perceptions of culture have changed during the pandemic, and this represents an opportunity for new sustainable cultural strategies and policies that value culture as a key element in individual and social well-being. At the same time, there is a need to reconfigure current cultural policies and to promote intersectoral collaborations, because *„a rich and diverse cultural ecosystem is advantageous in several sectors of the economy and contributes substantially to social well-being“*¹.

These aspects were the basis of several studies² conducted before the pandemic, which demonstrate the role of culture in social cohesion, quality of life, social well-being, sustainability; and following the pandemic, culture is no longer seen exclusively as a way of leisure or entertainment. During this period, the role of culture as an important development factor in the current context was realised, as culture is a public good with major implications in the quality of people's lives³.

Thus, cultural participation (in the public space) has positive effects on people, the exposure to the variety of artistic forms and cultural diversity gives people the opportunity to be more tolerant, more open to new ideas and concepts, to be more involved in their own community or/ and to take part in activities with a civic component⁴.

1 UNESCO, Department of Culture and Tourism, "Culture in Times of COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Revival", United Printing & Publishing, Abu Dhabi, 2022, p. 49.

2 Tavano Blessi, Giorgio; Grossi, Enzo; Sacco, Pier Luigi; Pieretti, Giovanni, Ferilli, Guido, " Cultural Participation, Relational Goods and Individual Subjective Well-Being: Some Empirical Evidence" in Review of Economics & Finance, 2014. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265139702_Cultural_Participation_Relational_Goods_and_Individual_Subjective_Well-Being_Some_Empirical_Evidence [Ultima accesare 18 ianuarie 2023].

3 Tubadji, Annie. "Culture and mental health resilience in times of COVID-19" în Journal of Population Economics 34, (2021), pp. 1219–1259, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00148-021-00840-7>.

4 Regina A. List, Olga Kononykhina and Jessica Leong Cohen, , "Cultural participation and inclusive societies", Consiliul Europei, Mai 2017, pp.12-13.

Moreover, several studies^{5,6} highlight the fact that participation in artistic/cultural activities brings benefits not only at the individual level, but also at the community level. An increased cultural participation positively influences the quality of life, not only at the level of people, but also at the level of interpersonal relationships.

Annie Tubadji's study conducted during the pandemic on the link between individual well-being and cultural consumption points to the role that culture plays in people's quality of life. Thus, „*culture is clearly a consumer good that is strongly associated with people's mental health*”⁷, cultural consumption (before, but also during the pandemic period) is positively associated with an increased level of well-being, which demonstrates that participation in cultural activities in periods of shock, of crisis is positively associated with emotional resilience, as well as with pro-social behaviour⁸.

Botti⁹ makes a classification of the benefits that participation in cultural activities brings to the people, as follows:

- *Functional (cultural) benefits* – are associated with the need for knowledge and education and are sought by people when they feel such a need (knowledge, curiosity, education, information);
- *Symbolic benefits* – refer to the significations of a cultural

product / event on a psychological or social level. In other words, a person may display their personality and social values through cultural consumption choices. Furthermore, these benefits refer to the desire to reach a certain social status, but without precisely understanding the cultural or artistic product / event associated to a higher social status;

- *Social benefits* – refer to those benefits produced when the cultural product / event conveys a message about a person and their social status. Cultural activities that determine such benefits act as „spaces for reunion and socialisation” (for example, a theatre play is a reason to meet friends in a certain space, while the play itself becomes a subject of discussion after it ends);
- *Emotional benefits* – are closely related to a person's desire to have an engaging, interesting or fun experience, to satisfy a need, to escape from everyday life, to unwind. Unlike functional benefits, emotional benefits emphasise emotions, feelings, while functional benefits come from an internal need to „fill an inner void”.

In addition to these benefits, we can also analyse people's reasons for attending cultural events, what drives them to attend and continue to attend. Before making a brief classification of these reasons, it is important to note that, regardless of the personal motivation to participate in cultural activities, people's well-being is an important benefit of cultural consumption. People want to feel good when they participate in a cultural activity, they want to relax, to feel that the experience was pleasant and worth repeating¹⁰.

Marylouise Caldwell identified in her study, based on several studies over the years, that there are four main reasons why people participate in cultural activities/events¹¹:

5 Matarasso, François, "Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts", Comedia, 1997, p. 74.

6 Lee, Chia-Wen; Lin, Li-Ching and Hung, Huang-Chia, "Art and Cultural Participation and Life Satisfaction in Adults: The Role of Physical Health, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Relationships" in *Frontiers in Public Health*, sec. Public Mental Health, Vol. 8, 21 ianuarie 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33558844/>.

7 Tubadji, Annie. "Culture and mental health resilience in times of COVID-19" în *Journal of Population Economics* 34, (2021), <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00148-021-00840-7>, p. 1222.

8 Idem.

9 Botti, Simona, "What Role for Marketing in the Arts? An Analysis of Arts Consumption and Artistic Value" in *International Journal of Arts Management*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (SPRING 2000), pp. 14-27.

10 Caldwell, Marylouise, "Applying general living systems theory to learn consumers' sense making in attending performing arts." In *Psychology and Marketing*, 18(5), (2021), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/mar.1018>, pp. 497–511.

11 Idem, pp. 504.

- *Enrichment* – which refers to the desire for affective / intellectual / transcendental stimulation and which is based on the approach of positive experiences that are stimulating, the desired consequences being various experiences, emotions, feelings with an energising, revitalising impact;
- *Simplification* – is the desire for recovery, peace, escape from everyday life and it is based on the accumulation of positive experiences that have a calming impact and from which feelings of relaxation, of timelessness are expected, through which energy is recovered, „the batteries are charged“;
- *Communion* – refers to the desire for socialisation and connection to other people, for unity, and this motivation is based on the approach of positive experiences with people, things or events, on the (re)connection with people from a narrow social circle, with the aim to create intimacy, socialisation, human contact;
- *Distinction* – is the desire for uniqueness, superiority, self-determination, and this motivation is based on the approach of positive experiences with the self, on the desire to be different from others, to feel superior, on the desire for self-updating.

From Botti's and Caldwell's classifications we can see the connections between these reasons; the benefits brought by the participation in cultural activities are multiple (for example, social benefits can be associated with communion motivations, symbolic benefits - with distinction motivations, etc.), but it is important to remember that they are not mutually exclusive, a cultural activity may bring several benefits, the reasons may vary depending on the person and the needs they have at a certain moment (for example, emotional benefits may be associated with reasons of enrichment, but also with those of simplification, depending on the need one is feeling at some point). Following the pandemic, these benefits have become even more evident, and the link between the participation in cultural activities and a higher quality of life has been studied and

demonstrated in several studies that looked at the impact of culture on the quality of life during the pandemic^{12,13}.

Obviously, each type of cultural activity brings different benefits, depending on the person who participates in such activities, but certain types of cultural activities, which are predominantly stimulating, without requiring very high cognitive demands from people, have a positive impact on the quality life, more so than activities that offer instant rewards and lead to boredom fairly quickly, or more than activities that require a demanding cognitive effort, which also leads to boredom or fatigue and consequently to a low degree of attendance¹⁴.

Cultural activities that have relaxation and entertainment components are important in people's lives because they give them the chance for relaxation and personal development¹⁵, but also a chance to expand their „knowledge, skills, sense of belonging and personal achievement“¹⁶, in a pleasant way. All these contribute to „the restoration of individuals' psychological resources after periods of stress... they provide psychological well-being... positive moods“¹⁷.

12 Tubadji, Annie. "Culture and mental health resilience in times of COVID-19" in *Journal of Population Economics* 34, (2021) , <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00148-021-00840-7>, pp. 1219–1259.

13 Radermecker, Anne-Sophie, "Art and culture in the COVID-19 era: for a consumer-oriented approach" in *SN Business and Economics*, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43546-020-00003-y>, 2021.

14 Tavano Blessi, Giorgio; Grossi, Enzo; Sacco, Pier Luigi; Pieretti, Giovanni, Ferilli, Guido, " Cultural Participation, Relational Goods and Individual Subjective Well-Being: Some Empirical Evidence" in *Review of Economics & Finance*, 2014, Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265139702_Cultural_Participation_Relational_Goods_and_Individual_Subjective_Well-Being_Some_Empirical_Evidence [Last accessed January 18, 2023], p. 42.

15 Stebbins, Robert A., (1997) "Casual leisure: a conceptual statement", *Leisure Studies*, 16:1, 17-25, DOI: 10.1080/026143697375485.

16 Marques, L și Giolo, G. (2020) "Cultural leisure in the time of COVID-19: impressions from the Netherlands", *World Leisure Journal*, Vol. 62, no.4, 344-348, <https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2020.1825256>.

17 Vorderer, P. și Reinecke, L., (2015) "From mood to meaning: The changing model of the user in entertainment research", *Communication Theory* 25(4),

We must mention here that certain specialised studies on participation in cultural activities make distinctions between types of activities according to the way they were traditionally defined and according to social class. As an example we have the "high culture" („highbrow culture"), which was reserved for the elites and the "mass culture" („lowbrow culture"), which was reserved for the common people, who did not have access or the necessary education to take part in „high culture" activities. Within this classification there is also the distinction between art and entertainment, a dichotomy that is also based on social class hierarchies. Similarly to the „mass culture", entertainment was considered inferior to forms of „high culture" for a long time, because, unlike this type of culture, which had as intrinsic values „truth, moral character, political value"¹⁸, entertainment was associated with the „carnal, profane life"¹⁹, the values of the two being divergent.

Cultural activities were also classified according to the types of activity, without reference to social class, but to leisure activities, which are divided into *casual* and *serious* leisure activities²⁰. Casual leisure activities refer to those activities that are generally practised for relaxation, enjoyment and do not require major cognitive effort. Conversely, serious activities refer to those activities which, in addition to relaxation and enjoyment, include a higher degree of (cognitive or physical) effort.

It is important to remember that various forms of cultural activities have different meanings to different people. Attending a classical music or opera performance may provide functional (cultural) or symbolic benefits, and going to the cinema may provide relaxation or entertainment benefits, depending on the personal motivations of people, who are actively involved in each cultural activity in which they decide to participate and

know from the beginning the result they want to obtain from participating in a certain activity.

The connection between the participation in cultural activities and the well-being of people and society is obvious, especially in the current context. Public policies should focus on this through the development and implementation of cross-sector strategies, and this requires consistent studies of people's cultural consumption and their reasons for attending cultural events. Another aspect that future studies should focus on is the identification of consumption patterns for each sub-sector of culture (e.g. performing arts, dance, music, etc.), because such studies can anticipate people's needs and desires, but also future consumption patterns (especially in times of crisis).

The evolution of culture over time is also to be considered; culture is in a process of continuous transformation, it becomes more and more interactive, engaging, it is ubiquitous in all areas of daily life and, therefore, the way cultural consumers relate to it in terms of motivations and benefits also evolves, people filter through their own internal mechanisms how they assimilate and use the cultural experiences they are exposed to²¹. Considering these aspects, as well as the studies conducted (before and during the pandemic) and mentioned in this chapter, which show the positive association between cultural consumption in the public space and individual as well as social well-being, we can realise the cultural institutions' opportunities to promote this connection at the level of local / national authorities, not only through the financing of cultural actions or initiatives, but also through collaboration with adjacent sectors, such as the sectors of education, health and social assistance²².

18 Shusterman, R. (2003) "Entertainment: A question for aesthetics", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 43, Nr. 3, p. 291.

19 Ibidem.

20 Stebbins, R. A. "Casual leisure: a conceptual statement", *Leisure Studies*, (1997) 16:1, 17-25, DOI: 10.1080/026143697375485.

21 Sacco, Pier Luigi, "Culture 3.0: A new perspective for the EU 2014-2020 structural funds programming" in *EENC Paper*, 2011.

22 Radermecker, Anne-Sophie, "Art and culture in the COVID-19 era: for a consumer-oriented approach" in *SN Business and Economics*, 2021.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, several variables were taken into account, through the analysis of which we tracked the distribution of different types of cultural activities and the reasons for participating in cultural activities at the level of the Romanian society, with the aim of supporting a data-based development of public policies or initiatives.

To answer these objectives, descriptive statistics and contingency analyses were used. Descriptive statistics highlight the general degree of cultural participation at the sample level. These explore the frequency with which people participate in various leisure activities. Contingency analyses are used to analyse the types of cultural participation depending on certain

socio-demographic variables (gender, age, level of education, personal income and residence area). Thus, an analysis of the public's profile specific to a certain activity is conducted.

The research hypotheses tested how respondents perceived the benefits of cultural activities by expressing reasons for participation. In Table 1 we present the potential benefits and degree of applicability for each cultural activity that we tested through the analyses. We mention that the functional (cultural) benefits correspond to educational reasons, the symbolic benefits are associated with artistic/aesthetic reasons, the social benefits correspond to socialisation reasons, and the emotional benefits are associated to relaxation reasons.

Table 1. Distribution of types of benefits depending on activities²³

| Cultural activities | Functional (cultural) benefits | Symbolic benefits | Social benefits | Emotional benefits |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Participation in classical/symphonic music, opera or ballet performances | | | | |
| Participation in theatre performances | | | | |
| Going to the cinema | | | | |
| Going to the library to read / borrow books | | | | |
| Visiting a historical monument or archaeological site (e.g. palace, castle, church, monastery, gardens, old buildings, etc.) | | | | |
| Visiting a museum, exhibition or art gallery | | | | |
| Participation in music festivals | | | | |
| Participation in theatre festivals | | | | |
| Participation in film festivals | | | | |

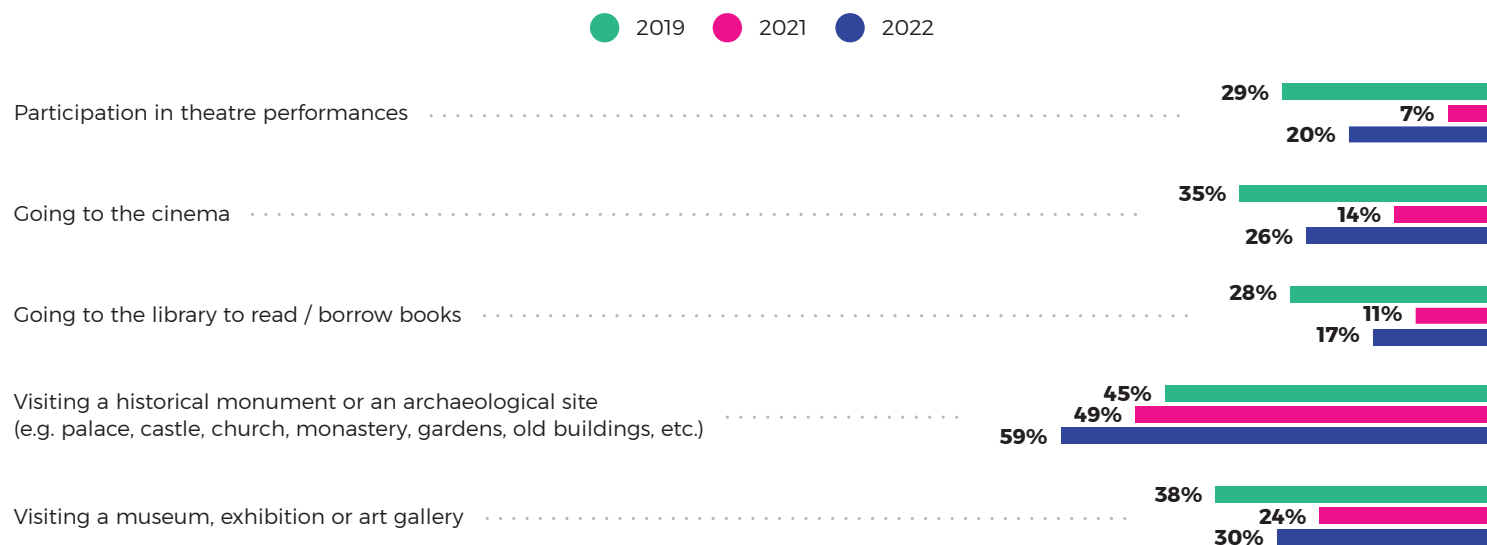
²³ The intensity of the colour expresses the degree of applicability in the case of the cultural activity.

4. Participation in cultural activities in the public space

We will first present comparisons between the frequency of participation in cultural activities before the pandemic (2019), during the pandemic (2021) and in 2022. The frequency of participation in cultural activities starts to increase in 2022, after two years of decline, as we can see in Graph 1. First of all, visiting a historical monument or an archaeological site is the most frequently performed activity by respondents throughout the compared period, and

the high percentages during the pandemic period can be explained through the fact that this activity could take place in the open space, too (for example, gardens or castles). The activities that are quickly recovering from the pandemic are going to the cinema, attending theatre performances and visiting a museum, exhibition or art gallery. For example, the frequency of attending theatre performances increased from 7% during the pandemic (2021) to 20% in 2022.

Graph 1. Comparison of the frequency of participation in cultural activities before the pandemic, during the pandemic and in 2022



At a general level for 2022, the frequency of participation in cultural activities is low (Table 2); thus, more than half of the respondents have not participated in any of the cultural activities analysed in this study in the last year. The only exception is visiting a historical monument or an archaeological site, an activity that 59% of respondents

practise at least once a year. This activity is followed by visiting a museum or art gallery and attending music festivals, with almost a third of respondents practising these activities at least once a year. Going to the cinema is an activity carried out at least annually by 26% of the respondents.

Table 2. Frequency of participation in cultural activities in the last year

| | At least once a month | At least once every six months | At least once a year | Never | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Participation in classical/symphonic music, opera or ballet performances | 1% | 4% | 5% | 90% | 100% |
| Participation in theatre performances | 3% | 8% | 9% | 80% | 100% |
| Going to the cinema | 7% | 13% | 6% | 74% | 100% |
| Going to the library to read / borrow books | 7% | 5% | 5% | 83% | 100% |
| Visiting a historical monument or archaeological site (e.g. palace, castle, church, monastery, gardens, old buildings, etc.) | 10% | 25% | 24% | 41% | 100% |
| Visiting a museum, exhibition or art gallery | 2% | 14% | 14% | 70% | 100% |

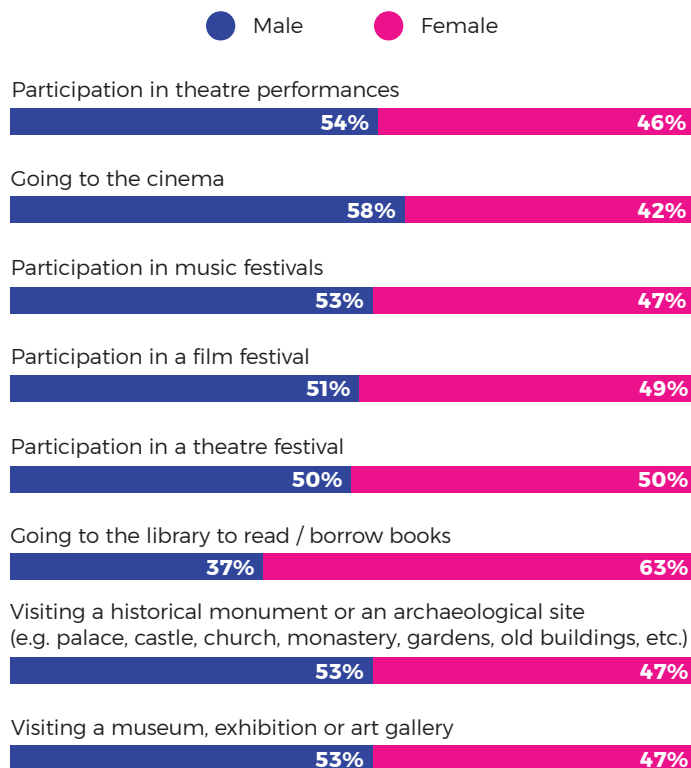
4.1 The socio-demographic profile of the participants in cultural activities in the public space

The public of the cultural activities is balanced, in the sense that in most of the considered activities, female and male persons participate equally (Graph 2). Differences depending on gender are observed in the case of going to the library

(to read or borrow books) and attending classical music, opera or ballet performances, the majority being represented by women. Watching a movie at the cinema or attending a theatre performance are more widespread among men.

54 Participation in cultural activities in the public space

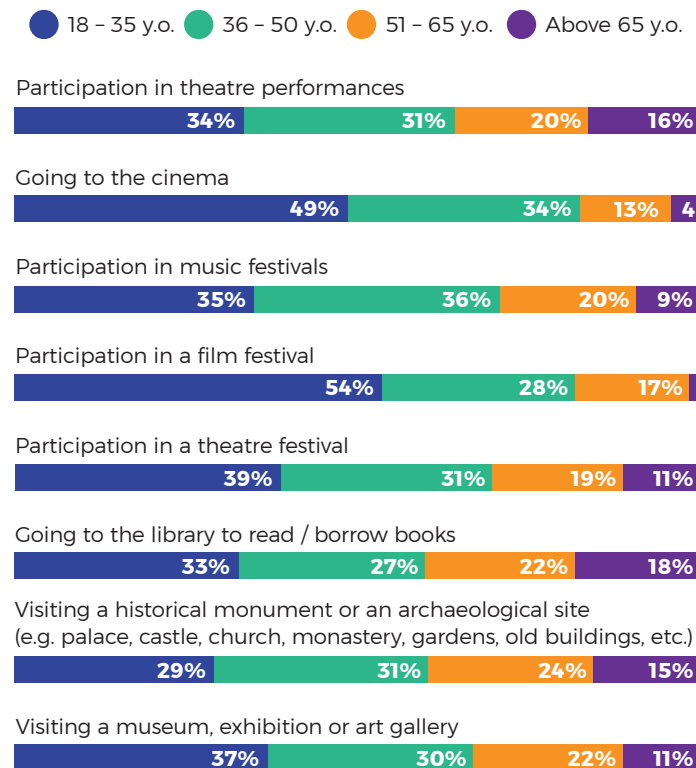
Graph 2. Profile of people who have participated in cultural activities in the last year, depending on gender²⁴



The profile of people who participate in cultural activities is predominantly made up of young people (18-35 years old). Thus, a specific profile (depending on the age variable) is visible among the people who in the last year have attended a film or theatre festival and the cinema, as well as for those who participated in classical music, opera or ballet performances or visited a museum, exhibition or art gallery. There is no specific audience for the other types of activities.

²⁴ The percentages were calculated from the total percentages for the answer options At least once a month, At least once every six months, At least once a year.

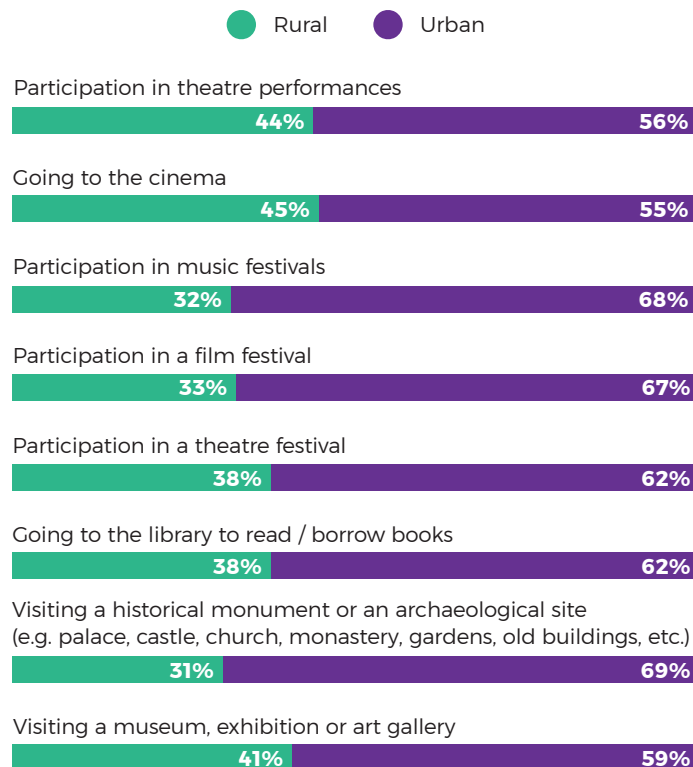
Graph 3. Profile of people who have participated in cultural activities in the last year, depending on age²⁵



In the case of the profile of the participants in activities of a cultural nature, we analysed the cultural practices depending on the residence area of the respondents (Graph 4). All activities have a significant urban audience, without exception, and this could be due to either greater financial possibilities or greater opportunities or accessibility of these activities in urban versus rural areas.

²⁵ The percentages were calculated from the total percentages for the answer options At least once a month, At least once every six months, At least once a year

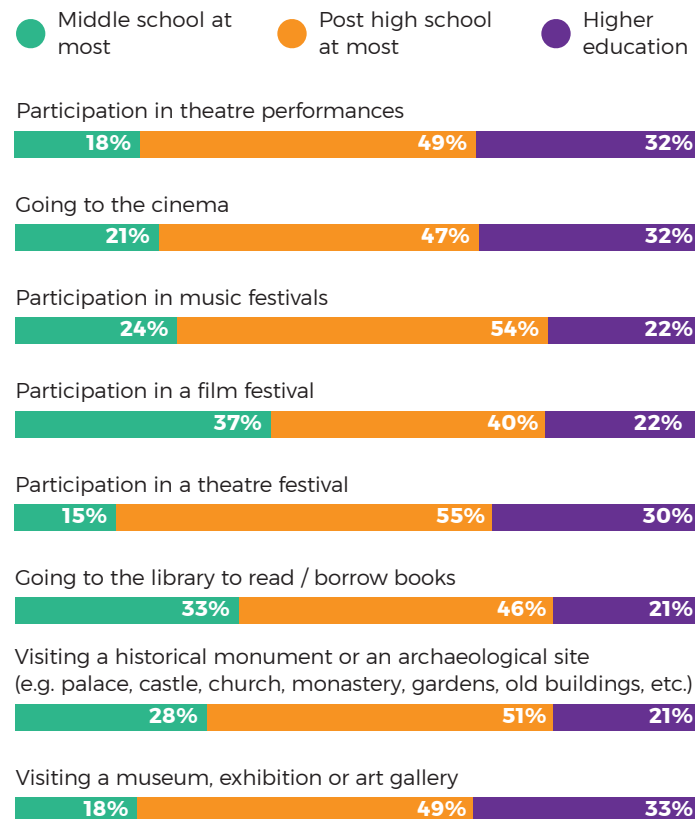
Graph 4. Profile of people who have participated in cultural activities in the last year, depending on the area of residence²⁶



The education level is another relevant criterion in defining the public that participates in activities of a cultural nature (Graph 5). In general, people who practice these activities at least once a year are people with a high level of education. A greater difference is noted in the case of those who attend classical music, opera or ballet performances, these being mostly people with higher education.

²⁶ The percentages were calculated from the total percentages for the answer options At least once a month, At least once every six months, At least once a year.

Graph 5. Profile of people who have participated in cultural activities in the last year, depending on the level of education²⁷



Income is another variable through which we can analyse the audience of cultural activities, and for most of them the audience consists of people with personal incomes over 2501 lei, especially in the case of participation in classical music, opera or ballet performances, going to the cinema and visiting a museum, an exhibition or an art gallery.

²⁷ The percentages were calculated from the total percentages for the answer options At least once a month, At least once every six months, At least once a year.

56 Participation in cultural activities in the public space

Another profile that emerges from the analysis is that of the people with an income below 2500 lei and who in the

last year have gone to the library to read or borrow books (61%).

Graph 6. Profile of people who have participated in cultural activities in the last year, depending on income²⁸



²⁸ The percentages were calculated from the total percentages for the answer options At least once a month, At least once every six months, At least once a year

4.2 Participation in theatre / film / music festivals

Attending music festivals is the activity that scores the highest frequency of participation, with 29% of respondents

stating that they have attended such a festival in the last year. On the other hand, participation in a film festival or a theatre festival records low frequencies; only 9% of people say they have participated in these activities in the last year.

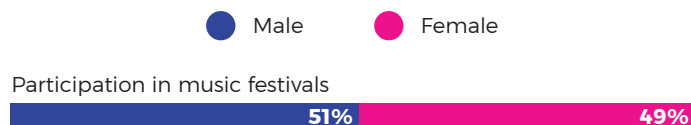
Table 3. Frequency of participation in theatre, film, music festivals in the last 12 months

| | At least once a month | At least once every six months | At least once a year | Never | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Participation in music festivals | 2% | 12% | 15% | 71% | 100% |
| Participation in a film festival | 1% | 4% | 4% | 91% | 100% |
| Participation in a theatre festival | 0% | 3% | 6% | 91% | 100% |

Among those who attended a music festival, the majority participated in a traditional/folk music festival, followed by those who attended a pop/Latino music festival.

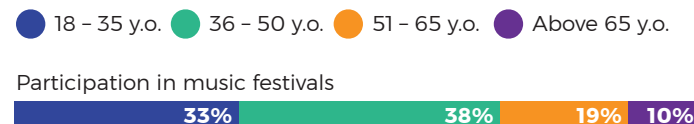
The gender distribution of those who have attended festivals in the last year is almost equal for all categories of festivals.

Graph 7. Profile of people who have participated in music festivals in the last year, depending on gender



As regards the profile of people who participated in festivals in the last year, festival participants are generally young people and a specific profile of young people between 18 and 35 years old who participated in theatre festivals in the last year is noticeable. In the case of music and film festivals, there is no specific audience.

Graph 8. Profile of people who have participated in music festivals in the last year, depending on age



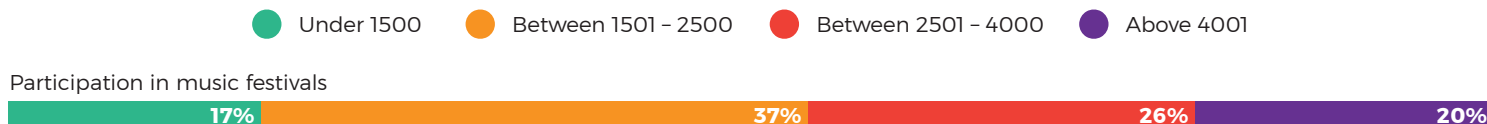
In terms of education level, people with medium and high education are the ones who generally attend the festivals. The percentages for all festival categories are roughly the same.

Graph 9. Profile of people who have participated in music festivals in the last year, depending on the level of education



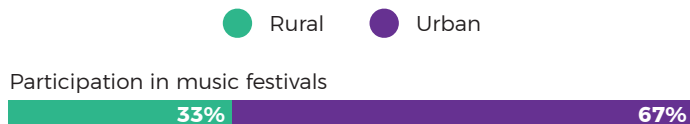
Regarding the profile of festival participants depending on income, people with medium or high income (over 2501 lei) generally participate in festivals.

Graph 10. Profile of people who have participated in music festivals in the last year, depending on personal income

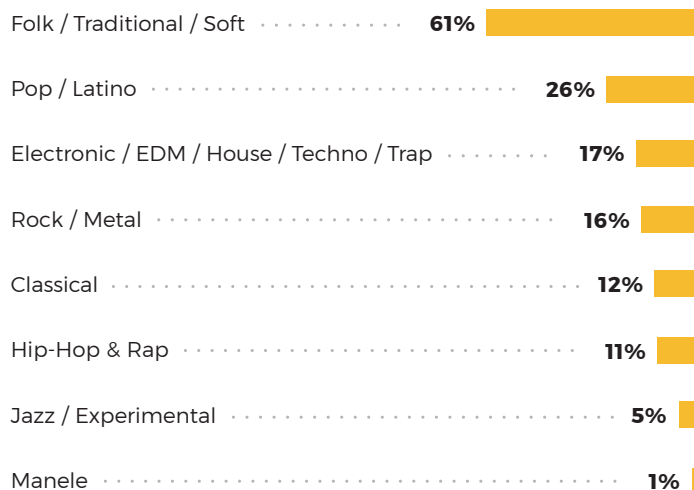


Depending on the area of residence, the profile of people who have participated in festivals in the last year is primarily made of people from urban areas (for all types of festivals).

Graph 11. Profile of people who have participated in music festivals in the last year, depending on the area of residence



Graph 12. Genres of music at music festivals (only yes answers)



As for the music genres most listened to at festivals, folk / traditional / soft music festivals (61%) and pop / Latino music festivals (26%) stand out. The rest of the music genres score low percentages, below 20%.

4.3 Types of access to theatre festivals

Next, we shall present the profile of people who participate in theatre festivals, depending on the type of access (free / ticket-based), in order to have an overall image of those who participate in such festivals. Thus, among those who have participated in theatre festivals in the last year, the majority participated on the basis of a paid ticket / subscription. This data tell us that, although only a small part of people attend these festivals, those who want to attend do so regardless of the type of access - paid or free tickets / subscriptions. There are no differences in gender distribution.

As regards the distribution by age, the profile of a young audience (18 - 35 years old) is noticeable, who mostly participates in theatre festivals with free access. There is no specific profile for those who go to theatre festivals with paid tickets / subscriptions. There are no major differences from the viewpoint of the education level in terms of attending theatre festivals with paid tickets/subscriptions or with free access.

Regarding the participation in theatre festivals depending on income, we can notice a specific profile of people with a personal income below 1500 RON, who have participated in the last year in theatre festivals with free admission. Otherwise, no specific profile stands out.

Regarding the profile of the public participating in theatre festivals, we can see that, in the case of free access, most of the participants come from urban areas. In the case of paid tickets / subscriptions, there are no differences.

4.4 The main reasons for participating in various cultural activities

In analysing cultural practices it is important to understand the reasons why people choose to participate in such activities. The main reasons for participating in various cultural activities were listed in relation to each cultural practice, and the respondents mentioned the variants valid

for their case. We analysed the distribution of reasons by frequency of cultural participation and respondents' socio-demographic profile.

Table 4 shows the main reasons of the respondents who participated at least once a year in one of these activities. Most of the respondents mentioned that they participated in cultural activities in order to relax. It is interesting to note that even for cultural activities that are usually associated with education or the need for increased cognitive effort on the part of people, their main reasons for participating in such activities are not educational, but relaxation reasons, which once again indicates that the perceived benefit of any type of cultural consumption is a pleasant experience.

Table 4. Main reasons for participating in activities of a cultural nature (for people who participated at least once in the last year)

| | Socialisation | Education | Artistic / aesthetic reasons | Relaxation | Entertainment / fun | Other reasons | Total |
|--|---------------|-----------|------------------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------|-------|
| Participation in classical / symphonic music, opera or ballet performances | 10% | 10% | 8% | 61% | 7% | 4% | 100% |
| Participation in theatre performances | 17% | 10% | 12% | 38% | 19% | 4% | 100% |
| Going to the cinema | 11% | 5% | 3% | 56% | 23% | 2% | 100% |
| Participation in music festivals | 15% | 2% | 6% | 40% | 35% | 2% | 100% |
| Participation in a film festival | 26% | 9% | 7% | 41% | 12% | 5% | 100% |
| Participation in a theatre festival | 18% | 14% | 11% | 36% | 17% | 4% | 100% |
| Going to the library to read / borrow books | 8% | 55% | 1% | 27% | 6% | 3% | 100% |
| Visiting a historical monument or archaeological site (e.g. palace, castle, church, monastery, gardens, old buildings, etc.) | 9% | 23% | 6% | 48% | 6% | 8% | 100% |
| Visiting a museum, exhibition or art gallery | 7% | 46% | 12% | 27% | 5% | 3% | 100% |

60 Participation in cultural activities in the public space

Other reasons for attending such events relate to socialisation, education and entertainment. Thus, in the case of those who have attended a library, visited a museum, an exhibition or an art gallery in the last year, the main motivation was to educate themselves. As regards the participation in festivals (music, theatre, film), more than a quarter of the respondents state that they participated for socialisation and relaxation reasons.

The profile of those who go to the cinema for relaxation reasons mainly includes young people (18-35 years old) from urban areas. Urban men aged up to 50 are the ones who choose more to visit a museum for educational reasons. Participation in music festivals for relaxation reasons is more specific to women aged between 36-50 years, from urban areas.

4.5 Participation in leisure activities in the public space

In this section we shall present the degree of respondents' participation in various recreational activities.

The highest percentages are recorded in the case of meetings with relatives or friends: 78% of respondents met with relatives or friends at least once a month. The next most frequent activity is walking in parks or green areas, with 64% of respondents practising it on a monthly basis. This activity is followed by going to malls, with 58% of respondents going to malls for various activities at least once a month. Going to church is another activity practised monthly, the percentage of those participating in religious activities being 51%. More than a third of the respondents state that they went to restaurants / pubs / cafés and that they practised a sport with a monthly frequency.

The other types of activities are performed with an annual rather than monthly frequency. Thus, just over half of the respondents went on trips in the country or participated in local celebrations or events at least once a year. Under a third of respondents attended sports competitions as spectators, went to clubs/discos or went on trips abroad.

Table 5. Frequency of participation in various leisure activities

| | At least once a week | At least once a month | At least once every six months | At least once a year | Never | Total |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Walking in parks, green areas | 40% | 24% | 9% | 5% | 22% | 100% |
| Practising a sport | 23% | 13% | 6% | 3% | 55% | 100% |
| Attending meetings with relatives or friends | 48% | 30% | 10% | 5% | 7% | 100% |
| Participation in local celebrations / events (e.g. Town / Commune Days) | 2% | 13% | 17% | 34% | 34% | 100% |
| Going to church | 24% | 27% | 20% | 12% | 17% | 100% |
| Going to a restaurant / pub / café | 16% | 27% | 15% | 8% | 34% | 100% |
| Going to the mall (shopping, movies, restaurants) | 21% | 37% | 14% | 4% | 24% | 100% |
| Participation in sports competitions as a spectator | 4% | 11% | 12% | 9% | 64% | 100% |
| Going to the disco / club | 1% | 4% | 4% | 6% | 85% | 100% |

| | At least once a week | At least once a month | At least once every six months | At least once a year | Never | Total |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Participation in entertainment shows (e.g. stand-up comedy, circus, etc.) | 0% | 6% | 15% | 12% | 67% | 100% |
| Going on trips in the country | 1% | 8% | 28% | 23% | 40% | 100% |
| Going on trips abroad | 0% | 1% | 6% | 18% | 75% | 100% |

5. Conclusions

Through this chapter we aimed to analyse the different forms of cultural participation in the public space and to identify the categories of people who participate in various activities, in order to provide a data-based support in the development of public initiatives/policies that sustain the increase in the degree of cultural participation at the level of the Romanian society. The reasons for cultural participation and its benefits to people are important factors that must be taken into account in the development of public policies or initiatives.

The analysed theories highlighted a series of benefits identified by the researchers as being associated to the respondents' perceived reasons for participating in cultural activities in the public space. Only certain research hypotheses were confirmed, especially those related to the social and emotional benefits associated to watching movies at the cinema or attending music or film festivals, as well as those related to the functional benefits associated to going to the

library and visiting a museum. The hypotheses regarding the functional and symbolic benefits perceived by the respondents for attending classical music or theatre performances, theatre festivals or visiting cultural heritage sites were disproved.

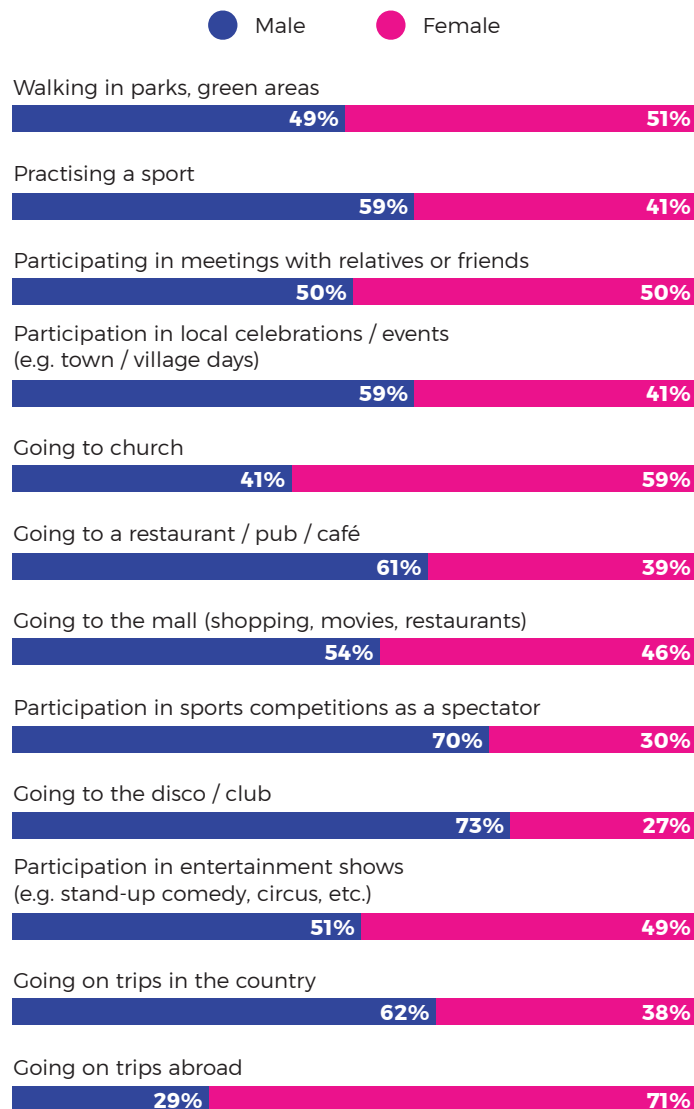
A possible explanation for these results resides in the consequences of the pandemic, which affected the emotional state of the population and which determined the use of leisure activities as a form of loosening up or relaxing in crisis situations, as shown by the studies cited at the beginning of the chapter. Another possible explanation is the paradigm shift in cultural management which, out of the desire to attract new categories of public, turned towards an easier offer, oriented more towards fun and enjoyment and less towards functional and symbolic benefits. It is important to follow in future studies whether this trend is temporary and caused by the social changes generated by the pandemic or if this trend is the effect of new tendencies in cultural management and will be maintained for a longer period

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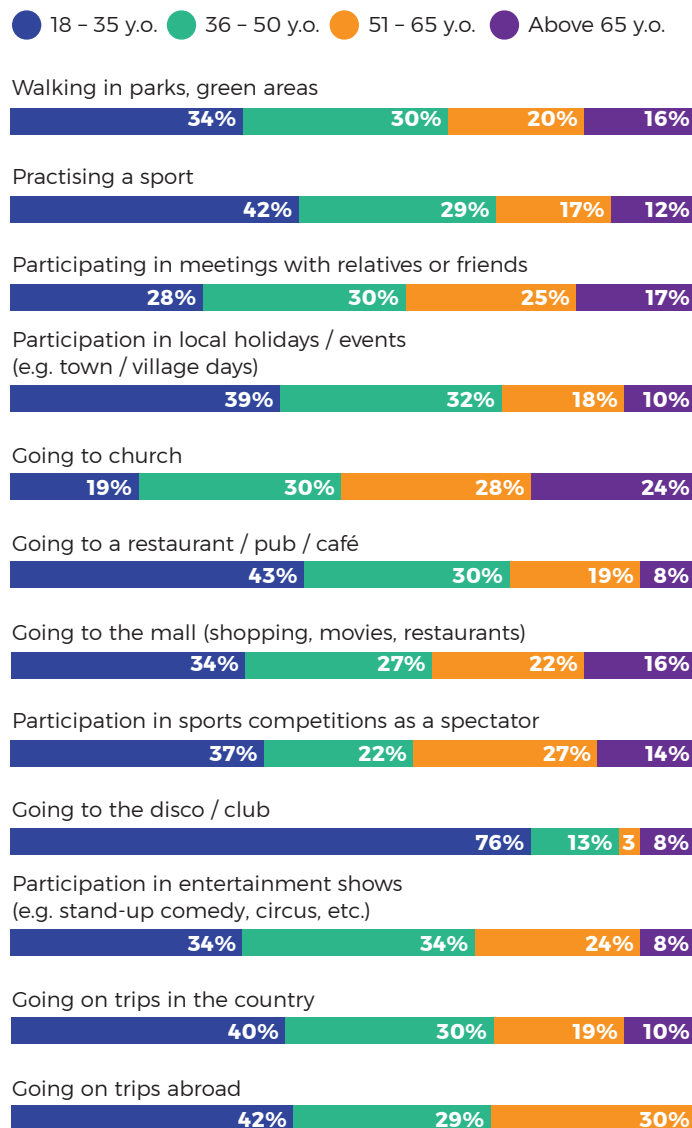
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7. Annexes

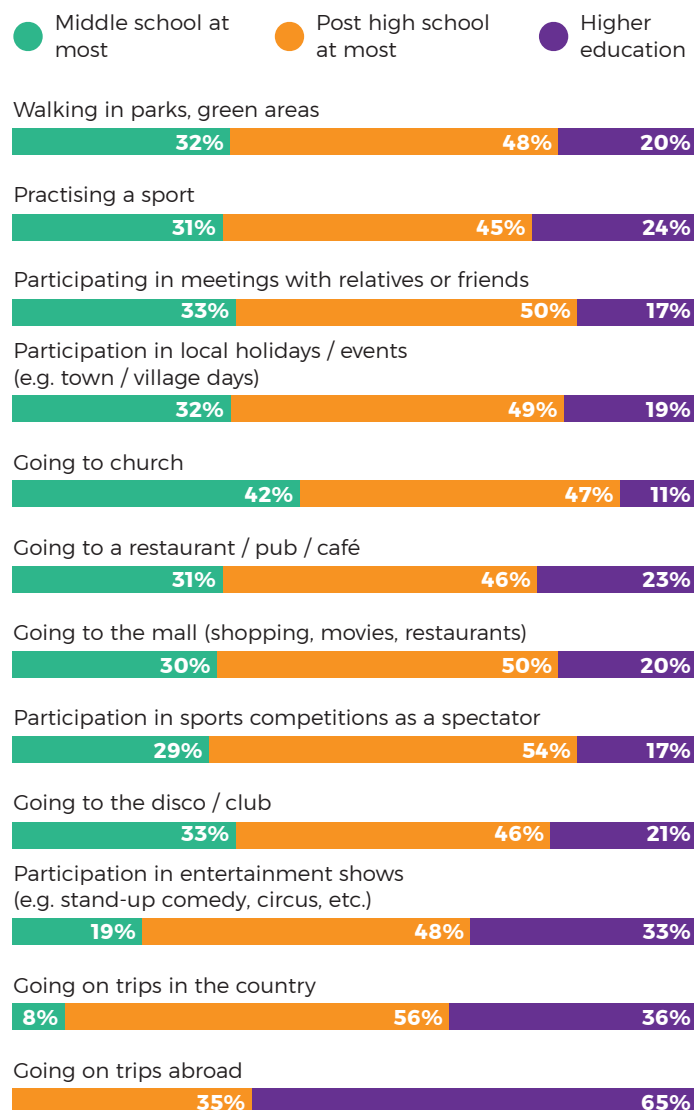
Graph 13. Profile of people who participated at least once a month in recreation and relaxation activities, by gender



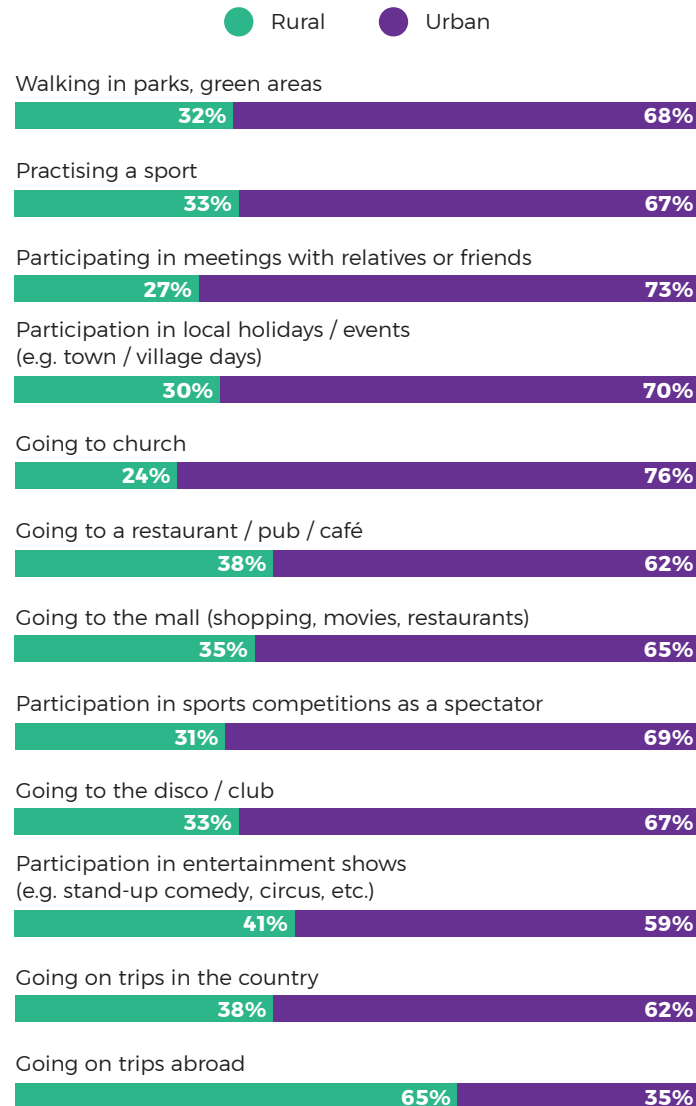
Graph 14. Profile of people who participated at least once a month in recreation and relaxation activities, by age



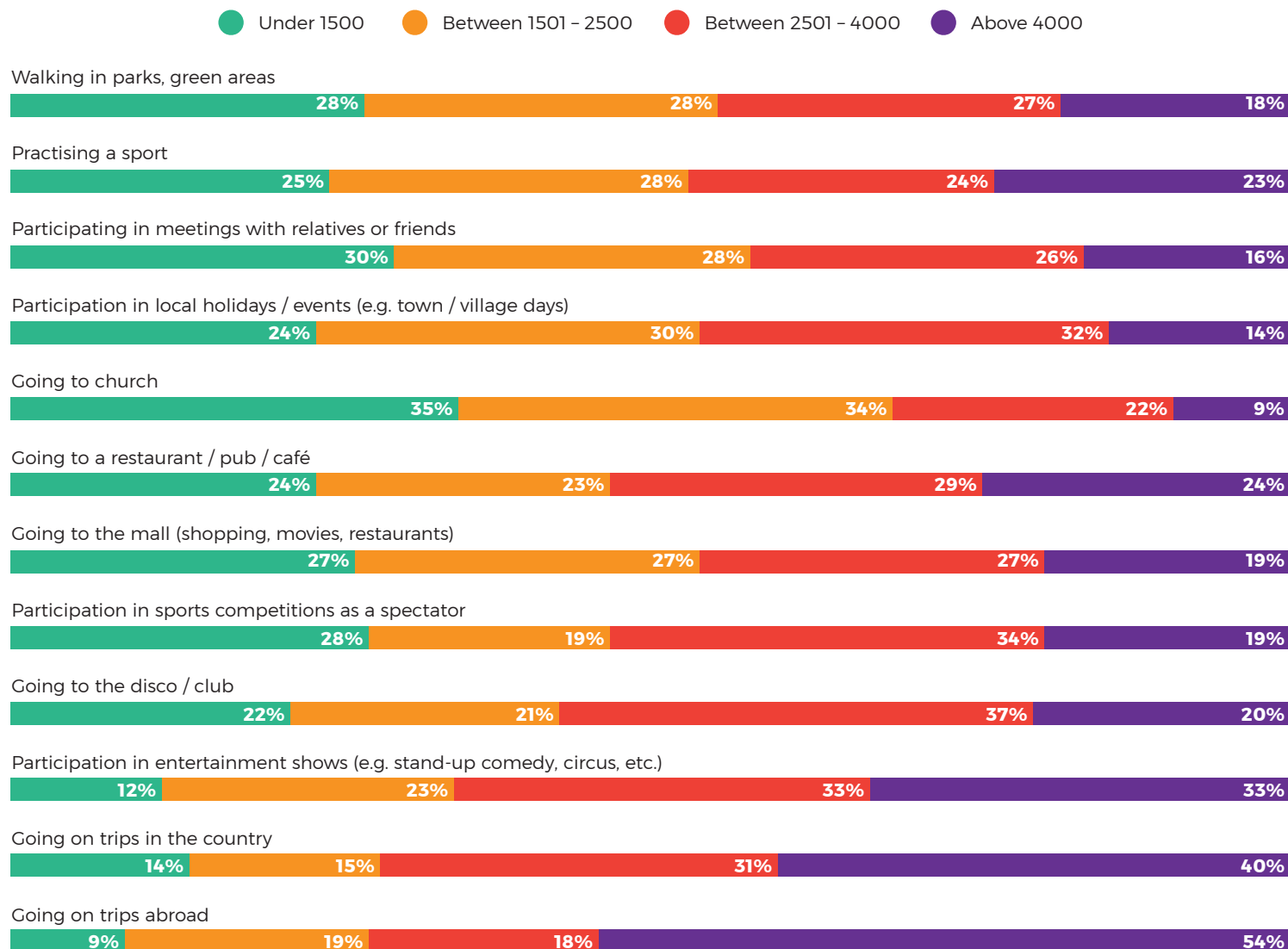
Graph 15. Profile of people who participated at least once a month in recreation and relaxation activities, by education level



Graph 16. Profile of people who participated at least once a month in recreation and relaxation activities, by residence area



Graph 17. Profile of people who participated at least once a month in recreation and relaxation activities, by income



Participation in cultural activities as one of the explanatory factors of democratic citizenship

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Content

- 1. Introduction 71
- 2. Research methodology 73
- 3. Explanatory theoretical models 77
 - 3.1 The theoretical model of democratic engagement. 79
 - 3.2 The theoretical model of democratic disengagement 84
- 4. Statistical data analysis 86
 - 4.1 The dimension of social belonging 86
 - 4.2 The dimension of social identity 88
 - 4.3 The dimension of social tolerance 89
 - 4.4 The dimension of social trust. 92
 - 4.4.1 Trust in the information presented in the mass media 95
 - 4.5 The dimension of social inclusion 98
 - 4.6 The dimension of civic concerns. 100
 - 4.7 The dimension of social freedom 104
- 5. Conclusions 107
- 6. Bibliography 110

1. Introduction

The role of cultural activities in society has been extensively discussed in terms of economic impact, while the weight of the effects that culture has on various aspects of social life was unduly neglected. Most studies have aimed to identify the influences that different leisure practices have on the accumulation of educational capital, on the consolidation of a local economy, on the provision of subjective well-being or on the increase of living standards. However, more recent approaches show that the effects of cultural life are not only reflected on the economy, but the effects end up being observed at a much wider social level, through processes aimed at the formation of social values.

The analysis of specialised literature has outlined a series of theoretical perspectives aimed at identifying the social impact attributed to participation in cultural activities, by analysing aspects related to active citizenship, civic engagement, social integration or democratic participation¹. For example, the *European Parliament Resolution of 11 December 2018 on the New European Agenda for Culture* stipulates „ the role of culture and the cultural and creative sectors (CCSs) as a driving force in pursuing the objectives of cohesion policy and social inclusion ”², thus specifying the unique contribution of cultural life in the consolidation of a democratic society. According to this perspective, public policies theoretically define culture as a tool that contributes to ensuring social cohesion and inclusion³, a fact that appears explicitly in the government documents of several states, among which Cyprus, Switzerland, Sweden,

Azerbaijan, France and Italy⁴. The implementation of such an approach is beneficial on a social level, providing a favourable framework for organising cultural activities.

The report commissioned by the European Union, entitled „Culture and Democracy: the evidence”, highlights the fact that there is a positive correlation between the level of participation in cultural activities and indicators of civic engagement, democracy and social cohesion⁵. Participation in cultural activities is understood as „participation in any activity that, for individuals, represents a way of increasing cultural and informational capacity and capital, which helps define their identity and/or allows for personal expression”⁶. Participation in cultural activities encompasses a range of leisure activities that are carried out in either formal or informal settings and that are part of everyday life, most often taking a habitual or routine-like form. Some authors believe that the distinction between elitist („highbrow”) cultural activities and mass („lowbrow”) cultural activities has faded over time, becoming less relevant in the context of today’s society, when cultural consumption has become more and more diversified as a result of the proliferation of the new media⁷. In Romania, the differences between culture and entertainment are maintained in certain socio-demographic categories and are amplified in

1 M. Sharon Jeannotte, *The Social Effects of Culture. A Literature Review* (Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa, 2017).

2 Comisia Europeană, *Rezoluția Parlamentului European din 11 decembrie 2018 referitoare la Noua Agendă Europeană Pentru Cultură*, 2018 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0499_RO.html>.

3 Vladimír Bína & Teunis Ijdens, *Social Participation and Cultural Policy: A Position Paper* (Den Haag: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2007).

4 H.K. Anheier et al., *Cultural Participation and Inclusive Societies. A Thematic Report Based on the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy* (Council of Europe, 2017), p. 14.

5 William Hammonds, *Culture and Democracy: the evidence. How citizens’ participation in cultural activities enhances civic engagement, democracy and social cohesion. Lessons from International Research*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, p.6.

6 UNESCO, *Measuring Cultural Participation: A Framework for Cultural Statistics Handbook*, 2012, p. 51.

7 Desirée Campagna, Giulio Caperna and Valentina Montalto, ‘Does Culture Make a Better Citizen? Exploring the Relationship Between Cultural and Civic Participation in Italy’, *Social Indicators Research*, 149.2 (2020), 657–86 (p. 659).

the absence of coherent cultural education programmes to educate the aesthetic tastes of young consumers.

The scope of cultural activities includes not only the practices that take place within traditional cultural institutions, but also other types of activities that meet one of the following conditions: they involve the functioning logic of the creative sectors, they aim at the consumption of cultural products or services and they require interaction with media content. In cultural activities, it is considered that participation takes place voluntarily, consciously and intentionally, based on a motivational and volitional support acquired through the assimilation of the set of social significations.

Parker and Jarolimek (1984) cited by Doganay define democratic citizenship as the adoption of a “set of practices and activities that equip young people and adults with the resources necessary to participate in democratic life by assuming and exercising the rights and responsibilities they have within society”⁸. According to the Council of Europe, democratic citizenship implies a high level of „participation, social cohesion, access, equity and solidarity”⁹: „democratic citizenship is more about inclusion than exclusion, more about participation than marginalisation, more about culture and values than procedural rationales (like voting), it’s about being civically and socially active”¹⁰. Understood in this manner, democratic citizenship represents an essential foundation for the functioning of democratic institutions, being made of an attitudinal component (values oriented towards equal opportunities, social justice, respect for

human rights) and a behavioural component (participation in decision-making, involvement in the community, development of associative life, political and social activism). On the one hand, democratic citizenship corresponds to the building of a sense of solidarity and social responsibility that contributes to the collective well-being and, on the other hand, democratic citizenship implies individual autonomy and an assumption of independence in relation to the elements that define personal life¹¹. As such, democratic citizenship presupposes an orientation towards collectivity and community, by showing interest in participating in how society is organised and by engaging in actions alongside others.

8 Ahmet Doganay, 'A Curriculum Framework for Active Democratic Citizenship Education', in *Schools, Curriculum and Civic Education for Building Democratic Citizens*, ed. Murray Print and Dirk Lange (Rotterdam: Sense Publishing, 2012), pp. 19–39 (p. 25).

9 Hugh Starkey, *Democratic Citizenship, Language, Diversity and Human Rights. Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education* (Strasbourg, 2002), p. 8.

10 Idem.

11 Anne Larason Schneider and Helen Ingram, 'Public Policy and Democratic Citizenship: What Kinds of Citizenship Does Policy Promote?', in *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis. Theory, Politics, and Methods*, ed. Frank Fischer, Gerald Miller, and Mara Sidney (London & New York: CRC Press), pp. 329–46 (p. 333).

2. Research methodology

In the context of this study, cultural participation is understood as assimilating a series of diverse activities that contribute to the building of cultural capital, assuming relevant forms of involvement in society. Three dimensions of cultural participation were considered: (1) the dimension of public cultural participation (which involves activities carried out in the extended community, in the social space where other members of society are physically present), (2) the dimension of non-public cultural participation (corresponding to the cultural consumption carried out especially in the domestic space, but which in particular presupposes a form of individualised exposure to a specific content) and (3) the dimension of cultural participation in the online environment (corresponding to the forms of cultural

consumption that presuppose the use of digital technologies, requiring an Internet connection). Certain indicators have been set for each of the dimensions, and each of these indicators is part of several aggregated cumulative indices that measure not only the frequency of cultural participation, but also the diversity of the forms of involvement in cultural life. Thus, we have calculated an index of public cultural participation (as the sum of the frequencies associated with the activities carried out in the public space), an index of non-public cultural participation (as the sum of the frequencies associated with the activities performed in a private context, regardless of the actual place where they are carried out) and an index of online cultural participation (as the sum of activities undertaken through the use of the Internet).

Table 1. Operationalisation of cultural participation

| | |
|---|---|
| The dimension of public cultural participation | Frequency of attending classical, symphonic, opera or ballet performances |
| | Frequency of attending theatre performances |
| | Frequency of attending entertainment shows |
| | Frequency of going to the cinema |
| | Frequency of attending music festivals |
| | Frequency of participation in film festivals |
| | Frequency of participation in theatre festivals |
| | Frequency of going to the library to read or borrow books |
| | Frequency of visiting a historical monument or archaeological site |
| | Frequency of visiting a museum, exhibition or art gallery |
| | Frequency of going to discos or clubs |
| | Frequency of walking in parks and green areas |
| | Frequency of going on trips in the country |
| | Frequency of going on trips abroad |
| | Frequency of practising a sport |
| | Frequency of participation in sports competitions as a spectator |
| | Frequency of attending meetings with relatives or friends |
| | Frequency of going to church |
| | Frequency of attending local celebrations or events |
| | Frequency of going to restaurants, pubs or cafés |
| | Frequency of going to the mall |

| | |
|---|---|
| The dimension of non-public cultural participation | Frequency of reading newspapers, magazines, online or on paper |
| | Frequency of reading books in print format |
| | Frequency of reading books in electronic format |
| | Frequency of listening to music |
| | Frequency of watching TV programmes |
| | Frequency of taking photos or filming video |
| | Frequency of editing, cropping or modification of pictures or video material |
| The dimension of online cultural participation | Using the Internet to download pictures or audio-video materials from Internet pages/social networks |
| | Using the Internet to upload pictures or audio-video materials to Internet pages/social networks |
| | Using the Internet to visit the websites of museums/libraries/theatres/festivals/pages with cultural events |
| | Using the Internet to watch online streaming movies or TV shows |
| | Using the internet for computer/laptop or console/phone games |
| | Using the Internet for professional/school activities (e-mail, video conferences, etc.) |
| | Using the Internet to attend online courses or tutorials |
| | Using the Internet to read books, manuals, articles |
| | Using the Internet to buy books, CDs, theatre tickets, event tickets (concerts, etc.) |
| | Using the Internet to use social networks |
| | Using the Internet to make online purchases of any kind |
| Using the Internet for other activities | |

Democratic citizenship represents, on the one hand, a set of attitudes aimed at accepting diversity in relationships with others and showing an interest in topics of social relevance, and, on the other hand, a set of behaviours that imply the engagement in community life and responsible participation in decisions regarding the organisation of community life. According to this approach, democratic citizenship is defined in relation to 7 dimensions: (1) the dimension of social belonging (which describes the degree of involvement in associative life), (2) the dimension of social identity (which describes the way individuals position themselves in the social space), (3) the dimension of social tolerance (which describes the degree of acceptance of marginalised social groups subject to risks of discrimination in the immediate proximity), (4) the dimension of social trust (which describes the proclivity towards strengthening social relations), (5) the dimension of social inclusion (which describes the importance given to initiatives supporting minority groups)

(6) the dimension of civic concerns (which describes the interest in certain topics relevant to the functioning of democratic institutions) and (7) the dimension of social freedom (which describes the tendency towards accepting the values of individual and collective autonomy in the public space). It should be noted that the ordering of these dimensions was not established based on reasons related to the statistical considerations inherent in bivariate or multivariate analyses. In particular, the sequence of dimensions was established based on reasons assimilated to the practices of conceptualisation and operationalisation of the notion of democratic citizenship in line with the theoretical foundation of the hypotheses. In order to capture the different nuances related to the influence of cultural consumption on democratic citizenship, each of the indicators is addressed separately in the analysis if the variability of the data allows it, without using extended cumulative measures like aggregated indices as independent variables.

Table 2. Operationalisation of democratic citizenship

| | |
|--|---|
| The dimension of social belonging | Subjective belonging to communities of a cultural or artistic nature |
| | Subjective belonging to communities of people who share the same musical preferences |
| | Subjective belonging to professional development or continuous learning communities |
| | Subjective belonging to communities of people practising a sports activity |
| | Subjective belonging to communities supporting an athlete or sports teams |
| | Subjective belonging to religious or church communities |
| | Subjective belonging to professional communities or associations |
| | Subjective belonging of ecologist (environment protection) groups |
| | Subjective belonging to humanitarian or charitable associations |
| | Subjective belonging to alumni communities of an educational institution |
| | Subjective belonging to communities of people with the same hobbies |
| The dimension of social identity | The importance attributed to the preservation of national identity and patriotic feeling |
| | The importance attributed to the alignment of the measures in the country with the directives of the European Union |
| The dimension of social tolerance | Acceptance of people of other ethnicities as neighbours |
| | Acceptance of foreign workers as neighbours |
| | Acceptance as neighbours of people with LGBTQIA+ identity |
| | Acceptance of people of other religions as neighbours |
| | Accepting as neighbours people who have recently been released from prison |
| The dimension of social trust | The degree of trust in family members |
| | The degree of trust in the people of the neighbourhood/village/community |
| | The degree of trust in people known in person |
| | The degree of trust in people met for the first time |
| | The degree of trust in people of another nationality |
| | The degree of trust in people of another religion |
| | The degree of trust in the information presented in the mass media |
| The dimension of social inclusion | The importance attributed to equality between men and women |
| | The importance attributed to supporting ethnic minorities (Roma, Hungarians, other ethnicities) |
| | The importance attributed to supporting people with LGBTQIA+ identity |
| | The importance attributed to the freedom of every man to practise their religion of choice |
| The dimension of civic concerns | The importance attributed to the protection of nature and environment |
| | The importance attributed to people's participation in voting when there are elections |
| | The importance attributed to employers' respect for employees' rights |
| | The importance attributed to the punishment of delinquent acts in proportion to their gravity |
| | The importance attributed to the fight against corruption |
| | Signing an electronic / online petition |
| | Participating in peaceful protests or street demonstrations |
| | Participating in violent protests or street demonstrations |
| The dimension of social freedom | The importance attributed to the freedom of every man to express their point of view |
| | The vision on the freedom of choice and control over one's life |
| | The importance attributed to freedom in relation to the importance attributed to safety |

Apart from these indicators, which operationalise the concepts of cultural participation and democratic citizenship, a series of socio-demographic variables were included in the analysis, including: gender, age (18-35 years old, 36-50 years old, 51 -65 years old, over 65 years old), level of education (middle school at most, post-high school at most, higher education), income (under 1500 lei, between 1501 and 2500, between 2501 and 4000, over 4000 lei) and the size of the locality (rural, urban under 30,000 inhabitants, urban between 30,001 and 100,000 inhabitants, urban between 100,001 and 200,000 inhabitants and urban over 200,000 inhabitants).

In order to test the theoretical models identified in the specialised literature, which we shall detail henceforward, a series of hypotheses were formulated, each of them having as a foundation the reasons and assumptions integrated with the empirical results obtained in previous studies conducted in different cultural contexts or timeframes. In general, the indicators used to measure democratic attitudes are inspired and adapted from the „Social Values Barometer” study carried out internationally and conducted in Romania by the Research Institute for the Quality of Life (ICCV) within the Romanian Academy.

Table 3. The relationship between theoretical models, hypotheses and indicators

| Theoretical model | Hypothesis | Indicator |
|--|--|--|
| The explanatory model of social capital | The higher the index of cultural participation (public, non-public or online), the greater the ability to accumulate social capital through involvement in associative life. | The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and indicators of social belonging |
| The explanatory model of values cultivation | The higher the index of cultural participation (public, non-public or online), the more strongly the values related to openness to those around are reinforced. | The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and indicators of social identity |
| | | The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and indicators of social tolerance |
| | | The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and indicators of social trust |
| The explanatory model of social mobilisation | The higher the index of cultural participation (public, non-public or online), the greater the predisposition to social mobilisation. | The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and indicators of social inclusion |
| | | The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and indicators of civic concerns |
| The explanatory model of social empowerment | Social status is a shaping factor of the relationship between the indicators of cultural participation and those of democratic citizenship | The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and indicators of social freedom |
| | | The role of indicators of cultural participation in explaining democratic citizenship diminishes when the influence of education, income (or other aspects associated with privileged social positions) is taken into account. |

In order to analyse the data, the following statistical procedures were used:

- a) **Univariate analyses:** These types of analyses are used in order to make an in-depth analysis of the way in which democratic attitudes are distributed at the level of the Romanian society. Univariate analyses involve primary data processing that has an exclusively descriptive purpose. In the context of this study, they are used to identify a series of relevant aspects regarding the consolidation of democratic citizenship (articulation of the feeling of social belonging, the importance attributed to socially relevant themes, the manifestation of social tolerance attitudes, the degree of trust in people around, the preference for freedom of expression and the defining elements of identity construction).
- b) **Bivariate analyses:** On the one hand, bivariate analyses are used to test the direct relationship between forms of cultural participation (operationalised through composite measures such as aggregated indices) and the dimensions that make up democratic citizenship (analysed through specific indicators, analysed, in their turn, individually or overall). On the other hand, bivariate analyses are used to test the relationship between different types of cultural consumption and

socio-demographic variables (categories of gender, age, education level, income and locality size). Specifically, for the bivariate analysis, the Bravais-Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used in order to identify those relationships that are statistically significant, with a view to their subsequent introduction in the multivariate analyses.

- c) **Multivariate analyses:** Multivariate analyses are used to test causal models by identifying the combined influence of multiple factors on components of democratic citizenship. More specifically, logistic regression models are used to identify whether the correlation between the forms of cultural consumption and democratic citizenship, identified through bivariate analyses, is maintained when the effects of socio-demographic variables are controlled. In logistic regression models, the dependent variables (what is explained) are made up of indicators of democratic citizenship, re-coded to match the statistical assumptions of these analyses, and the independent variables (what explains) are made up of those variables corresponding to cultural consumption, as well as those corresponding to socio-demographic data, in accordance with the statistically significant relationships resulting from the application of bivariate analyses.

3. Explanatory theoretical models

This study aims to explore the relationship between cultural life and democracy, in the context of Romanian society. As a theoretical foundation, we shall present a series of explanatory models that define the mechanisms through which participation in cultural life ends up shaping the democratic citizenship.

Theoretical models represent the existing theoretical framework that synthesises different perspectives from academic research on the analysed topics. Theoretical models are intended

to substantiate research hypotheses and directions for analysis and interpretation. They help limit generalisations and provide the framework for analysis focused on particular circumstances. The primary purpose of the social sciences is to provide the conceptual framework for understanding and explaining human behaviour¹², and explanatory theoretical models focus on describing, explaining, and identifying the effects of social practices.

¹² Roger D. Evered, A Typology of Explicative Models, *Technological Forecasting And Social Change* 9,259-211 (1976), p. 260.

78 Explanatory theoretical models

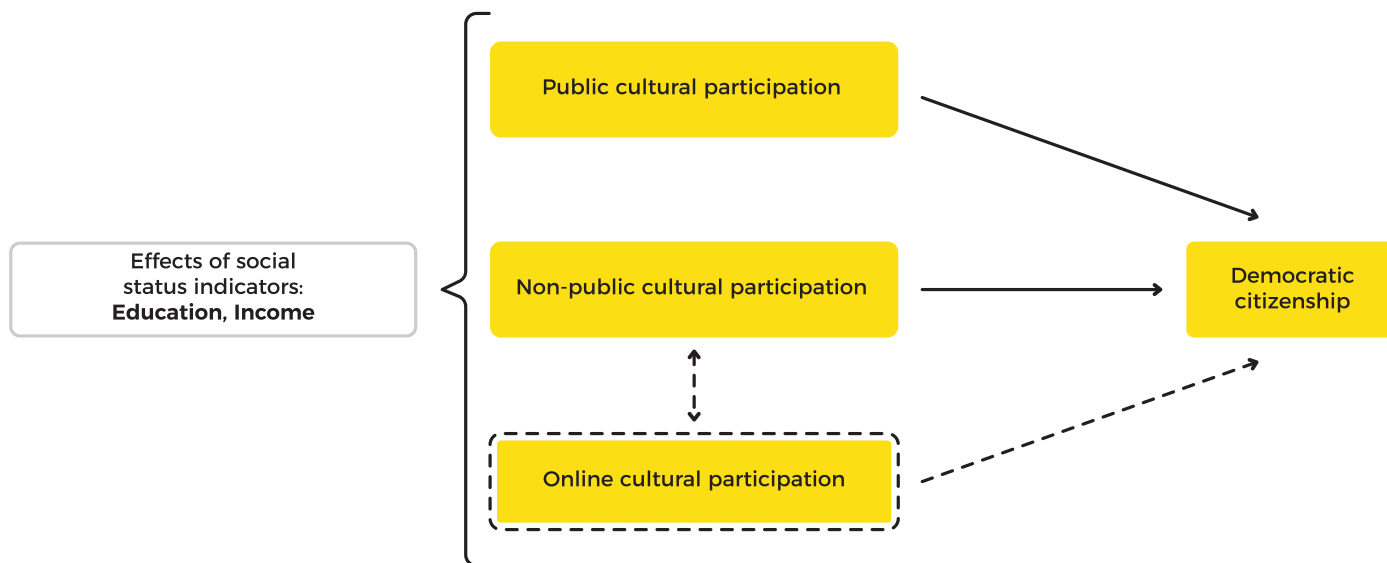
The analysis of specialised literature highlights the fact that democratic citizenship was explained by taking into account the action of economic, political or historical factors. Some authors believe that democratic citizenship is much more likely to be consolidated in economically developed societies, in societies where political institutions function adequately, in societies where an efficient and fair system of government is found, or in societies that have faced fewer wars or natural disasters throughout history. Cultural factors, especially those related to participation in cultural life, were only relatively recently introduced to explain democratic citizenship.

The analysis of the specialised literature highlighted two theoretical models: the model of democratic engagement and the model of democratic disengagement. The model of democratic engagement, in its turn, includes: the explanatory model of social capital, that of values cultivation, that of social mobilisation and the model of social empowerment.

The theoretical model of democratic disengagement includes: the explanatory model of isolation, the explanatory model of alienation and the model of trivialisation.

The present chapter aims to test the relationship between cultural participation and democratic citizenship. We set out to identify which of these theoretical and explanatory models best applies to the existing situation at the level of Romanian society. We considered four explanatory models (1) the social capital model (testing the relationship between involvement in associative life and cultural participation), (2) the value cultivation model (testing the relationship between the values of openness towards others and cultural participation), (3) the social mobilisation model (testing the relationship between interest in civic issues on the public agenda and cultural participation) and (4) the social empowerment model (testing the influence of social status on the relationship between cultural participation and democratic citizenship).

Figure 1. The analytical model used in the study to test the relationship between cultural participation and democratic citizenship



3.1 The theoretical model of democratic engagement

According to the theories identified within the model of democratic engagement, participation in cultural activities would represent a favourable condition for the formation of a democratic citizenship, which can be explained by means of factors that intervene on social capital, on social mobilisation and on the cultivation of values.

The explanatory model of social capital

This model starts from the premise that the accumulation of cultural capital contributes to the activation of some mechanisms that trigger the formation of social capital. The explanatory model of social capital differentiates between the effects of cultural practices that presuppose a form of passivity that is implied by participation by watching a cultural act („watching activities”) and the effects of cultural practices that presuppose a form of involvement, communion or sociality („joining activities”)¹³. The model identifies a range of leisure activities which have the capacity to generate social capital and which, as a result, are considered to be essential elements in the consolidation of a democratic society¹⁴. Even the forms of cultural consumption carried out in the non-public space, which were usually criticised for producing the phenomenon of isolation, may contribute to an activation of social capital, to the extent that they manage to coagulate a mobilising force with reverberations on community development.

The explanatory model of social capital considers that cultural activities play an important role in the formation of a democratic citizenship, taking into account their social

component in particular. Some of the cultural activities are essentially social events that manage to bring people into contact with each other and foster a sense of community by creating collective memories and stories shared with others¹⁵. These types of cultural activities contribute to the strengthening of informal structures that bring people together around common topics of interest, thus facilitating the production of social interactions that can be cultivated on a longer term. Likewise, a series of cultural activities are likely to bring together people who share the same tastes and preferences, which contributes both to the cultivation of trusting relationships with those around them, and to the activation of the norm of reciprocity in interactions with others. In addition, those cultural activities that take place in a social setting contribute to the formation of an awareness of the presence of others and the acceptance of cultural diversity. Through all the previously described mechanisms, the aspects related to sociality subscribed to cultural activities nurture the care towards people around and the willingness to act in the common interest, aspects that are absolutely necessary for the formation of a democratic citizenship¹⁶.

More recent studies have confirmed the explanatory model of social capital, showing that it is not the environment of cultural consumption itself that is relevant in the articulation of democratic citizenship, but the artistic content within the cultural products made available to the public: any form of cultural consumption can support democracy if it manages to direct the attention of a group to topics of social relevance¹⁷. For example, the results of such studies have shown that forms of cultural consumption with an informative nature are able to activate social capital to a greater extent than activities

13 Dhavan Shah et al., 'Nonrecursive Models of Internet Use and Community Engagement: Questioning Whether Time Spent Online Erodes Social Capital', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79.4 (2002), 964–87. (p. 967).

14 JL Hemingway, 'Leisure, Social Capital, and Democratic Citizenship', *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31.2 (1999), 150–65.

15 H.K. Anheier et al., *Cultural Participation and Inclusive Societies. A Thematic Report Based on the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy* (Council of Europe, 2017).

16 Idem.

17 Dhavan V. Shah, 'Civic Engagement, Interpersonal Trust, and Television Use: An Individual-Level Assessment of Social Capital', *Political Psychology*, 19.3 (1998), 469–96.

that mainly fulfill recreational or entertainment functions¹⁸. It is also worth noting that, according to the results of some consumer studies, the participants in performances and the art consumers are more active in their communities and participate to a greater extent in associative life, being thus more anchored in the values that lead to the adoption of a democratic culture¹⁹. The degree of participation in cultural activities is closely related to both the level of social trust and the predisposition to support democratic institutions, not only at the national level, but also at the individual level²⁰. In support of the explanatory model of social capital, the positive correlations that have resulted between the development of the cultural sector and the ability to form sustainable communities or between the number of cultural events held in a space and the development of the community can also be brought into discussion²¹.

The validity of the explanatory model of social capital turns out to be even greater with regard to the use of the Internet for cultural purposes. In certain studies, a series of intergenerational differences have been observed regarding the possibility of cultural activities to strengthen democratic citizenship: while for the elderly people the print media and the radio are the most important vectors associated with democratic attitudes, for adults television plays a more important role, and for young people the Internet is a decisive factor²². Studies have shown that

- 18 Elizabeth Stoycheff, Erik C. Nisbet și Dmitry Epstein, 'Differential Effects of Capital-Enhancing and Recreational Internet Use on Citizens' Demand for Democracy', *Communication Research*, 47.7 (2020), 1034–55.
- 19 Henry Fogel & Dana Gioia, *The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life* (National Endowment for the Arts, 2008).
- 20 Liam Delaney and Emily Keaney, *Cultural Participation, Social Capital and Civil Renewal in the United Kingdom: Statistical Evidence from National and International Survey Data* (Economic and Social Research Institute (Dublin) & Institute for Public Policy Research (London), 2006).
- 21 Sharon Jeannotte, 'Singing Alone? The Contribution of Cultural Capital to Social Cohesion and Sustainable Communities', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 9.1 (2003), 35–49.
- 22 Dhavan V. Shah, Nojin Kwak and R. Lance Holbert, "'Connecting" and "Disconnecting" with Civic Life: Patterns of Internet Use and the Production

participation in online cultural activities favours the formation of a sense of trust and generalised reciprocity, which results in the expansion of the online-built social capital into the offline environment²³. Patricia Moy and colleagues showed that online cultural activities explain civic participation, social participation and membership in formal groups: the higher the degree of Internet use, the greater the degree of interaction with public authorities and the degree of involvement in volunteering²⁴. We emphasise, however, that other authors have highlighted the ambivalent effects of the use of the Internet for cultural purposes (inter alia) on the users' civic behaviour: sometimes this may lead to slippages within the democratic system of values (see the fake news phenomenon)²⁵. Other researchers have observed that the high degree of Internet connectivity explains the high degree of organisational membership, a relationship explained by the fact that online media have the ability to provide additional resources in the formation of interpersonal relationships²⁶. Some authors have highlighted the fact that the development of interactive digital media is a phenomenon associated with the formation of a democratic citizenship, as a result of the fact that new technologies offer users easier and more accessible possibilities to be active in the community²⁷. This is more valid for intensively digitised societies, unlike Romania, where digitisation is still in its

of Social Capital', *Political Communication*, 18.2 (2001), 141–62.

- 23 Tetsuro Kobayashi, Ken'ichi Ikeda and Kakuko Miyata, 'Social Capital Online: Collective Use of the Internet and Reciprocity as Lubricants of Democracy', *Information Communication and Society*, 9.5 (2006), 582–611.
- 24 Patricia Moy et al., 'Linking Dimensions of Internet Use and Civic Engagement', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82.3 (2005), 571–86.
- 25 Vian Bakir and Andrew McStay, 'Fake News and The Economy of Emotions, Digital Journalism', 6.2 (2018), 154–175.
- 26 Barry Wellman et al., 'Does the Internet Increase, Decrease, or Supplement Social Capital? Social Networks, Participation, and Community Commitment', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 3, 2001, 436–55.
- 27 Dhavan Shah et al., 'Nonrecursive Models of Internet Use and Community Engagement: Questioning Whether Time Spent Online Erodes Social Capital', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79.4 (2002), 964–87.

infancy. Last, but not least, a strong association between social media usage and civic participation has been highlighted²⁸.

The explanatory model of value cultivation:

According to the explanatory model of value cultivation, cultural consumption contributes to the formation of value systems and attitudes compatible with the development of a democratic society. Cultural activities involve exposing participants to heterogeneous ideas, facilitating contact between several cultures and making it possible to expand the horizons of knowledge or experience of those involved. All this stimulates thinking in alternative ways, which implies the formation of favourable attitudes towards freedom of expression. At the same time, the exposure to cultural contents represents a communicative act that offers diverse perspectives towards the world and life, which cultivates a set of norms based on valuing diversity, openness, tolerance or empathy towards those around. Cultural participation outlines a space for the circulation of ideas about how a society works, offering a perspective on the problems that exist in that society or on the types of actions that could be taken to solve them. Last but not least, cultural participation contributes to the formation of identity constructions that work in a democratic society, by circulating specific symbols or by creating opportunities to express individuality.

Some of the empirical approaches in the field have highlighted the positive impact that active cultural consumption and passive cultural consumption have on social cohesion, group membership and the adoption of pro-social behaviour²⁹. The study carried out by the Council of Europe on a sample of

20 European countries highlights the fact that, at the national level, cultural participation is very strongly associated with attitudes of social tolerance, with trust in people around and with participation in community life, but its association with valuing freedom of expression is weaker³⁰. Furthermore, some data have shown that spending free time in front of the TV explains the attitudinal component of social capital (based on cognitive aspects) to a greater extent, while explaining the structural component (based on relational aspects)³¹. to a lower extent. At the same time, participation in performing arts and activities practised within cultural institutions favours the formation of altruistic attitudes, tolerance and social trust, explaining the willingness of society members to get involved in civic actions³². In the same order, visiting art museums turns out to be a very important influencing factor for supporting minorities, for adopting liberal attitudes over conservative ones, and for the likelihood of participating in the culture of critical discourse³³.

Studies targeting the value cultivation model have shown that cultural participation in the online fulfills the same roles as cultural participation in general. The data show that the use of the Internet for cultural purposes contributes to the reduction of information uncertainty, having a direct influence on the acquisition of information on social issues³⁴. However, the acquisition of information could translate into civic action only

28 Homero Gil de Zúñiga, 'Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17.3 (2012), 319–36.

29 Australian Expert Group in Industry Studies of the University of Western Sydney, *Social Impacts of Participation in the Arts and Cultural Activities. Stage Two Report. Evidence, Issues and Recommendations* (The Australian Expert Group in Industry Studies, University of Western Sydney, 2004).

30 H.K. Anheier et al., *Cultural Participation and Inclusive Societies. A Thematic Report Based on the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy* (Council of Europe, 2017).

31 Marc Hooghe, 'Watching Television and Civic Engagement: Disentangling the Effects of Time, Programs, and Stations', *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 7.2 (2002), 84–104.

32 Kelly Leroux and Anna Bernadska, 'Impact of the Arts on Individual Contributions to US Civil Society', *Journal of Civil Society*, 10.2 (2014), 144–64.

33 Paul DiMaggio, 'Are Art-Museum Visitors Different from Other People? The Relationship between Attendance and Social and Political Attitudes in the United States', *Poetics*, 24.2–4 (1996), 161–80.

34 Michael Xenos and Patricia Moy, 'Direct and Differential Effects of the Internet on Political and Civic Engagement', *Journal of Communication*, 57.4 (2007), 704–18.

under certain conditions. At the same time, the approaches in this category show that the use of the Internet in general acts on the system of beliefs and values, especially in societies that are in the phase of consolidation of democratic institutions, but not in autocratic regimes³⁵. Last but not least, the use of the Internet for cultural purposes correlates with the development of a global identity: the greater the degree of participation in cultural activities in the online environment, the more pronounced the degree of belonging to an international community³⁶.

The explanatory model of social mobilisation

According to the theories within the explanatory model of social mobilisation, participation in cultural activities contributes to the development of critical thinking and formation of civic skills. Cultural consumption is considered by some authors to be an element that makes people more aware of the events taking place in the world in which they live, cultivating the interest in participating in public decision-making and, through this, acting on the formation of democratic citizenship.

In support of the explanatory model of social mobilisation, some researchers brought into discussion the results according to which people whose cultural consumption is directed towards the side of social information through the mass media develop their democratic attitudes to a greater extent³⁷. There is also a differentiation within information practices: people who watch news on television engage in less civic action in comparison to people who get information from print media or

radio broadcasts³⁸. On the one hand, this relationship between the participation in cultural activities and the civic involvement appears to be significant regardless of the action of education or the effects of other socio-demographic variables³⁹. On the other hand, the relationship between the participation in cultural activities and the civic involvement appears to be mediated by the intervention of certain factors: (1) media consumption has the ability to influence democratic citizenship only if the content circulated focuses on the transmission of civic messages or involves exposing the public to certain information that favours the organisation of discussions with other colleagues or friends⁴⁰ and (2) people who take part in various cultural practices perceive themselves as having more knowledge about how democratic institutions work and, as such, they show a predisposition to participate more frequently in relevant civic activities⁴¹.

It can be stated that, through all these mechanisms, participation in cultural activities in combination with education generates a capacity for social mobilisation, as media contents make people more aware of the relevance of certain social themes⁴². The flip side of this situation is that certain media exposures give people reasons to be dissatisfied and interfere with optimism about how society will evolve in the future⁴³.

35 Erik C. Nisbet, Elizabeth Stoycheff and Katy E. Pearce, 'Internet Use and Democratic Demands: A Multinational, Multilevel Model of Internet Use and Citizen Attitudes About Democracy', *Journal of Communication*, 62.2 (2012), 249–65.

36 Nojin Kwak, Nathaniel Poor și Marko M. Skoric, 'Honey, I Shrunk the World! The Relation Between Internet Use and International Engagement', *Mass Communication and Society*, 9.2 (2006), 189–213.

37 Pippa Norris, 'Does Television Erode Social Capital? A Reply to Putnam', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 29.3 (1996), 474–80.

38 Sonia Livingstone și Tim Markham, 'The Contribution of Media Consumption to Civic Participation', *British Journal of Sociology*, 59.2 (2008), 351–71.

39 Desirée Campagna, Giulio Caperna and Valentina Montalto, 'Does Culture Make a Better Citizen? Exploring the Relationship Between Cultural and Civic Participation in Italy', *Social Indicators Research*, 149.2 (2020), 657–86.

40 Dhavan V. Shah et al., *Information and Expression in a Digital Age: Modeling Internet Effects on Civic Participation*, *Communication Research*, 2005, XXXII.

41 Sei-Hill Kim and Mijeong Han, 'Media Use and Participatory Democracy in South Korea', *Mass Communication and Society*, 8.2 (2005), 133–53.

42 Kenneth Newton, 'Mass Media Effects: Mobilization or Media Malaise?', *British Journal of Political Science*, 29.4 (1999), 577–99.

43 Eric M. Uslaner, 'Social Capital, Television, and the "Mean World": Trust, Optimism, and Civic Participation', *Political Psychology*, 19.3 (1998), 441–67.

The explanatory model of civic mobilisation has acquired a series of nuances in the context of the development of the digital society and the advancement of mass media. Some authors believe that the use of the Internet triggers a force of civic mobilisation that derives both from the power of social networks to facilitate the organisation and coordination of collective actions⁴⁴, and from the ability of online platforms to show users that they are not the only ones with certain interests or concerns⁴⁵. Certain empirical approaches have highlighted the fact that accessing certain websites (of public authorities, cultural organisations or discussion forums) correlates with the adoption of democratic attitudes, while the preference for using the Internet strictly for entertainment purposes diminishes the tendency for civic participation⁴⁶. Some researchers have observed a correlation between the development of the Internet infrastructure and the perception of the consolidation of democratic culture, but also between the degree of individual use of the Internet and the need for the existence of democratic institutions for the proper functioning of society⁴⁷. Such correlations have become increasingly strong over time as opportunities for civic engagement have increased as a result of the diversification of digital media⁴⁸.

44 Dhavan Shah et al., 'Nonrecursive Models of Internet Use and Community Engagement: Questioning Whether Time Spent Online Erodes Social Capital', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79.4 (2002), 964–87.

45 Shelley Boulianne, 'Social Media Use and Participation: A Meta-Analysis of Current Research', *Information Communication and Society*, 18.5 (2015), 524–38.

46 Tom P. Bakker and Claes H. de Vreese, 'Good News for the Future? Young People, Internet Use, and Political Participation', *Communication Research*, 38.4 (2011), 451–70, (p. 461).

47 Elizabeth Stoycheff and Erik C. Nisbet, 'What's the Bandwidth for Democracy? Deconstructing Internet Penetration and Citizen Attitudes About Governance', *Political Communication*, 31.4 (2014), 628–46.

48 Shelley Boulianne, 'Twenty Years of Digital Media Effects on Civic and Political Participation', *Communication Research*, 47.7 (2020), 947–66.

However, certain empirical results have shown that the influence of the Internet on the formation of democratic citizenship is much more complex than it appears at first sight, involving multiple causal relationships. In this sense, some researchers have highlighted the fact that the use of the Internet correlates with civic participation, since both variables are associated with political interest, which in fact represents the element that can influence both civic participation and the use of the Internet. Moreover, some studies have shown that not only can it be said that Internet use influences civic participation, but also that civic participation acts on the Internet use, which implies a dynamic two-way relationship and makes it impossible to precisely identify the causes or effects involved⁴⁹.

The explanatory model of social empowerment

The theories within the explanatory model of social empowerment emphasise the fact that there is not a positive correlation between cultural consumption and democratic citizenship in all situations, but the related influences are conditioned by the degree of access to material or symbolic resources. In other words, the socio-economic status represents the necessary ingredient for cultural participation to have effects on the consolidation of democratic citizenship through the mechanisms associated with social capital, social mobilisation or value cultivation. Structural position is a conditioning factor, which means that cultural participation favours the emergence of democratic attitudes only among people who occupy privileged positions in the hierarchical system, and not among those who are deprived of access to education, income or other resources.

Such a perspective is supported by the results of studies showing that cultural participation is related to the adoption of democratic values only because cultural participation

49 Shelley Boulianne, 'Social Media Use and Participation: A Meta-Analysis of Current Research', *Information Communication and Society*, 18.5 (2015), 524–38, p. 528.

explains the position in the social hierarchy⁵⁰. The authors of these studies showed that the influence of education on democratic citizenship is greater than the influence of cultural consumption⁵¹. Likewise, the influences of mass media on community integration, on knowledge of the functioning of democratic institutions and on involvement in civic actions do not appear to be valid for minority populations or for people in conditions of vulnerability or marginalisation⁵². This is why it is believed that the presence of an activation potential (most often given by education and income) is necessary so that exposure to cultural content in various forms can contribute to the consolidation of solid democratic reference points⁵³.

3.2 The theoretical model of democratic disengagement

Another series of studies tends to outline a theoretical model of democratic disengagement, highlighting that cultural participation evolves in the direction of eroding democratic attitudes and behaviours⁵⁴. In this theoretical discussion, cultural participation is particularly assimilated to media consumption, and the differential effects of

preferences for certain information sources on civic engagement are analysed. Thus, studies in this category show that newspaper and magazine readers show a higher degree of support for democratic values, as compared to TV show viewers or Internet users⁵⁵. Considering these aspects, certain forms of media consumption are considered to produce negative effects on the democratic citizenship through three processes: isolation, alienation and trivialisation.

The explanatory model of isolation

Some authors believe that media forms of cultural participation lead to the "privatisation of leisure activities⁵⁶, which, on the one hand, prevents the engagement of cultural consumers in activities that involve the building of significant relationships with those around them and, on the other hand, it introduces a series of psychological barriers in social interactions⁵⁷. According to these explanations, certain forms of cultural participation favour weak civic engagement, as some types of cultural products end up keeping people captive in certain media universes, acting directly on the time capital⁵⁸ and reducing opportunities for engagement in public life⁵⁹.

50 Paul DiMaggio et al., 'From Unequal Access to Differentiated Use: A Literature Review and Agenda for Research on Digital Inequality', in *Social Inequality*, ed. Kathryn Neckerman (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), pp. 355–400.

51 Karin Gwinn Wilkins, 'The Role of Media in Public Disengagement from Political Life', *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 44.4 (2000), 569–80. (p. 577).

52 Teresa Mastin, 'Media Use and Civic Participation in the African-American: Exploring Participation Among Professionals and Nonprofessionals', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 71.1 (2000), 115–27.

53 Liam Delaney and Emily Keaney, *Cultural Participation, Social Capital and Civil Renewal in the United Kingdom: Statistical Evidence from National and International Survey Data* (Economic and Social Research Institute (Dublin) & Institute for Public Policy Research (London), 2006).

54 Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperback, 2000).

55 John C. Besley, 'The Role of Entertainment Television and Its Interactions with Individual Values in Explaining Political Participation', *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 11.2 (2006), 41–63.

56 Robert Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', *Journal of Democracy*, 6.1 (1995), 65–78.

57 Robert Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', *Journal of Democracy*, 6.1 (1995), 65–78.

58 Michael Peterson and Robert Kraut quoted by Dhavan Shah et al., 'Nonrecursive Models of Internet Use and Community Engagement: Questioning Whether Time Spent Online Erodes Social Capital', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79.4 (2002), 964–87, (p. 965).

59 Patricia Moy, Dietram A Scheufele and R Lance, 'Television Use and Social Capital: Testing Putnam's Time Displacement Hypothesis', *Mass Communication and Society*, 2.1–2 (2011), 27–45, (p. 51).

Explanatory model of alienation

Other authors consider that media forms of cultural participation articulate a sense of social insecurity as a result of the fact that they expose consumers (in their capacity as television viewers or internet users) to messages that signal continuously and repeatedly the existence of dangers and threats in society⁶⁰. According to this perspective, certain types of cultural media consumption can contribute to the decrease of the reserve of social trust, thus having indirect consequences on the formation and consolidation of democratic citizenship⁶¹.

The explanatory model of trivialisation

A number of researchers believe that the media forms of cultural participation, through the mode of exposure, produce a trivialisation of the aspects on the public agenda, thus minimising the importance of certain subjects and interfering with the manifestation of interest in the events taking place in society⁶². According to this explanatory model, certain forms of cultural consumption contribute to the loss of the sense of reality, producing a disorientation of individuals in relation to the world in which they live. The situation is presented by the authors as being all the more worrying among young people, whose interest in the topics on the public agenda turns out to be diminished and who, according to studies, have a less consolidated identity, have less knowledge about the way democratic institutions work and a lower degree of involvement in associative life⁶³.

However, the democratic disengagement model has received a number of criticisms and has been challenged by other researchers for multiple reasons. One of the critics points out that the studies that confirmed the model of democratic disengagement focused exclusively on the intensity of media consumption (using indicators of time spent interacting with mass media), but extended their conclusions to a much broader domain of cultural participation. Studies within this theoretical model are criticised for ignoring aspects of engagement patterns, by including measurements of the type of content received, or by emphasising personal motivations or subjective consumption preferences.

Furthermore, other criticisms of the model of democratic disengagement show that related studies are very tightly anchored in the philosophy of technological determinism, considering that the impact of cultural consumption on democratic citizenship depends, to the greatest extent, on the intrinsic characteristics of the communication medium. The development of the technological infrastructure and the diversification of the ways of using the Internet have shown that the model of democratic disengagement is not supported in today's society, since the forms of cultural consumption in the online can contribute to reducing the costs of civic engagement, they may represent viable sources of information and of general knowledge fostering, they can promote openness and autonomy and represent opportunities for identity expression. All these aspects demonstrate that the impact of cultural consumption on the democratic level is generated through much more complex mechanisms pertaining to personal and social characteristics or differentiated consumption patterns, and it does not represent an exclusive function of the dominant communication and information media.

60 Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperback, 2000).

61 John Brehm and Wendy Rahn, 'Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital', *American Journal of Political Science*, 41.3 (1997), 999–102.

62 Patricia Moy and Dietram A Scheufele, 'Media Effects of Political and Social Trust', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77.4 (1996), 744–59.

63 Kenneth Newton, 'Mass Media Effects: Mobilization or Media Malaise?', *British Journal of Political Science*, 29.4 (1999), 577–99.

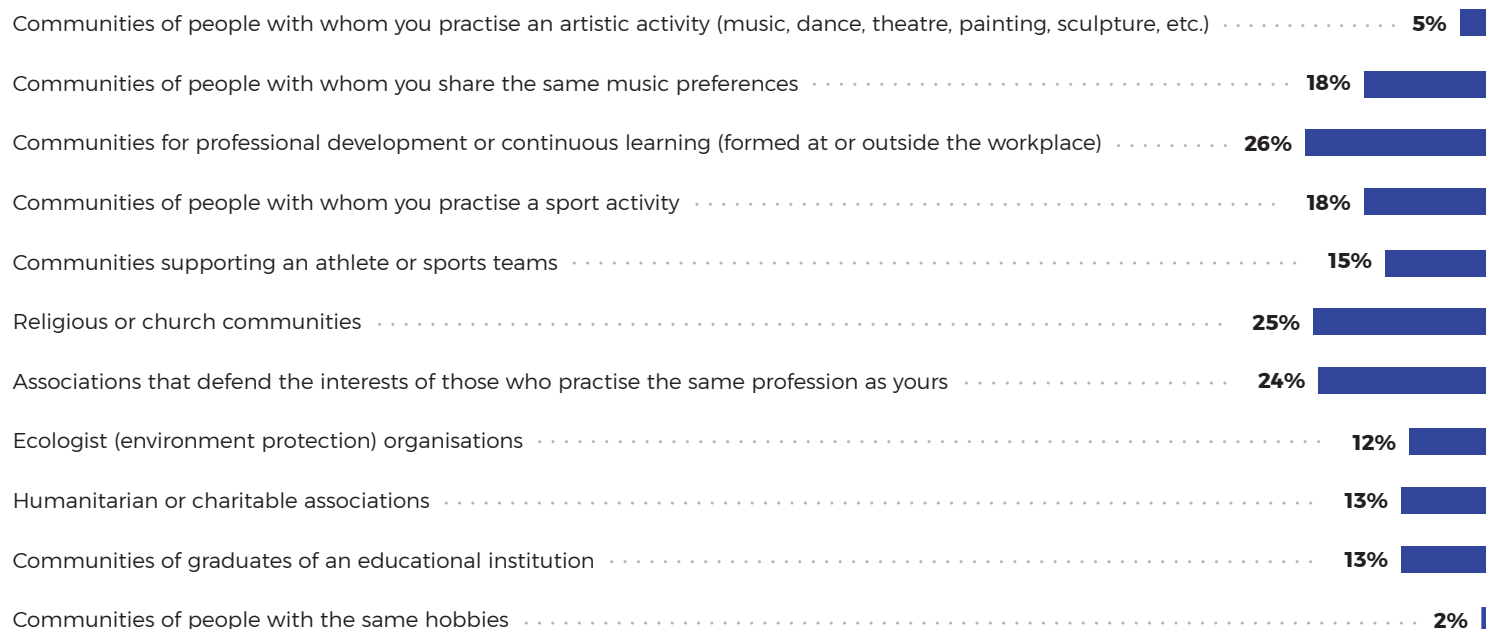
4. Statistical data analysis

4.1 The dimension of social belonging

In general, at the level of the Romanian society, the degree of belonging to formal or informal communities is relatively low. Moreover, the diversity of the communities wherein the respondents perform activities is not very great either. In this context, the best consolidated sense of belonging emerges in the case of occupational communities: 26% of respondents state that they are part of professional development and continuous learning

communities, and 24% assume the status of members in associations that defend the interests of those who practise a similar profession. Furthermore, a considerable percentage of respondents (25%) are part of formally or informally constituted religious or church communities. The feeling of belonging to the community is also noticeable in relation to practising a sports activity (18%) and supporting an athlete or sports teams (15%). A much smaller percentage of respondents are part of alumni communities, humanitarian associations, environmental, cultural or leisure organisations (under 15%).

Graph 1. Percentage of people who report a sense of belonging to various social communities
(Please tell me if you are a member of one of the following types of communities, including online.)



The position in the social structure seems to explain the involvement in associative life. More precisely, we can notice that people in less privileged social positions are less involved in communities, which amplifies the tendency of social marginalisation. For example, the correlation coefficients resulting from the statistical analysis show that the feeling of belonging to the community: (1) is more significant among men than among women, (2) is more significant among young people than among the elderly, (3) is more significant among people with a high education level than among people with a low level of education, (4) is more significant among those with higher income than among those experiencing financial problems, and (5) is more significant among those who come from localities with a larger number of inhabitants than among those who live in small localities.

It is worth noting that the data show cultural consumption as a factor favouring the manifestation of the feeling of belonging to at least one community. This is true not only in terms of public cultural participation or online-specific participation (based on forms that to a greater extent presuppose the awareness of the presence of others, engaging the group in joint activities), but also in terms of cultural participation in the non-public space (based on forms that rather involve individual consumption). In other words, the people who are more frequently involved in several cultural activities, regardless of their nature, are those who are part of social communities, having a strong sense of belonging.

Members who belong to professional development or continuous learning communities (formed at or outside the workplace) listen to music, watch TV programmes and go to the mall (for shopping, movies, restaurants) the most frequently. People who go more often to the theatre or to the library, who visit a historical monument or museum, an exhibition or art gallery, who read newspapers/magazines or books, listen to music or watch TV programmes are members of professional development or continuous

learning communities (formed at or outside the workplace). As expected, communities of individuals who share the same music preferences are mainly made from people who listen to music or watch TV programmes the most.

In addition to this, the data show that the sense of social belonging is not strictly articulated in relation to the cultural or entertainment activities performed within the group, but also to the activities that can be mainly performed individually or in a more restricted group setting. Thus, we can notice that people who are part of at least one community visit museums, exhibitions, art galleries, historical monuments or archaeological sites more often, they read books more often, go to the cinema more often and attend theatre, classical or symphonic music performances more often. Furthermore, the people who show a consolidated sense of social belonging go more often on trips in the country or abroad, they are also the ones who practice sports more often or who go to restaurants, pubs or cafés more often. Another element that can be pointed out is the fact that the frequency of participation in sports competitions as a spectator is a factor that strengthens group identity.



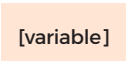
All these aspects disprove, to some extent, the results of previous studies which showed that the participation in activities of an elitist cultural nature („highbrow culture“) has the ability to activate social capital to a higher extent than the participation in activities which have a more pronounced entertainment component. For example, the effect that the frequency of going to the cinema exerts on the possibility of accumulating social capital is similar to the effect exerted by the frequency of going to theatre performances and symphonic or classical music concerts. Last but not least, as expected, the data show that people who use social networks exhibit a stronger sense of belonging to a community. However, accessing websites with cultural content does not appear to be a significant factor in explaining the participation in associative life.

The results of our study highlight a process that shows that the activation of cultural capital can contribute to an activation of social capital. The influence of cultural consumption on the feeling of social belonging does not disappear in the aggregate models where the indirect effects of different socio-demographic variables are controlled. More precisely, the effects of cultural activities on social belonging are manifested independently of the influence of education or income. In addition, the index of non-public participation appears as the most important explanatory factor of social belonging, followed by the index of online cultural participation and the index of public cultural participation.

Table 4. The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and the manifestation of the feeling of social belonging

| | Manifestation of a sense of social belonging to at least one community (including online) |
|--|---|
| Index of public cultural participation | |
| Index of non-public cultural participation | |
| Index of online cultural participation | |

Note:

-  → statistically significant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from both bivariate and multivariate analyses)
-  → statistically insignificant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from bivariate analyses)
-  [variable] → statistically significant correlation resulted from bivariate analyses, but which, following multivariate analyses, is cancelled by the influence of the variables indicated in square brackets

4.2 The dimension of social identity

National landmarks seem to be somewhat more important than European landmarks in the building of identity constructs: 85% of respondents consider the preservation of the national identity and patriotic feeling to be important and very important, while 82% of participants in the study attribute high and very high importance to the alignment of measures in the country to the directives of the European Union. However, the two aspects do not appear as divergent topics of interest, but rather as complementary elements: 40% of all respondents consider that both the aspects related to the preservation of the patriotic feeling and those related to the alignment of the national measures to the directives of the European Union are concomitantly very important.

The preservation of the national identity and patriotic feeling turns out to be a topical theme mainly for young people, with high education, with high income and from localities with a larger number of inhabitants. The manifestation of interest in aligning the measures in the country with the directives of the European Union seems to be a more topical issue for women, for young people and for people from urban areas.

Both the concern for the preservation of the national identity and the manifestation of the preference for a European identity are aspects that are in a direct connection with all three forms of cultural consumption. Consequently, people who participate more frequently in several activities in the public and non-public space, as well as in the online are the ones who tend to consider that the patriotic feeling and European value orientations are equally important or very important aspects in strengthening a democratic society.

Moreover, we can notice that the predisposition towards the preservation of the national identity and patriotic feeling correlates statistically significantly to a greater extent with the participation in theatre performances, with visiting museums, exhibitions or art galleries, with participation in music festivals, going on trips in the country and reading newspapers or

magazines. In contrast, the preference for aligning the measures in the country with the European Union directives correlates statistically significantly with going to the cinema, with visiting historical monuments or archaeological sites and with reading books in printed or electronic format. It is worth noting that going on trips abroad does not correlate statistically significantly either with the predisposition towards the preservation of the national identity and patriotic feeling, nor with the preference for aligning the measures in the country with the directives of the European Union. However, such a result may be influenced by the fact that the reference period of the study overlapped with the pandemic period, which greatly affected spatial mobility and the possibility of carrying out some travel activities.



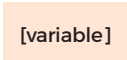
On the one hand, the analysis highlights the fact that using social networks and obtaining information from the print press (newspapers, magazines) simultaneously explain the assimilation of national identity landmarks, as well as the assimilation of European identity landmarks, thus confirming the fact that in the public conscience there is no divergence between the valorisation of the preservation of the patriotic feeling and the preference for aligning the measures in the country with the directives of the European Union. On the other hand, the consumption of TV programmes and the use of social networks do not correlate statistically significantly with any of the indicators that make up the social identity dimension.

However, the data show that it is not exposure to certain cultural content that would necessarily make people more likely to adopt patriotic attitudes, but education is the decisive factor, as its influence is maintained when analysing the aggregate effects. It should be noted, on the other hand, that the frequency of participation in public cultural activities continues to explain the predisposition to put national decisions in a global context, but not the tendency towards the preservation of the national identity and patriotic feeling: people who participate in cultural activities in the public space perceive to a greater extent the need to align the measures in the country with the directives of the European Union.

Table 5. The relationship between indicators of cultural consumption and aspects of social identity

| | High or very high importance attributed to ... | |
|--|---|--|
| | ... the preservation of the national identity and patriotic feeling | ... aligning the measures in the country with the directives of the European Union |
| | B | B |
| Index of public cultural participation | [education] | |
| Index of non-public cultural participation | [education] | [other aspects] |
| Index of online cultural participation | [education] | [other aspects] |

Note:

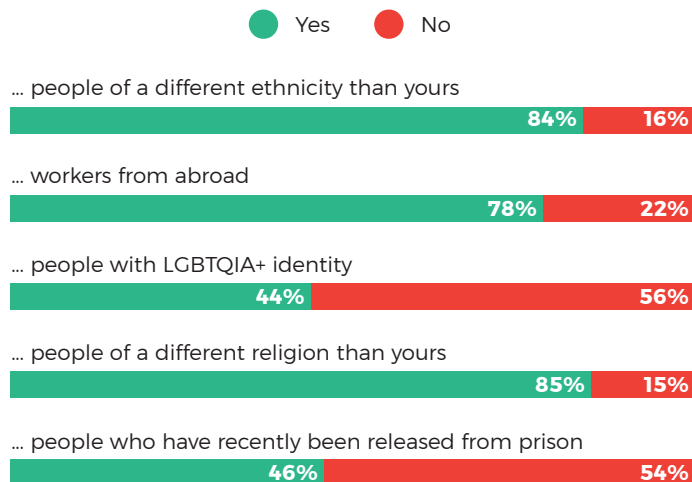
-  → statistically significant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from both bivariate and multivariate analyses)
-  → statistically insignificant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from bivariate analyses)
-  [variable] → statistically significant correlation resulted from bivariate analyses, but which, following multivariate analyses, is cancelled by the influence of the variables indicated in square brackets

4.3 The dimension of social tolerance

The level of tolerance records considerable variations depending on the social groups of belonging (socio-demographic categories). The highest degree of social tolerance is recorded for people of different religion and ethnicity. A relatively high degree of acceptance is manifested in the case of foreign workers. The results highlight that people with LGBTQIA+ identity and people who have recently been released from prison represent the social segments with the highest risk of being discriminated against: more than half of the respondents would feel disturbed if they had as neighbours people who have a sexual identity different

from the majority or who have been convicted of crimes. What is important to emphasise is that social tolerance was measured with reference to the acceptance of these people in the proximity of the residence space („would you accept as neighbours”), and the differences can be explained by the subjective evaluation of the consequences of this proximity on one’s own person or their family.

Graph 2. The level of acceptance of people belonging to certain social groups („Would you accept as neighbours...?”)



On the one hand, it is worth noting that women show a more dismissive attitude towards foreign workers, towards people with LGBTQIA+ identity and towards people who have recently been released from prison than men. On the other hand, young people show a higher level of social tolerance towards people of another ethnicity, towards workers from abroad, towards people with a sexual identity different from the majority and towards people of a different religion. In contrast, from the age viewpoint, there are no differences in the social acceptance of people recently released from prison. Also, what appears significant is the fact that people with high education, people with high income

and people living in urban areas show more tolerant attitudes towards all the social categories under study.

Cultural consumption correlates statistically significantly with the degree of social tolerance. The situation is valid not only with regard to cultural participation in the public space, but also with regard to cultural participation in the non-public space or in the online environment. In other words, people who participate more frequently in cultural activities, regardless of their type, embrace to a greater extent attitudes of social tolerance towards all those social categories for which, in general, there is a tendency of marginalisation (people of other ethnicity, foreign workers, people with LGBTQIA+ identity, people of another religion and people recently released from prison).

Moreover, the specific cultural activities that explain social tolerance to the greatest extent are the following: attending online courses or training programmes, attending entertainment shows, going to the cinema, watching movies broadcasted online, attending to theatre performances and visiting museums, exhibitions or art galleries. The listed cultural activities simultaneously correlate with social acceptance of people of other ethnicities, foreign workers, people with LGBTQIA+ identity, people of other religions, and people recently released from prison.

Tolerance towards minority groups is also significantly explained by the frequency of getting information from the print media: the more frequently people read content from newspapers and magazines, the more they display more tolerant attitudes towards all five groups considered in the study. More frequent use of social media explains a higher level of tolerance towards people of other ethnicity, towards foreign workers, towards people with LGBTQIA+ identity and towards people of other religion, but not towards people who have been released from prison recently. Moreover, accessing cultural websites statistically significantly explains the tolerance towards ethnic minorities, immigrants and sexual minorities. Another relevant aspect is the degree of tolerance of people

who spend more time watching programmes or shows on TV and who tend to show more discriminatory attitudes towards people with LGBTQIA+ identity.

Nevertheless, the exposure to online cultural content is the most important explanatory factor of social tolerance, given that the index attributed to this form of cultural consumption remains statistically significant in explaining the degree of acceptance of all categories prone to marginalisation, even when the concurrent influences of other different socio-demographic characteristics are taken into account.

The effects of public and non-public cultural participation fade in the aggregate analyses, given that the manifestation of the attitude of social acceptance towards people of another ethnicity and towards foreign workers is explained by education. A similar trend is found in accepting as neighbours people who have recently been released from prison. In this



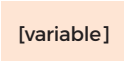
situation, a significant role in explaining the social acceptability of people convicted of crimes is played by income, which thus subtracts from the influence of cultural consumption in public and non-public spaces.

On the other hand, both the online cultural participation, and the non-public cultural consumption are significant factors in explaining the social acceptability of people with LGBTQIA+ identity, along with age, education and the size of the locality. A similar pattern also results when considering the acceptance of people of another religion as neighbours. In this context, we can notice that the level of social tolerance is higher in smaller localities, which indicates the operation of a solidarity logic, and the attitudes of social acceptance turn out to be dependent on the cohesion factors involved in strengthening relationships and in the processes subscribed to direct interactions.

Table 6. The relationship between cultural consumption indicators and aspects of social tolerance

| | Acceptance as neighbours of... | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| | ... people of another ethnicity | ... workers from abroad | ... people with LGBTQIA+ identity | ... people of another religion | ... people who have recently been released from prison |
| Index of public cultural participation | [education] | [education] | [age] [education] [locality size] | [education] [locality size] | [gender] [income] |
| Index of non-public cultural participation | [education] | [education] | | | [gender] [income] |
| Index of online cultural participationonline | | | | | |

Notă:

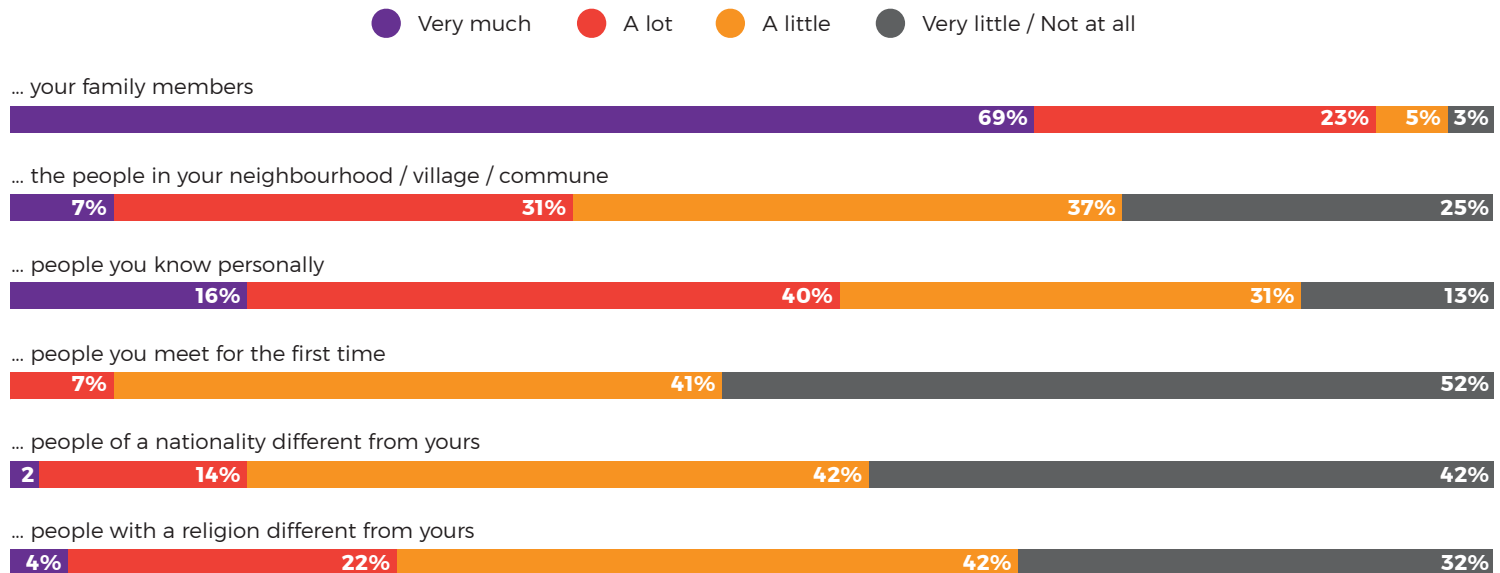
-  → statistically significant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from both bivariate and multivariate analyses)
-  → statistically insignificant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from bivariate analyses)
-  [variable] → statistically significant correlation resulted from bivariate analyses, but which, following multivariate analyses, is cancelled by the influence of the variables indicated in square brackets

4.4 The dimension of social trust

The data show that in the Romanian society there is rather a culture of mistrust in people around. This may reflect at several levels: at the level of cooperation within organisations, at the associative level, at the level of social interactions in the public space, as well as in the non-public space. Respondents have the most trust in family members (91%), in people they know personally (56%) and in those in the immediate community (38%) (neighbourhood, village or commune). Conversely, the lowest level of trust is manifested in relation to people met for the first time (7%). Sociological theories define trust as an „attitude,

based on beliefs and feelings, and involving expectations and dispositions”⁶⁴, which is vital for social interaction and maintaining cooperation. Putnam believes that trust is the factor that makes democracy work⁶⁵, because it is indispensable for social communication. Trust is based on both experiential beliefs and intuitive expectations. The results of our study confirm that trust in physically and socially close people (called „thick trust”⁶⁶), with similar values, is the most widespread within the Romanian society, while trust in people who are less close physically and socially is lower.

Graph 3. The level of trust in people belonging to certain social categories („In general, how much do you trust ...?”)



64 Trudy Govier, "Social Trust and Human Communities", Polity Press, Cambridge 1996, p. 4.

65 Barbara A. Misztal, „Trust in Modern Societies The Search for the Bases of Social Order”, Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996, p.14.

66 Trudy Govier, "Social Trust and Human Communities" McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston, 1997, p.6.

In general, women tend to be less trusting of people in their neighbourhood, in people they know personally, people they meet for the first time, people of another nationality and people of another religion. The data also indicate that young people show more trust in family members, but adopt more reserved attitudes towards neighbours, towards people of another nationality and towards people of another religion. On the other hand, education and income correlate positively with the level of trust: the higher the level of education and income, the higher the level of trust in different categories of people. The explanation for these results can be found in sociological studies that highlighted the relationship between trust, vulnerability and social tolerance. The perception of risk and personal vulnerability influences the level of trust, cooperation and tolerance, which may explain the lower level of trust and tolerance of women and young people in certain social groups. In general, contrary to expectations, the level of trust is higher in urban areas, as compared to rural ones: we can notice that respondents from urban areas have more trust in people in the proximity community, in those they know personally and in those of another nationality or religion. It is also worth noting that the level of trust in people known personally, in people met for the first time, in people of another nationality and in people of another religion increases with the size of the locality. These somewhat surprising results contradict certain social theories that have shown that in smaller, traditional communities, trust and cooperation are greater than in large communities. To explain these results we can launch some hypotheses that can be tested in future analyses:

1. The Romanian society is marked by transformations of values in the rural world and in small communities, which causes a decrease in trust and cooperation,
2. In small and traditional communities a high degree of mistrust is currently manifested, but only temporarily, as an exception that confirms the rule identified by Marcel Mauss in archaic societies, in which there is no middle ground⁶⁷, and mistrust can take the place of trust in certain periods;

3. The Romanian society is marked by the increase in the perception of risk and vulnerability, and small communities seem to be more exposed to risk situations, which may explain the results presented previously as a result of the crisis situations generated by the pandemic.

The results indicate that people who participate in public and non-public cultural activities show a higher level of social trust in relation to all the categories of targeted people. On the other hand, online cultural participation tends to correlate only with trust in people with whom direct interactions have been established, with trust in people of another nationality, and with trust in people of another religion.

All the indicators that make up the dimension of social trust correlate simultaneously with the frequency of visiting historical monuments or archaeological sites, with the frequency of going on trips in the country and with the use of the Internet for the purpose of buying books, CDs, theatre tickets, tickets to events. Furthermore, as expected, it is visible that trust in family members correlates most strongly with the frequency of visiting relatives or friends. Trust in the people of the neighbourhood, village or commune correlates most strongly with the frequency of participation in sports competitions and with that of participation in music and entertainment shows. Trust in people met for the first time is related both to the frequency of visiting museums, exhibitions or art galleries, and to the frequency of attending music festivals. Activities with a cultural component, such as reading books and attending theatre performances, have the specificity of being associated with a higher level of trust in people the respondents know personally.

The frequency of obtaining information from the print media and the accessing of websites with cultural content represent some of the important aspects that are assimilated to a high level of social trust. More precisely, people who access cultural websites have a higher level of trust in people in the immediate vicinity (neighbourhood, village, commune), in people they meet for the first time and in people of another religion. In addition,

⁶⁷ Barbara A. Misztal, „Trust in Modern Societies. The Search for the Bases of Social Order”, Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996, p. 17.

people who are frequently exposed to newspaper and magazine content have a high level of trust in their own family members. Contrary to expectations, we can notice that social networks produce an ambivalent effect in terms of social trust. In other words, it cannot be stated accurately either that the use of social networks would make people trust those around them more, nor that such online platforms would generate an attitude of social distrust. On the other hand, the time spent in front of the TV set to a high extent tends to favour attitudes of suspicion towards those around: the higher the frequency of watching TV shows or programmes, the lower the levels of trust towards people met for the first time and towards people of other nationalities.

We can therefore observe that non-public cultural participation remains a significant factor in explaining trust in people from the neighbourhood, village or commune of residence, and the influence

of exposure to cultural content is preserved, despite the input of the characteristics assimilated to gender, age and education. These results confirm the social theories that demonstrated the influence of the similarity of values on the level of trust. Thus the emergence of communities of taste is explained through the fact that „social trust is based on the similarity of values: people tend to trust other people and institutions that tell stories“, that express values that are important today, stories that interpret the world in the same way as and they do.”⁶⁸

In other cases, the influence of cultural participation on the level of trust is eclipsed by the influence of other variables, of which education appears to be the most important in explaining trust in family members, people known personally, and people of another nationality, and age is an important factor for explaining trust in people of another religion.

Table 7. The relationship between cultural consumption indicators and aspects of social trust

| | Great or very great trust in... | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | ... family members | ... people of the neighbourhood / village / commune | ... people known personally | ... people met for the first time | ... people of other nationality | ... people of other religion |
| Index of public cultural participation | [education] [income] | [gender] [age] [education] | [education] | [other aspects] | [age] [education] [income] | [age] [education] |
| Index of non-public cultural participation | [education] [income] | | [education] | [other aspects] | [age] [education] [income] | [age] [education] |
| Index of online cultural participation | | | [education] | | [age] [education] [income] | [age] [education] |

Note:

- statistically significant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from both bivariate and multivariate analyses)
- statistically insignificant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from bivariate analyses)
- [variable] → statistically significant correlation resulted from bivariate analyses, but which, following multivariate analyses, is cancelled by the influence of the variables indicated in square brackets

⁶⁸ George Cvetkovich and Ragnar E Lofstedt, „Social Trust and Risk Management“, Earthscan, Abingdon, 1999, p. 10.

4.4.1 Trust in the information presented in the mass media

The data on the perception of mass media show that media organisations are facing a very high deficit of trust. Such a situation tends to be indicative of a difficulty that the public has in identifying sources of information with credibility and validity in the interpretation of the events taking place in today's society. Thus, we can notice that more than 75% of the respondents either have little or no confidence in the news distributed through any of the information channels. This means that three out of four Romanians question the truthfulness of the messages that are circulated in the public space, which in the long term could constitute both a vector of instability in the formation of the system of representations of the world, and an element that could raise considerable obstacles in articulating the reference points necessary for the functioning of a democratic culture. These data also suggest the difficulty of undertaking effective information or awareness campaigns through the media. Habermas believes that the ability to communicate involves a shared understanding that is based on three validity claims: truth, fairness and sincerity⁶⁹. Without them, as Bok points out, „[a] society whose members are unable to distinguish truthful from deceptive messages would collapse.“⁷⁰

The highest level of trust seems to be attributed to news published on social networks and shared by relatives or friends: 28% of respondents state that they have a high or very high trust in such information. The component of greater trust in information from social and value proximity sources appears again. This configuration seems to indicate that respondents tend to select their opinion leaders more from the immediate circle of acquaintances or friends and less from people with visibility in the public space. It is also

visible that the respondents have more trust in the news transmitted on the radio (24% high and very high trust) than in those transmitted on television (21% high and very high trust). A much lower level of trust is recorded for news published in printed newspapers or magazines, alongside news published on websites or shared on social networks by media entities (below 15% high and very high trust). A possible explanation for the low level of trust in the news shared on these channels is related to the low level of information consumption through these media sources at national level. Last but not least, we can see that only 3% of respondents trust the news shared through social networks by strangers, which in certain contexts could be an inhibiting factor in perpetuating the distribution of false information.

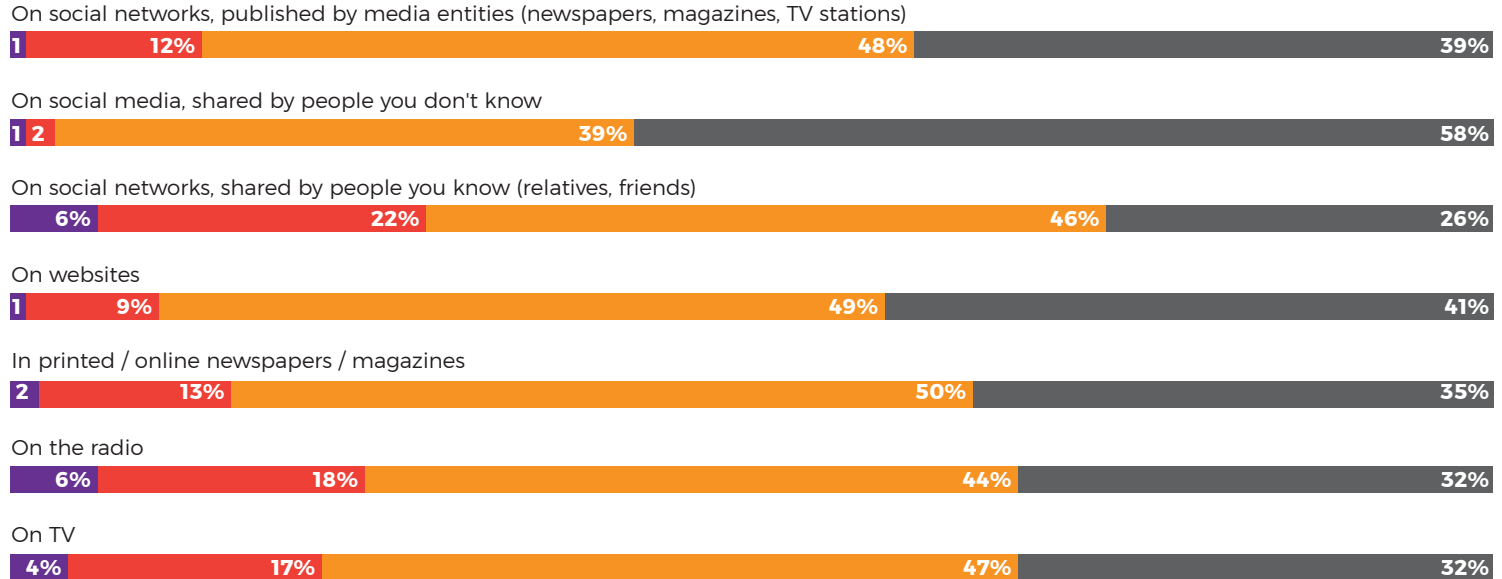
The data on the level of people's trust in certain sources of information reveal a certain tendency of isolating the public into distinct media consumption communities. More precisely, we can notice that people who use social networks give credibility only to news sources assimilated to such platforms, and they are not open to other information channels. Similarly, people who frequently watch TV programmes or shows only trust the news broadcast on TV or radio, and they are not receptive to information transmitted through other possible sources. Another approach on these results may bring into discussion the connection between the level of trust and the level of consumption. In other words, it is possible that the very trust in certain sources of information generate a higher level of consumption. Other theoretical explanations bring into question the connection between factors such as familiarity, habit or ritual, on the one hand, and the level of trust, on the other. All these might explain the greater trust of frequent traditional media consumers in these information sources.

69 Barbara A. Misztal, "Trust in Modern Societies The Search for the Bases of Social Order", Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996, p. 13.

70 Idem.

Graph 4. The level of trust attributed to the news transmitted through various information channels
 („Please tell me how much trust you have in the information presented in the following media sources.
 How much trust do you have in the news transmitted/published...“)

● Very much
 ● A lot
 ● A little
 ● Very little / Not at all

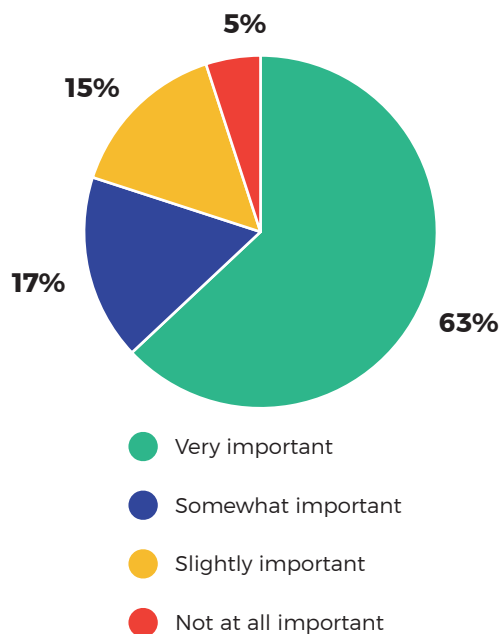


People who access cultural websites show a high trust in the news broadcast on the radio or in the print media, but not in the news broadcast on television or in those circulated through social networks. Conversely, people who read newspapers or magazines more frequently are more receptive to the content of multiple news channels (television, print media, online media, news shared on social networks by friends, and news shared on social networks by media institutions).

The lack of trust attributed to the mass media ends up manifesting itself against the background of a desire for

accuracy and objectivity in the reporting of current events. This desideratum is shared collectively and appears to represent a criterion by which the public evaluates the truthfulness of a piece of information. More precisely, we can notice that 80% of respondents want quality news, considering that, for the good running of things in today's society, it is important for the media to inform citizens correctly. Such data tend to suggest that the trust deficit attributed to media outlets appears to have formed in the context of an experience of repeated and generalised exposure to information that was either perceived to be inconsistent or later proven to be false.

Graph 5. The importance attributed to the quality of the press (For the good running of things in the society we live in, how important do you think it is that the press informs citizens correctly?)



Older people, people with higher education, and people with higher incomes find it easier to identify a credible news source depending on which they would interpret current events. The corollary is the fact that young people, people with low education and people at risk of poverty are the social categories that find it more difficult to orient themselves in the circuit of information that characterises the current media system, which in the long term may have repercussions in the formation and the practice of active citizenship as an important aspect in an inclusive society. At the same time, the gender and the locality size do not correlate with trust in the news transmitted through at least

one media channel; in other words, there is no dependency relationship between trust and these variables.

As regards cultural consumption, we can notice that the index of public participation and the index of non-public participation correlate positively with the level of trust in media channels: the higher the frequency of participation in cultural activities practised in the public space or in the private environment, the more probability of trusting at least one media channel of news distribution. However, the index of online cultural participation does not explain the level of trust in the news, as no statistically significant correlation is found between the two associated variables.

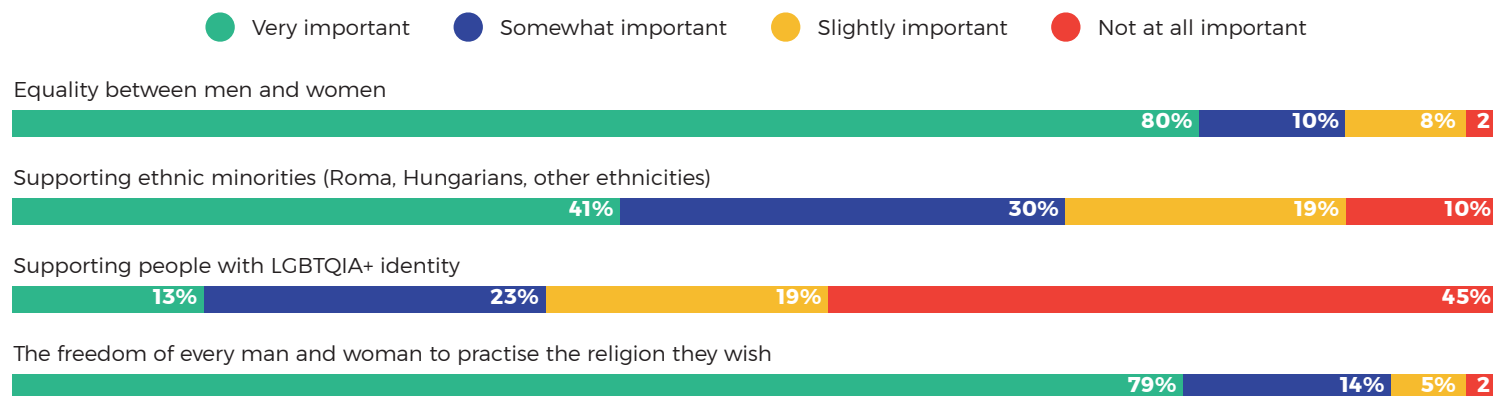
The aggregate statistical analysis highlights the fact that the effects of public cultural participation and of income on the level of trust in the news are diminished by the influencing factors attributed to non-public participation, age and, above all, education. This means that non-public cultural participation is more important than public cultural participation in explaining the mechanisms involved in establishing the interpretative benchmarks needed to evaluate media content. Furthermore, the educational level is more important than the living standard in terms of the ability to identify a credible source of information.

Taking into account the specificity of non-public cultural activities, we can put together the hypothesis according to which the ability to identify veracity factors in the media space and to formulate cognitive benchmarks in the reception of information is greater among people who are involved in activities that presuppose critical autonomy in the interpretation of content (e.g. reading books), as well as among those who engage in practices that presuppose an individualised approach to information (editing photos, videos).

4.5 The dimension of social inclusion

Religious freedom and gender equality represent the themes that constitute the foundation of democratic attitudes within the Romanian society: 93% of the total participants in the study believe that every person should have the freedom to practise the religion they want, and 90% of the respondents believe that it is important that men and women have the same rights. A lower level of importance is attributed to

Graph 6. The level of importance attributed to social inclusion (How important do you consider the following topical issues to be for the good running of things in the society we live in?)



Gender equality is a concern that expressed especially among people with higher education and high income. Supporting ethnic minorities is mainly included in the sphere of interest of women, young people, people coming from large localities, but also of people with a high level of schooling and with financial stability. In general, these categories of people also show their support towards sexual minorities, except that in the area of support for people with LGBTQIA+ identity no significant differences are observed between men and women.

the respect of the rights of ethnic minorities, where we can notice the percentage of 71% that represents the study participants who believe that ethnic minorities should be given governmental or non-governmental support. The lowest level of support is recorded for the aspect aimed at respecting the rights of people with LGBTQIA+ identity, in which case a percentage of 13% of those who attribute a high level of importance to this theme is noted, while the percentage of respondents who consider that such a theme is not a priority at all reaches 45%.

Social inclusion attitudes are in a very close relationship with cultural participation. Thus, all three indices of cultural participation correlate positively and statistically significantly with the importance attributed to gender equality, ethnic equality, sexual equality and religious equality: the higher the degree of participation in cultural activities, the higher the level of expressing support for minority groups or vulnerable social categories. This is true whether we are talking about cultural consumption in the public space, or whether we are referring to cultural participation in the non-public space or to the online participation.



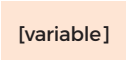
When considering specific activities, the data indicate certain particularities of cultural consumption depending on the social inclusion dimension. More precisely, we can notice that the equality between men and women is mainly supported by people who visit historical monuments and archaeological sites more often, by people who watch movies broadcasted online more often, by people who read more often (books in any format, manuals, articles) and by people who travel abroad more. Support for ethnic minorities is also expressed to a greater extent by people who read books in either print or electronic format, in addition to people who get their information more often from print newspapers or magazines and to those who visit more often museums, exhibitions or art galleries. People who show more support for people with LGBTQIA+ identity mostly read books in electronic format, visit museums, exhibitions or art galleries more often, watch more movies online and go to the cinema more often.

In confirmation of the results highlighted in the previous sections, it can be noted that watching TV shows or programmes does not correlate with social inclusion attitudes (i.e. there is no dependent link). Conversely, accessing the websites of cultural institutions is the most important factor in explaining the concern for gender equality, while information from the print media (newspapers or magazines) is the most important element in explaining the concern for supporting ethnic minorities and respecting the rights of social minorities. It is also worth noting that the use of social networks correlates particularly well with the concern for religious freedom (the more a person uses the Internet to access social networks, the more he/she is interested in religious freedom).

Table 8. The relationship between cultural consumption indicators and aspects of social inclusion

| | Equality between men and women | Supporting ethnic minorities (Roma, Hungarians, other ethnicities) | Supporting people with LGBTQIA+ identity | The freedom of every human being to practise the religion they want |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Index of public cultural participation | | [gender] [education] | [age] [education] [locality size] | [education] |
| Index of non-public cultural participation | [education] [income] | | | [education] |
| Index of Online Cultural Participation | | | [age] [education] [locality size] | |

Note:

-  → statistically significant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from both bivariate and multivariate analyses)
-  → statistically insignificant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from bivariate analyses)
-  → statistically significant correlation resulted from bivariate analyses, but which, following multivariate analyses, is cancelled by the influence of the variables indicated in square brackets

The influence of cultural consumption on social inclusion is strong enough to show up even when testing the combined effects of several factors on democratic values. The concern for respecting the rights of minorities can be explained not only through aspects related to education, but also through certain particularities of cultural consumption. For example, people who participate in cultural activities in the public and online space are more supportive of equality between men and women, independent of the influence exerted by certain socio-demographic variables. Ethnic minorities enjoy greater support from people who participate more frequently in non-public and online activities. Moreover, the index of non-public cultural participation explains the support given to sexual minorities, and the index of online cultural participation appears as a more important factor in explaining attitudes favourable to religious freedom.

4.6 The dimension of civic concerns

Employers' respect for employees' rights is the most relevant topic of public interest: over 92% of respondents say that constructive workplace relations are an essential ingredient in the functioning of a democratic society. Moreover, a comparable level of importance is attributed to other themes, among which there are: the protection of nature and the environment, the punishment of delinquent acts in proportion to their gravity, the fight against corruption and the participation of people in voting when there are elections (each of these being rated as important by over 80% of respondents).

Graph 7. The level of importance attributed to some topics of civic relevance (*How important do you consider the following current topics for the good running of things in the society we live in?*)



The fight against corruption and the protection of the environment are topics embraced mostly by people who have a high level of education, by people with financial stability and by people who live in large towns. Furthermore, the punishment of delinquent acts according to their gravity is also an important concern for these socio-demographic categories, to which young people are added. The participation of people in voting when there are elections is considered to be a priority by young people, by people with higher education and by people coming from demographically developed localities. Income does not prove to be a relevant factor in explaining the interest in manifesting the electoral option. An element of particularity appears in the area of employers' respect for employees' rights. The profile of those who share this concern is shaped by gender, education, income and locality size. More precisely, women believe to a higher extent than men that an institutional framework stipulating working relationships based on mutual respect between employer and employee is necessary. It can also be noticed that people who attach high or very high importance to the respect of rights at professional level are more likely to have higher education and an income above the national average and to come from urban areas.

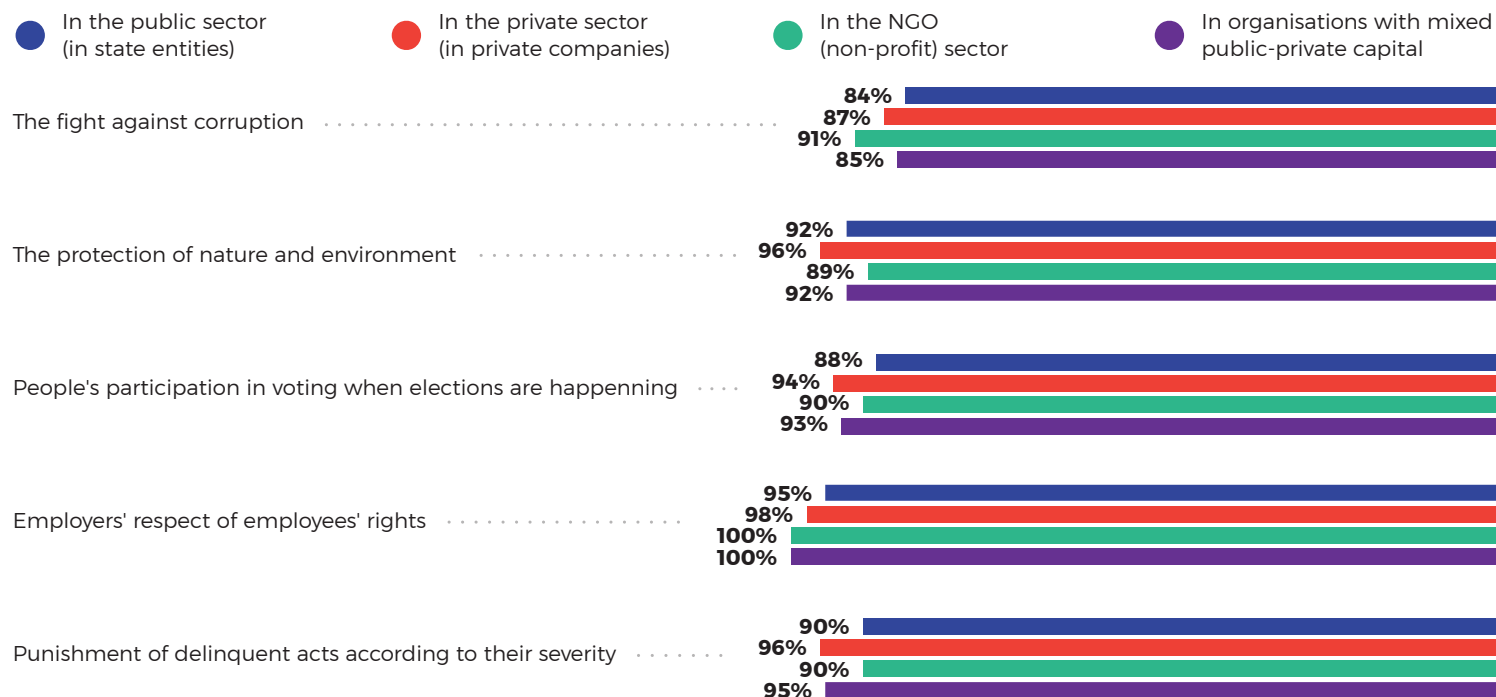
Concerns with various topics of public interest vary to some extent by occupational sector. The fight against corruption is an aspect that gains particular relevance in the non-profit sector, while environmental interests, electoral participation and a sense of justice are topics present mainly in the spectrum of interest of employees in the private sector. It is also worth noting that employers' respect for employees' rights is a concern that seems to be unanimously embraced by people who work in the non-profit sector and in mixed-capital organisations.

The data show that participation in cultural activities tends to favour the formation of relevant civic attitudes.

The higher the cultural consumption recorded, the higher the interest in topics on the public agenda: the fight against corruption, the protection of nature and the environment, the participation of people in voting when there are elections, the employers' respect for the employees' rights and the punishing of delinquent acts according to their gravity. We can also notice that, in this case, online cultural consumption has a much higher direct contribution than public and non-public cultural consumption, which suggests that access to the Internet and its use for cultural purposes play an important role in strengthening the interest in the topics on the public agenda.

An element of specificity in relation to the dimension of civic concerns is that the use of social networks is an indicator that strongly correlates (dependent relationship) with the importance attributed to the fight against corruption, the protection of nature and the environment, the participation of people in voting when there are elections and punishing delinquent acts according to their gravity. The same type of association can also be observed between the previously mentioned civic aspects and the frequency of watching movies broadcast online. When taking these aspects into account, we can notice that social networks can function as a mobilising factor in carrying out civic actions or organising social movements: people who use social networks are more concerned with more civic topics. Such a configuration appears significant, particularly in the context where accessing websites with cultural content statistically significantly correlates (dependent relationship) only with the fight against corruption, with people's participation in voting when there are elections and with employers' respect of employee's rights.

Graph 8. The percentage of people who attribute high or very high importance to themes of civic relevance, depending on the occupational sector



At the same time, it should be noted that the frequency of watching programmes on television does not correlate statistically significantly with the importance attributed to any of the civic concerns considered. Such an aspect tends to suggest that television does not seem to influence viewers to adopt attitudes aligned with democratic values, but such a hypothesis needs to be tested in detail through future studies. On the other hand, what stands out is the fact that both for young people (18-35 years old) and for the elderly (above 65 years old) civic concerns are formed especially through the use of social networks. Specifically, for these two age groups, a strong correlation is observed between the use of social

networks and the importance attributed to themes of civic relevance. Conversely, in the case of adults (35-64 years old), civic concerns are shaped to a greater extent by information from the print media (newspapers, magazines) than through TV consumption or the use of social networks.

It is also worth noting that people who visit museums, exhibitions or art galleries more often attribute greater importance to all the aspects that make up the dimension of civic concerns, including the one related to the respect of employees' rights. Reading activities in their multidimensionality (reading books in printed or electronic format, consulting manuals, scientific articles, newspaper or magazine articles) correlate

significantly (dependent relationship) with the importance attributed to the fight against corruption, people’s participation in voting when there are elections, the employers’ respect of the employees’ rights and the punishment of delinquent acts according to their gravity. Another aspect to be considered has to do with the statistically significant association between the frequency of participation in theatre performances and the importance attributed to the fight against corruption. In addition, as expected, the protection of nature and the environment is more important for people who walk more often in parks or green areas and for those who visit historical monuments or archaeological sites more often.

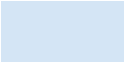

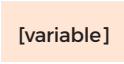
Certain forms of cultural consumption end up explaining different civic concerns despite the aggregate influences of socio-demographic variables. Thus, we can notice that participation in cultural activities in the public space explains

eco-friendly attitudes, independent of the level of education, while participation in online cultural activities is a more important explanatory factor in terms of social justice sense. Likewise, cultural consumption mediated by digital media explains the importance attributed to electoral participation, while decreasing the influence of all other explanatory factors. The concern for employers’ respect for employees’ rights is influenced both by the frequency of participation in cultural activities in the public space, and by the involvement in online-specific cultural activities specific, and all this happens despite the influence exerted by socio-demographic variables. On the other hand, the interest in combating acts of corruption mainly depends on the educational level, which takes over the entire influence, not being determined by the particularities related to the participation in cultural activities.

Table 9. The relationship between cultural consumption indicators and civic concerns

| | The fight against corruption | Protection of nature and the environment | People’s participation in voting when there are elections | Employers’ respect of employees’ rights | Punishment of delinquent acts according to their gravity |
|--|------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Index of public cultural participation | [education] | | [other aspects] | | [age] [education] |
| Index of non-public cultural participation | [education] | [education] | [other aspects] | [education] | [age] [education] |
| Index of online cultural participation | [education] | [education] | | | |

Note:

-  → statistically significant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from both bivariate and multivariate analyses)
-  → statistically insignificant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from bivariate analyses)
-  [variable] → statistically significant correlation resulted from bivariate analyses, but which, following multivariate analyses, is cancelled by the influence of the variables indicated in square brackets

In addition, the data suggest that the sense of personal autonomy could represent an explanatory factor of relating to

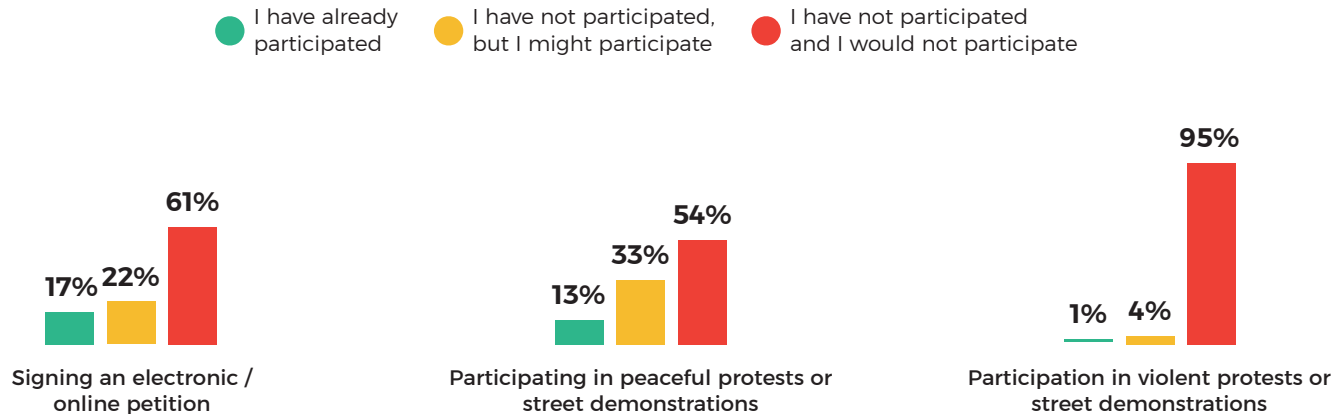
information transmitted through mass media. More precisely, we can notice that the level of trust in the news is higher among

people who would choose freedom over safety, among people who believe that they have control over the course of personal or social events, but also among people who express willingness to sign a petition or participate in peaceful protests in order to show their dissatisfaction with a situation or a government decision.

According to the data of the study, under the current circumstances, at the level of the Romanian society, there is a relatively low probability of coagulation for violent protest movements that would significantly change the social fabric. For example, we can notice that 95% of respondents have not participated and do not intend to participate in street demonstrations involving violence in the future, and more than half of the participants in the study would not even engage in peaceful protests, nor would they sign an online petition.

However, there is an emergence of a sufficiently large segment of people who can put pressure on decision-makers and determine the directions of public policy development. More precisely, it appears significant that a third of the population coagulates the group of people who, although they have been less visible in the public space and have not shown their critical attitude so far, could become active by participating in protest actions, should the society face a situation in which democratic values would be affected: 33% of respondents stated that they did not participate, but could participate in peaceful protests or street demonstrations if the situation was such of such a nature that interventions in the public sphere would be necessary.

Graph 9. Willingness to participate in protest actions

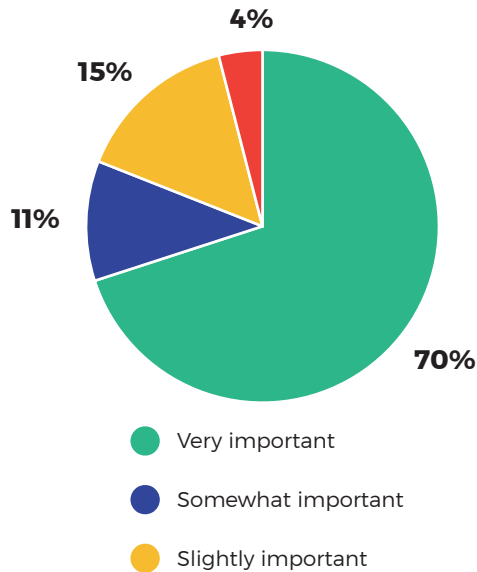


4.7 The dimension of social freedom

Social freedom is understood as representing an important component in the consolidation of democratic values. Thus, we can notice that 81% of the respondents believe that it is important for a society to provide citizens with the conditions necessary to express different points

of view, regardless of whether or not they are aligned with official or majority perspectives. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the respondents consider that censorship or restriction by any means of the rights of expression are undesirable aspects, as they could affect the good running of things in society.

Graph 10. The importance attributed to freedom of expression (How important do you consider the freedom of each person to express his/her point of view for the good running of things in the society we live in?)

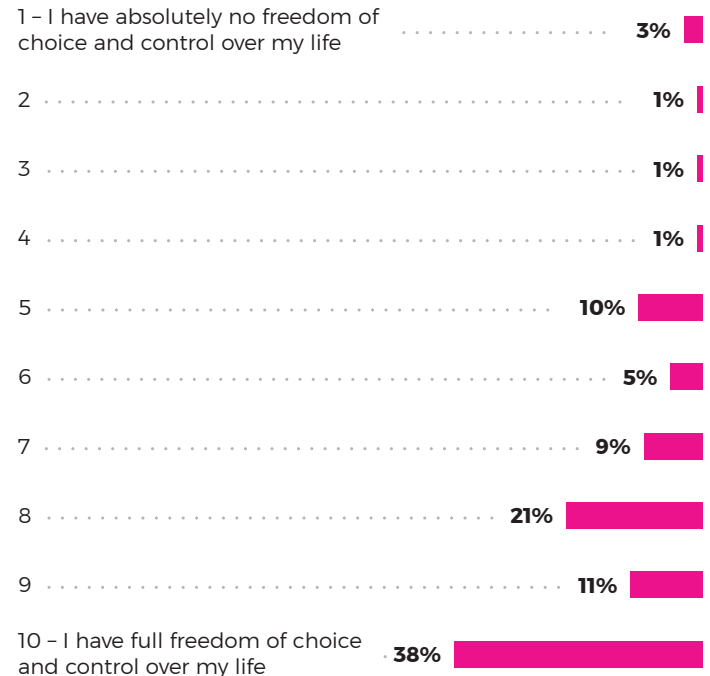


Freedom of expression is a value appreciated especially by young people, people with high education and people with high income. It is also visible that the area of residence is in a close relationship with the importance attributed to the right to freedom of expression: the larger the size of the locality, the greater the openness to the acceptance in the public space of more points of view. Conversely, from the point of view of gender, no differences are observed as regards the internalisation of this value regarding the freedom of expression.

The data show more visible manifestations of the internal locus of control, i.e. the respondents tend to attach individualised causality to events that are part of their lives. Such an attitude is articulated at the expense of adopting an external locus of control, a perspective that is assimilated to a tendency to consider that factors from the social, cultural or economic

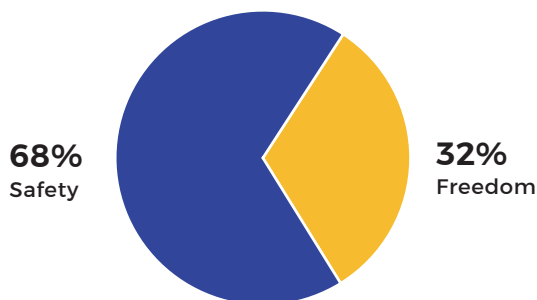
environment influence how people’s lives unfold. More precisely, we can notice that 38% of the participants in the study believe that they have full freedom of choice and control over their lives, and only 3% state that they do not have such freedom at all. In addition, when analysing the percentages cumulatively, it is visible that 84% of the study participants mainly manifest an internal locus of control (they believe that they have the ability to influence the events that take place in society and that they have the power to decide on their own lives), while 16% opt for an external locus of control (they consider that what happens in their lives is, for the most part, determined by conditions acting independently of their own will or action).

Graph 11. Perspectives on external locus of control („I have no choice and control over my life at all”) and internal locus of control („I have complete freedom of choice and control over my life.”)



Furthermore, the survey data indicates a substantial preference among respondents for safety over freedom: 68% of the people surveyed at national level opt for safety, while 32% choose freedom as the central value in shaping their system of significations in life.

Graph 12. Expressing a preference for freedom or safety
(Most people consider both freedom and safety important.
However, if you had to choose between the two, which
would be more important to you?)



It is important to note that women, young people, people with higher education and those with higher incomes mention to a greater extent that they have freedom of choice and control over their own lives. The explanatory models may be different for each category of people: for women and young people, it is possible that the adoption of these attitudes represents the consequences of some needs for emancipation and affirmation of personal autonomy, while in the case of people with a high social status, the sense of controllability may be explained through a higher access to resources that expand the horizon of action. In the same line of argumentation, it can be pointed out that the preference for freedom over safety is especially manifested among men, people with high education, people with high income and those from large towns.

All three components of cultural consumption (public, non-public and online) correlate not only with the importance

attributed to freedom of expression, but also with the perceived level of control over one's life and with the manifestation of a preference for freedom at the expense of safety. People who engage more frequently in several types of cultural activities, regardless of the sphere wherein they are practised, tend to appreciate to a greater extent the relevance of openness to dialogue in a democratic society and to internalise freedom as a value able to shape their perspective on the world and life.

Specifically, all three dimensions of social freedom correlate (dependent relationship) with distinct forms of cultural consumption, including: the use of the Internet to attend online courses or training programmes, frequency of going to the cinema, use of the Internet for reading of books, manuals, articles, the frequency of trips abroad and the use of the Internet for professional activities. This means that people who internalise freedom as a value are statistically significantly more involved in the activities listed above.

In addition, we can notice that freedom is an aspect valued more by people who frequently get their information from the print media (newspapers, magazines). On the opposite side, the following relationship can be observed: the higher the frequency of watching TV shows or programmes, the lower the importance attributed to freedom (in its multidimensionality). Punctually, the data also underline the fact that the social networks users value freedom of expression to a higher degree. In contrast, the other two forms of social freedom do not correlate significantly with this form of consumption in the online. It is also worth noting that people who use the Internet to access websites with cultural content consider that they have greater freedom of choice and control over their own lives.

It is important to point out that cultural participation in the public space plays a much more important role than non-public and online cultural participation in attributing considerable importance to the freedom of expression. The data also point to the fact that age and education matter



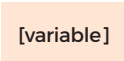
more than income and town size in forming the opinion that in a democratic society it is necessary that more points of view should be expressed. On the other hand, aspects different from those related to the peculiarities of cultural consumption and socio-demographics are important in explaining the freedom of control over one’s own life, , given that none of the variables considered during the study retains its statistically significant effects in the aggregate analyses anymore. However, the data show that the preference for

freedom over safety is solely explained by online cultural consumption, whose influence remains significant despite the effects of education or other socio-demographic characteristics. Such a result seems to suggest that the types of cultural content existing in the digital environment are more susceptible to the formation of liberal attitudes, in contrast to the types of cultural content corresponding to the public or non-public space, as understood in the context of this study. au non-public.

Table 10. The relationship between cultural consumption indicators and aspects of social freedom

| | Great or very great importance attributed to the freedom of each person to express their point of view, for the good running of things in the society in which we live | Manifesting full freedom of choice and control over one’s life | Expressing a preference for freedom over safety |
|--|--|--|---|
| Index of public cultural participation | | [other aspects] | [gender] [education] |
| Index of non-public cultural participation | [age] [education] | [other aspects] | [gender] [education] |
| Index of online cultural participation | [age] [education] | [other aspects] | |

Note:

-  → statistically significant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from both bivariate and multivariate analyses)
-  → statistically insignificant correlation between the variables describing cultural consumption and the variables corresponding to democratic values (resulted from bivariate analyses)
-  → statistically significant correlation resulted from bivariate analyses, but which, following multivariate analyses, is cancelled by the influence of the variables indicated in square brackets

5. Conclusions

The analysis shows that, at the level of the Romanian society, the theoretical model of engagement is applied, over democratic disengagement. This means that cultural participation is a factor that stimulates (and does not inhibit) democratic citizenship. Moreover, the data highlight both a

high conformity of the explanatory model of social capital and social empowerment, and a partial conformity of the explanatory model of social mobilisation and value cultivation in explaining the proclivity towards the adoption of democratic attitudes and behaviours.

On the other hand, the explanatory models of social isolation, alienation and trivialisation cannot be considered aspects that include valid reasons in relation to the effects of cultural consumption within the Romanian society. More precisely, the rationales associated with the theoretical model of democratic disengagement are strongly refuted by the data, i.e. non-public

forms of cultural participation do not influence democratic participation in a negative manner. In other words, within the Romanian society, it is unlikely that exposure to media content will directly produce the phenomena of isolation, alienation and trivialisation.

Table 11. Synthetic results of testing the hypotheses on the relationship between cultural participation and democratic citizenship

| Theoretical model | Hypothesis tested | Test results |
|--|---|--|
| The explanatory model of social capital | The higher the index of cultural participation (public, non-public or online), the greater the ability to accumulate social capital through engagement in associative life. | Hypothesis fully confirmed by data |
| The explanatory model of value cultivation | The higher the index of cultural participation (public, non-public or online), the more strengthened the values of openness to those around. | Hypothesis partially confirmed by data |
| The explanatory model of social mobilisation | The higher the index of cultural participation (public, non-public or online), the greater the proclivity to social mobilisation. | Hypothesis partially confirmed by data |
| The explanatory model of social empowerment | Social status is a shaping factor of the relationship between the indicators of cultural participation and those of democratic citizenship | Hypothesis partially confirmed by data (social status intervenes on the forms of value cultivation and on the proclivity towards social mobilisation, but not on the ability to accumulate social capital) |

On the other hand, the data show that cultural participation exerts the greatest influence on the probability of belonging to a community: the higher the values of cultural consumption, the stronger the sense of social belonging. In other words, people who engage more frequently in more types of cultural activities are those who take part in the associative life to a greater extent. Such a result shows that in the Romanian society cultural participation does not isolate, but on the contrary, it favours social engagement, offering opportunities to accumulate social capital derived from belonging to a community of people who share common concerns, interests or preferences. The influences of all forms of cultural consumption on social belonging are maintained when the effects of the social status or other demographic variables are controlled. Moreover, not only the forms of public and online

cultural participation, but also the cultural activities practised in the non-public space are influencing factors of belonging to a community.

The abovementioned trend, highlighted for indicators of belonging to a community, is also noticeable in the case of tolerance towards people of another religion, in which case all forms of cultural consumption are significant in explaining democratic attitudes, independently of the influence of education, income or other demographic factors.

In general, the assumptions assimilated to the theoretical model of democratic engagement are partially confirmed, as it turns out that not all specific cultural consumption practices play a role in explaining the various components of democratic citizenship independently of the influence of certain variables,

but only a certain form or specific configuration proves to be significant.

Therefore, the following trends can be observed:

- *Participation in cultural activities in the public space* explains the importance attributed to the protection of nature and the importance given to freedom of expression. In these cases, neither education, nor other forms of participation in cultural activities in the non-public space, including the online environment, prove to have an influence.
- *Participation in cultural activities in the non-public space* explains the level of trust in people in the proximity – people who live in the same neighbourhood or commune – and the backing of public forms of support for people with LGBTQIA+ identity. In these cases, neither education, nor other forms of participation in cultural activities in the public space and in the online environment prove to have an influence.
- *Participation in cultural activities in the online environment* explains the tolerance towards people of another ethnicity and towards foreign workers, the importance attributed to the punishment of delinquent acts according to their gravity, the freedom of each person to practice their religion and the participation of people in voting. In these cases, neither education, nor other forms of participation in cultural activities in the public and non-public space prove to have an influence.
- *Participation in public and online cultural activities* explains the importance attributed to employers' respect for employees' rights and the importance attributed to equality between men and women. In these cases, neither education, nor other forms of participation in cultural activities in the non-public space prove to have an influence.
- *Participation in non-public and online cultural activities* explains the tolerance towards people with LGBTQIA+

identity and the backing of public forms of support for ethnic minorities. In these cases, neither education, nor other forms of participation in cultural activities in the public space prove to have an influence.

Taking into account the previously presented configurations, it can be concluded that the forms of cultural consumption in the online environment are more important than other forms of cultural consumption in terms of shaping democratic attitudes and behaviours. There are multiple situations for which it can be observed that the influence of online cultural participation reduces the influence of cultural participation in the public and non-public space.

Nevertheless, there are also cases where education is found to influence certain components of democratic citizenship more than participation in cultural activities. Specifically, education makes the influence of cultural consumption irrelevant in terms of: (1) the importance attributed to the preservation of the national identity and patriotic feeling, (2) trust in family members, in people known personally, in people met for the first time, in people of other nationality and in people of other religion and (3) the importance attributed to the fight against corruption.

In conclusion, the analysis of the relationship between cultural participation and democratic citizenship provides an empirical basis capable of highlighting both the need to implement initiatives based on a model of education through culture, and the usefulness of developing measures that closely follow a model of community development through culture. On the one hand, these assertions are supported by statistical analyses that highlight the particularly important role that the education variable plays in articulating the forms of cultural consumption in the public space, in the non-public space and in the online environment. On the other hand, there is a strong and stable relationship between the cultural and the social capital: both forms of capital represent not only vectors of economic development, but also important pillars of strengthening democratic attitudes and behaviours.

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