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**AUDIENCE AND JOURNALISM.
SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATIONS CHANGES IN THE
BEHAVIOUR OF THE AUDIENCE AND THE TYPES OF
JOURNALISM**

ABSTRACT

OF DECERTATION FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE "DOCTOR OF SCIENCES"
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This dissertation is 465 pages long and contains an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and an appendix. The bibliography includes 363 sources – 209 in the Cyrillic script and 154 in Latin. The author has conducted three representative sociological studies based on the content analysis and media analysis methods and an in-depth interview with three journalists at a leading media organization in an attempt to identify the specificities of news production. The dissertation contains four tables, 47 figures, and 19 images.

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Main goal, subject, object, and hypotheses of the study

Thanks to the democratisation, accessibility, and effectiveness of various technological devices, the audience in today's world is able to participate actively in the process of media production not only by complementing, correcting, and commenting on products produced and distributed by media professionals, but also by producing, sharing, and discussing its own media products through the network connectivity offered by the virtual space. For the first time, the online user is not the last element in the communication chain, whose role is limited to giving some kind of feedback but is instead the genuine initiator of their own communication model. In this model, the traditional media players either have a new role (as participants on an equal footing who offer assistance) or are entirely left out, while users can communicate freely with one another and without being controlled by the media organizations, interact among themselves, and create and exchange products and services.

The changes in the model of media consumption are not just technological, but social as well. The media have become digital and ubiquitous. Online publishers create platforms rather than content, which is universally accessible, although not always appreciated in terms of value. Communication is dialogic, but sometimes its meaning remains unclear or insufficiently understood. Users are both creators of products and products themselves. The trustworthiness of the information and the speed of its dissemination, two fundamental components of journalism, have been swept away by the online user's ability to express their views and distribute them in the virtual space with lightning speed. The online user's media narrative is highly fragmented, varies in form in terms of expression, interpretation, events, and personalities, and draws on a more spontaneous approach to evaluation. The narrative turns are hard to trace, the familiar topical hierarchy is completely missing, as is the coming together of individual topics in larger, global constructs of meaning, and the language used is highly emotional.

The main goal of this dissertation is to offer an analysis of the social and communication behaviour of the active audience, whose members participate in the process of producing, sharing, and evaluating the information circulating in the media space. The media man is increasingly virtual, and the virtual man has an even greater civic awareness and social reflexivity, bringing about substantial changes in journalism and the emergence of new forms of journalism and new forms of media with their unique characteristics.

The object of the dissertation is the modern recipient, who does not fit the traditional notion of a passive user relying solely on the professionalism of journalists and the business decisions of media owners in relation to the nature and features of the media information delivered to them. They perceive media consumption as a part of the overall process of social change whereby the society aspires to integrate new models of behaviour, social and political transformations that are initiated by the communities themselves and are not the result of the views of the privileged political, economic, and cultural elites. The media operate in the context of complex turbulences in the public sphere; individuals use and/or produce media content so that it not only influences their emotional awareness but equips them with applicable knowledge that allows them to participate in the political and economic processes, broadens their expectations, and provides adequate solutions to their problems.

The subject of the dissertation are the changes currently taking place in relation to the essence of journalism that are triggered by technological and media advances, the emergence of multiple new media channels, the changes in journalists' behaviour, and the introduction of new types of journalism, such as participatory journalism, citizen journalism, network journalism, multimedia journalism, constructive journalism, and solutions journalism. These changes manifest themselves through the media's interaction with the active audience.

The main hypotheses of the dissertation concern the investigated social and communication changes in the behaviour of the audience and the models of

journalistic content production. **The first hypothesis** acknowledges that the notions of the media as power center in the society or as subjects of power control can no longer be so easily related to the field of communication, including in the light of notions of the media as information ‘gatekeepers’ and as a major force in the formation of the public opinion. The media are now more commonly seen as guardians of social responsibility – a function that the society has assigned to them so that they can provide quality and credible information, facilitate social consolidation, and protect the society’s values and democratic foundations. The society is no longer so detached from the process of information production, nor is it defenceless and dependent on journalism as a ‘watchdog’ that is supposed to protect it against attempts at political and economic encroachment, and against manipulation and disinformation. However, media users need to learn to rely on verified and accurate information, no matter whether the source is an established media organization, a website, or an online platform, because this guarantees its meaning and value.

The second hypothesis posits that media organizations and journalists as a whole should see the audience as a partner in the media production process – from the gathering and processing of information through its verification and positioning to its dissemination and evaluation. The notion of the user as a partner in media production has resulted from the idea that journalism is not a one-way transfer of information, and that feedback is always important. The online media user should not be viewed solely as a member of a group (the mass audience); instead, the media should prioritize the user’s individuality – the virtual man largely uses media devices on his own, and this presupposes seeing him in new roles, such as consumer, prosumer, an empowered audience, an active audience, and citizen journalists.

Citizen participation has been a part of journalism from the very beginning. It makes it possible to shift the focus from the content producer to the nature of the information itself with the aim of striking a balance between the influence

exercised by the communicator and the recipient in the traditional communication exchange model. This is especially visible online and leads to democratization of the media, as it allows non-professional journalists to gain influence and help the media to really get to know people's interests and problems and the events that matter to them. The media can thus continue not only to exist fully, but also to develop, provided they do not simply try to get to know their audience but identify with it.

The third hypothesis assumes that the changes in journalism caused by the recipient's active position go beyond the familiar division between quality journalism and tabloid journalism, which has been the dominant indicator of professional and substantive segmentation, facilitating the emergence of new types of journalism – participatory journalism, citizen journalism, multimedia journalism, network journalism, and solutions journalism, among others.

The first chapter of the dissertation is devoted to the features of the media audience. It presents various definitions of the term and the leading models for audience segmentation – social context, use of specific media formats, presence of specific market mechanisms, use of shared media products, and socio-demographic indicators. The manifestations of the audience's behaviour through typical social formations such as groups, crowds, audiences, and masses are explored, and the semantic distinction between a passive audience and an active audience is established. The active audience is the key concept, and it is taking shape as a result of the emergence of new media. The virtual space most clearly marks the duality in the audience's behaviour as a media customer and a media product, driven by the market mechanisms in the media industry. In addition, the chapter presents some more indicators for the typology of the audience – according to the scope and the duration of its interaction with media products, user localization in space and time (physical/virtual, real/delayed), the degree of activity/passivity and interactivity/interdependence, the simultaneity of the

interaction, the overlap of the social relationships among consumers/communicators/sources of information, and so on.

The activity of the audience, which participates as a partner in the process of media production, leads to a change in the position of the journalist as well, limiting their influence and authority. The significance of media brands is being transformed – their popularity, influence, and accessibility are not among the key criteria for their selection and use in the context of specific internet platforms and applications. The features of the modern virtual man are segmented based on social, cultural, personal, and psychological factors, as well as the degree of involvement and market influence. In addition, the chapter describes the features of the prosumer, whose definition corresponds to people's aspirations to produce goods and services (including media ones) for personal enjoyment or use rather than for sale. The development of the prosumer as a practice necessitates diverse social and cultural changes. There emerge new family and cultural forms, as well as new values and attitudes towards religion and personal freedom, and the boundaries between private and public spaces, similar to the boundaries between one's private and professional life, are blurring and complementing each other. At the same time, media consumption rituals are changing as result of the possibility for individuals to consume media information via personal devices (laptops, mobile phones, tablets, smart watches). Information itself is becoming ubiquitous and individually accessible, significant as a source of influence, and cross-media in terms of distribution. The time available for information consumption is shrinking because of the diversity of the information circulating around and the media users' inability to fully process, understand, and evaluate it. Information travels so fast these days that the members of the audience find their attention and efforts split between consumption, prosumption, volunteering, and usage. The evolving technologies stimulate the emergence of new media products and new production cycles, and journalists are required to take on new professional roles and train and retrain all the time. This creates uncertainty for

the media users, who do not know what content they will be able to consume and whether the products they have purchased will be useful to them, but also for the media professionals, who do not know how long they will continue to work at the media organizations they belong to and whether their knowledge and skills will be sufficient for enjoying secure and well-paid employment for a longer period of time. Still, despite users' growing alienation and psychological and social resignation, in view of the limitless opportunities for virtual communication, they can count on the formation of collective intelligence as an instrument for building collective knowledge and memory, and for sharing experience. The older notions of the audience are giving way to new ones – the audience can now be seen as the empowered consumer whose activity leads to the emergence of new types of journalism, and as a part of the virtual communities responsible for the success of alternative media, which many people prefer because of their decentralized and democratic operations, autonomy, and high degree of social reflexivity.

The second chapter explores the growing involvement of citizens with the media thanks to which journalism is returning to the models known from its early days while also broadening the civil society's influence. The chapter describes several interesting media theories, such as development media theory and democratic-participant media theory, and looks at the manifestation of different media models, for example the corporatist tradition, the libertarian tradition, the social responsibility tradition, and the citizen participation tradition. Another topic discussed in the chapter is the manifestation of new media roles. The media have monitoring and collaborative roles, which are traditionally seen as parts of journalism because they allow the media to monitor, describe, and control the events taking place, and facilitating and radical roles, through which the media help the society to develop civic awareness and the citizens to participate more actively in social and political processes, encourage public dialogue, and safeguard the democratic principles in the public space.

The civic activity of online users affects the description of citizen journalism, which reflects the changes that have taken place in the media sector so that the media can effectively fulfil its political functions and contribute to the creation of an effectively operating civil society. The chapter describes the types of citizen journalism existing today and some of its features, such as democracy, technical mediation, the use of diverse sources with the goal of producing more accurate and more detailed stories, coverage of alternative and local topics, cost savings achieved through free collaboration with the audience, and the deprofessionalization and deinstitutionalization of journalism that open the field to various practices. The features of the participation culture and the convergence culture are described as well. While the participation culture reflects the active interaction between the media producers and the audience in relation to the production of new media and cultural products, the convergence culture reflects the collaboration between diverse media platforms, media companies, and their audiences in relation to the use of multiple products that are the result of the intertwining of the multimedia, cross-media, and trans-media models. One visible trend is that the media tend to become ever more personal but also interconnected in an overall media ecology, and to take advantage of their global distribution while losing their national identity and media-systemic specificity. This helps the highly individualized modern user, both as a user of technological devices and as a member of social groups, to meet their personal information needs and succeed in their creative pursuits. At the same time, it makes them less capable of verifying and making reasonable use of the information that reaches them and that turns out to be socially, culturally, and politically irrelevant.

The third chapter explains the features and significance of participatory journalism, which has come about as a result of the greater accessibility of media technologies, the open nature of the internet leading to the formation of a network environment, and the strong civic culture, as well as the desire of the audience itself to produce, verify, and disseminate independent, trustworthy, accurate, and

diverse information. Some of the features of participatory journalism, such as dialogism and interconnection, are described. Professional and amateur journalists need to work together at every stage of media production, though not always on an equal footing given that mainstream media strive to make a profit from the produced content. A detailed description of the extremely diverse forms of participatory journalism is provided. These include text, audio and video recordings, collective interviews, writing comments, voting in rankings and surveys, participation in forums and discussions, sending mailing lists, newsletters, information management via smart watches and other smart devices, online channels like blogs (including journalism blogs and liveblogs), wikis, tags, social media posts, music, photos, and videos sharing, podcasts, content curation, and the use of selfies. The chapter also discusses the users' levels of participation. We talk about a high level of participation when users can produce the content that is offered, a medium level of participation when they assist in the process as prosumers and participate mainly in the monitoring and distribution of the content, and a low level of participation when they are commonly viewed as consumers of the content produced by the mass media. Differentiations of this kind can also be made in relation to the nature of the user-generated information based on whether it is associated with news topics, important social and political events, celebrity appearances, or tragedies, whether it is about entertainment, for example funny videos, photos with celebrities, and whether it concerns topics from show business, culture, travelling, eating, and touristic and natural sights, or is aimed at personal and expressive topics.

The key findings are as follows. The media actively open themselves up to user-generated content because this allows them to offer diverse, often unique stories and present different, highly personalized views about issues. There also arises a sense of loyalty among the users towards specific media, and those who participate in media production and distribution make use of the significant interaction between authors, newsroom members, and users, which is possible

thanks to the advances in network communications. The more active dialogue with users allows the media to offer access to far more opinions and viewpoints in relation to the topics and issues they cover, especially through the audience's participation in the comments sections, while the use of user-generated content reduces the newsroom's production costs. At the same time, the media continue to insist on controlling user-generated information and deciding when and where in their programs and pages they can use it. They do this because of their concerns about the potentially lower quality of this information and the need for putting in additional effort to verify and process it, and for maintaining special newsroom roles in relation to the interactions with the audience, such as content managers and moderators, who are responsible for pre- or post-moderation of user comments aimed at avoiding discussions about non-substantive issues, hate speech, and the dissemination of slander, disinformation, and advertisements.

The roles through which participatory journalism can manifest itself are defined. Users can be recognized as active recipients who provide feedback to the newsroom and participate in the formats the media have made available to them; as sources of information who, on their own or at the request of the media, send information about interesting and/or important current events; as commentators whose views and statements allow the media to gauge the changes in public attitudes over time; as co-authors, assistant reporters, or experts who assist the journalists at all stages of media production; as members of a civil society that supports the media in its struggle against social injustices.

The fourth chapter presents the essence of multimedia journalism, which is an expression of the production of diverse media content (audio, video, text, images), the high level of visualization of this content, and the opportunities for its distribution online. Multimedia journalism is characterized by the use of news packages that contain information presented in several media formats (text, audio, video, music, dynamic and static images, animation, interactive elements, maps, diagrams, etc.) and distributed through several media channels – a traditional

channel (newspaper, magazine, radio/TV programme) and online (website, forum, social media pages, emails, SMS, MMS, teletext, etc.). This calls for changes in the newsrooms, such as organizing journalists into teams that produce content together and use skills like flexibility, collaboration, communication, and interaction.

Network journalism, whose features are explored as well, is related to the ability of professional journalists, users, local communities, and experts in various fields to produce online content together with the goal of sharing facts, making complex links between various issues and events, and guaranteeing the trustworthiness of the information. The journalist's role is changing – their behaviour no longer depends on the type of media they work for or on their area of expertise; instead, it depends on their ability to make network contacts. They tend to be seen more as independent journalists who have a positive perception of their interaction with users than as gatekeepers who exercise selective control over the information arriving in the media organization they work for. However, this means journalists have to broaden their professional attitudes and the structure of their organization, use different technologies, online applications, and social media, and, above all, draw on their collaboration with the active audience. In addition to being active, this audience needs to have a high level of awareness and view accurate and quality information as a value that deserves to be shared with the media instead of striving to disseminate fake, misleading, and/or manipulative information, offensive comments, and rumours. The discussion further sheds light on key features of network journalism, including interactivity, hypertextuality, multimedia content production, asynchronicity, personalization, decentralization, discussion-seeking orientation, and network distribution of the information.

The fifth chapter explores the mediatization of emotions, to the extent that the intensified manifestation of emotions in the media is a response to the audience getting tired of the predominantly negative content, as well as from the

growing influence of social media, where emotionally loaded behaviour and emotional reactions have become a public norm. The media turn out to be a space for the manifestation of emotional culture, mediatized anger, and emotional intelligence. One part of the discussion is devoted to the meaning of emotions, which tend to be treated as personal manifestation of specific reactions, and of the affects related to specific political, social, or cultural attitudes. It is noted that being aware of the influence of specific emotions and the reactions of the affective audiences is useful to journalists because, in their work, they need to deal both with the emotional outbursts of their sources of information and with their own feelings while processing media content. This awareness is also useful because emotionally loaded content is present and even dominates the modern media environment – in the form of both text and images. That is why the author of the dissertation also looks at the manifestation of emotions in the journalists' reactions while performing their professional duties – the emotional work they have to do results in their feeling overwhelmed not only because of the large amount of information they need to process but also because some of this information is highly problematic, tragic, hyper-sensualized, and scandalous. At the same time, users feel free and driven to share their opinions about everything on social media, regardless of their lack of expertise, which only exacerbates the drama contained in the public discourse.

The inclusion of emotions in the media as a means for monitoring reality changes the traditional model of objective, credible, and impartial attitude towards facts. It is for this reason that the dissertation also looks at some of the concepts related to the significance of objectivity, which is mainly characterized by a balanced and fair approach to the reporting of the different facets of an issue, the sifting out of the facts, the selection of a neutral voice, the presentation of the information in an appropriate sequence, and the journalists' ability to turn off their emotional involvement. Emotions are to be found at different levels in the media – from the use of emotionally loaded expressions through the use of

detailed descriptions and assessments to the incorporation of emotions into the narration by intensifying the drama present in the narrative. The emotional involvement also manifests itself through the journalists' behaviour, personalized storytelling, and the audience's reactions.

For the purpose of assessing the emotional interpretation present in today's news content, the author has described the mechanisms for the formation of both good and bad news. On the one hand, the prevailing positive emotions are interpreted and their manifestation on social media is explored. On the other hand, negativity is embedded in journalism from the very beginning and the negative news values are prioritized in the news content. The problem is that the excessive supply of negative news gives the audience a distorted sense of risk, stimulates the sense of drama, depression, isolation, fear, and anger, constructs toxic techno cultures, and provides a fertile ground for hate speech and the rejection of certain identities.

One part of the analysis focuses on constructive journalism, which aspires to transform the news by presenting positive stories. Constructive journalism strives to find and increase the influence of those factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to develop and to feel more involved, inspired, and optimistic. It does not want to go around the established journalistic practices but to broaden them by paying attention to more positive topics as a means for a more thorough and balanced storytelling. To do this, it combines the mechanisms of critically minded journalism with the possibility of studying and solving social problems and the stimulation of proactivity and consensus building.

Solutions journalism is discussed as well. This type of journalism presents solutions to important social problems and puts the emphasis on topics such as mutual assistance, volunteering, and good news rather than on dramatic or negative information. Among its main features is the expansion of the journalist's awareness. Here, the journalist's focus shifts towards a specific facet of the story, the need to have good knowledge of the presented topics and of the sources used

in the reporting, including the localization of the information, the application of a critical attitude towards the presented solutions, the strong relationships and engagement between the journalist and the audience, and the provision of support for social causes, even protest actions.

Summary of the results from the empirical studies

The author of the dissertation has used diverse **research methods**, both theoretical and empirical. The theoretical methods include monitoring and analysis of scientific and applied literature covering a wide range of topics in Bulgarian, Russian, and English, and classification and interpretation of multiple research theories, concepts, and types of journalism and their characteristics. The empirical methods include conducting three representative sociological studies based on the application of the content analysis and media analysis methods, and an in-depth interview with three leading Bulgarian journalists.

For the purpose of empirically testing the research hypotheses, in the Chapter 3 of the dissertation, the author describes and analyses the findings from a representative sociological study that she conducted based on the content analysis method with the goal of evaluating the ability of the three biggest TV stations in Bulgaria – bTV, Nova Television, and the Bulgarian National Television (BNT) – to offer products created through participatory journalism. The evening news programmes of the three TV stations were monitored in November and December 2018. More than 3,600 news stories were studied, and 133 of them were classified as a form of participatory journalism. According to the results, bTV and Nova Television are the most active in the promotion of user-generated content – they maintain active communication with their audiences both via email and via online platforms created for this purpose and follow the news traffic in search of interesting user-generated content. The dominant user-generated media formats include funny videos on social topics, photos, and videos from CCTV cameras. In terms of topics, the stories are most often about

acts of aggression and crimes (murders, road rage, thefts), economic and social issues (including stories that involve members of the political elite or expose corruption), and incidents caused by traffic-related problems or bad weather, but there are also some funny and personally oriented stories.

In Chapter 4, the author's representative sociological study is presented and analysed. The study, conducted jointly with the Bulgarian media analysis agency Perceptica in accordance with the media analysis methodology, looks at the ways in which Bulgarian online users participate in the creation of media content and the initiation of a public debate about major social, educational, and institutional topics. The study covers all online activities of Bulgarian media in 2019, including their public social media profiles. According to the results, users' most preferred platform for participation in the news flow are social media, Facebook in particular. In terms of users' behaviour, they mostly share content (posts, links, photos, videos) and react (for example, by liking a post or a photo). In more than half of the cases, the news media point out that the information they have incorporated into their own stories has been generated by users. They tend to prefer sourcing information from web pages to sourcing information from personal profiles because they can thus more easily check the authenticity of the information and because these platforms are popular and easily accessible, operate in line with copyright rules, and are considered to be more reliable, authoritative, and objective sources. Nevertheless, most media prefer not to provide a hyperlink to the original source of the user-generated information they have used and, instead, upload the information on their own platforms, sometimes in a modified form. This influences users' emotional response to the information – in more than half of the cases, the prevailing response to the media pieces is negative. In the study, the active audience's behaviour was monitored in relation to several social issues, the poorly functioning social institutions, and problems in the educational system.

Chapter 5 includes the author's own representative content-analysis study of the ways and instruments through which Bulgarian media tell positive stories. For the purpose of this study, the author analysed all 163 news pieces from bTV's series 'We Believe in the Good', which aired as part of the TV station's evening news programme from 2014 to 2019. Through the series, the team working on it wanted to prove that while negative and dramatic news stories dominate the Bulgarian media landscape, a project like 'We Believe in the Good' allows the media to exert more constructive influence and contributes to the painting of a more positive picture of the world. At the same time, the series covers diverse topics and is inspired by viewers, to the extent that they can suggest ideas for stories that deserve to be told. According to the results, the most popular topics include charity, volunteering, providing support, and sponsorship. As expected, the dominant emotions are generosity, hope, enthusiasm, gratitude, and optimism. It turns out that most of the stories presented in the series came about as a result of people's personal initiative, with the involvement of like-minded individuals, friends, and family members. This explains why the main voices in relation to the reported problems are community members, relatives, and volunteers.

In 2019, the author conducted an in-depth interview with three leading Bulgarian journalists, who, at the time of the interview, held high-level editorial positions in the private TV station bTV – Venelin Petkov (Director of News, Current Affairs, and Sports), Gena Traykova (News Editor-in-Chief), and Valya Gizdarska (Editor-in-Chief of Current Affairs Programmes).

Key findings

The three hypotheses in relation to the social and communication changes in the audience's behaviour and in the models of journalistic production, studied by the author for the purposes of this dissertation, are validated by the study's results. The modern online user demonstrates the signs of segmentation that are well-known from the operation of traditional media, but they also act in new ways

that have become possible thanks to their existence in the internet space. Despite the fact that Bulgarian journalism has faced heavy criticism for its backwardness, lack of transparency of media ownership, lack of independence, and a low level of freedom of expression, by allowing users to actively participate in the media production process and by using participatory journalism, Bulgarian journalism indicates that it is ready to follow the general media trends. Citizen participation has the potential to improve the country's level of democratization and help solve some of the national problems.

Bulgarian journalists recognize that the audience's role has changed, use information generated by the audience, which they include at different levels in their programmes, look for alternative sources of information, and give space to user-generated products so that they can offer better reports of events. This helps the media organizations to better position themselves in the media market – it expands their audience, draws interest and loyalty on the part of the audience, and stimulates competition among the media, including in relation to the use of forms of participatory journalism. At the same time, media production remains firmly in the hands of professional media organizations. They do not allow media users to have a say in determining the topics and location of the content to be produced, nor in the editing of that content, because they want to preserve the established journalistic standards and news models. Media users are mainly seen as sources of information and creators of interesting stories that can be used as a springboard to the production of media stories or as a complement to journalistic materials, and they are only allowed to participate in the process by sharing and commenting on stories produced by professional media.

The adoption of new journalistic forms, such as network journalism, is an element of the transition process that facilitates the transformation of the media system without undermining the media's basic functions and helps the media to meet the needs, interests, and expectations of the new active audience. Thanks to its advantages, multimedia journalism allows the media to present their content

in a highly visual way and complement it with relevant explanations. The greater use of constructive journalism and solutions journalism encourages the media to once again act as mediators between the elite and the rest of the society for the purpose of preserving democracy and protecting social and cultural values.

The inclusion of positive emotions in the Bulgarian media is related to the traditional attitudes in the Bulgarian society towards social interactions, mutual support, and finding solutions to problems without the participation of those in power and the ineffective social institutions. They reflect the prevalence of values such as health, personal happiness, family success, education, and wealth, which are both personal goals for a big segment of the society and signs of Bulgarians' national identity. The presence of more good news in the TV news programmes provides for a more balanced, people-oriented perspective towards public issues and allows for the formation of positive role models and for the demonstration of social, group, and individual support. The audience clearly states that it finds these formats to be important and meaningful. In this way, it builds upon the established national and socio-psychological characteristics of media consumption and social consolidation and develops new helpful values that reflect both the changes in the Bulgarian society and the growing importance of social and online media.

Bulgarian media are ready to accept the need to use new forms of journalism, but they are still less willing to change the established professional structures and news practices. Journalists need to realize that communication in the modern world is indeed a two-way process in which the audience's behaviour is of equal importance to the communicator's behaviour, that information moves freely among all participants, and that decisions should be taken on the basis of dialogue and awareness. In practice, the Bulgarian media are not open enough to the audience's participation in media production, and users manage to be a more active part of this process only on social media. The Bulgarian mass media do not use to a sufficient degree their ability to point out the real problems and to

participate in the process of solving them. At the same time, the existing citizen and alternative media that are independent enough to have a viable, less market-oriented content production model exert a more limited influence over the public agenda.

Contribution to research

1. For the first time in the Bulgarian media theory is presented a detailed segmentation of the audience per different criteria – social context, use of specific media formats, specific market mechanisms, use of shared media products, typologization based on socio-demographic indicators, scope and duration of the interaction with media products, user localization in space and time, the degree of activity/passivity and interactivity/interdependence, etc. The manifestations of the audience through typical social formations such as groups, crowds, audiences, and masses are explored, and the semantic distinction between a passive audience and an active audience is established. New manifestations of user activity are described, among them consumers, prosumers, and an empowered user.

2. For the first time in the Bulgarian media theory and journalism new types of journalism, manifested by the activity of the audience, have been defined, evaluated, and characterized. Significant influence is exerted by those who help the media recipients themselves to participate in media production. The citizen journalism and the participatory journalism emergence is a result of the greater accessibility of media technologies, the open nature of the internet leading to the formation of a network environment, and the strong civic culture, as well as the desire of the audience itself to produce, verify, and disseminate independent, trustworthy, accurate, and diverse information.

3. The important and interesting are the types of journalism, which are derived from the significant collaboration between media professionals and their audience. The multimedia journalism is an expression of the production of diverse media content (audio, video, text, images), the high level of visualization

of this content, the use of news packages, and the opportunities for their distribution through a number of media channels. The network journalism is related to the ability of professional journalists, users, local communities and experts in various fields to produce online content together with the goal of sharing facts, making complex links between various issues and events, and guaranteeing the trustworthiness of the information.

5. The significant manifestation have the types of journalism, which are a product of the joint activity of the media and the members of the society to impose important social goals. The constructive journalism and the solutions journalism offer solutions to important social problems, put the emphasis on topics such as mutual assistance, volunteering, and good news rather than on dramatic or negative information, and aspire to provide local information and a critical attitude towards the presented solutions through a detailed and factually accurate account of diverse viewpoints and data.

6. The contribution of the dissertation is the assessment of the significance of the mediatisation of emotions, to the extent that the intensified manifestation of emotions in the media is a response to the audience getting tired of the predominantly negative content, as well as from the growing influence of social media, where emotionally driven behaviour and emotional reactions have become a public norm. The media turn out to be a space for the manifestation of the emotional culture, mediatized anger, emotional intelligence, but of the emotional labour as well.