

## **Summary Presentation of Doctoral Dissertation**

### **The Social and Cultural Role of Radio in Greece, 1938–1966**

**Olympia P. Konstantopoulou**

PhD in Communication

Panteion University, Department of Communication, Media and Culture

✉@olympiak27@gmail.com

#### **Abstract**

The present Doctoral Dissertation seeks to fill an important knowledge gap in the history of the Media in Greece related to Hellenic Public Radio. It covers the first period of Hellenic Public Radio's operation, from 1938 (the start of Hellenic Public Radio) until 1966 (the start of Hellenic Public Television). This was a significant period during which the radio was the only electronic mass media and entertainment medium in Greece on such a large scale.

The first goal of this Doctoral Dissertation is to describe the characteristics, goals, and the content (the radio program) of Hellenic Public Radio. The second goal is to answer the question of how Hellenic Radio evolved and interacted with other international radio networks, Greek society, and the daily life of its listeners, the Greek citizens, in a particular period of modern history, which includes several important events such as the regime of Ioannis Metaxas, the Second World War, the Occupation, the Civil War, the Cold War, and the Reconstruction.

The absence of research interest in the study of Hellenic Radio resulted in minimal literature, which often lacked documentation. This Doctoral Dissertation is retrospective archival research from various sources (public and private archives, magazines, newspapers, etc.).

The main source of information was the collection and processing of a large representative sample (total cases N=18,130) of radio broadcasts. The processing of the data was carried out through the combination of quantitative and qualitative research tools.

The findings of this research include: a) The recording of the historical course of Hellenic Radio as an institution and administrative organization (networks, radio coverage, legislation, etc.), b) The recording of other radio networks (Greek and foreign), and the interaction of the Hellenic Radio with them, c) The content analysis of the radio program and quantitative descriptive display of seven basic program categories and individual subcategories (and their evolution over time), d) The recording of the significant role of the Hellenic Radio as a producer of national, cultural and social actions, as well as the relationship of interaction with the social and private life of Greek listeners/citizens.

#### **Introduction**

This dissertation examines the history of Greek radio broadcasting from the establishment of the public Hellenic Radio (1938) up to (1966), when the advent of television marked the end of radio as the sole electronic mass medium. The aim of the research is to study radio as an institution, an organization, and a medium, through its own produced content.

This study constitutes the first comprehensive scholarly account of Greek radio broadcasting in the 20th century, based on the analysis of primary sources and the systematic processing of radio programming. The dissertation applies content analysis using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, aiming to categorize, document, and interpret the programming, and to highlight its features and evolution within its historical context.

The empirical basis of the study consists of an extensive and representative sample of 18,130 radio program entries from the National and Second Programs. This material was analyzed in terms of its main categories, qualitative aspects, and longitudinal changes. Its processing was carried out using statistical tools, contributing to both the description and interpretation of the phenomenon.

In parallel, historical and archival sources (legislation, press, testimonies) were used to reconstruct the institutional, political, and social framework in which Hellenic Radio operated.

The study of Greek radio, based on its programming, reveals crucial aspects of its cultural, institutional, and social functions. It highlights its development from a tool of state propaganda to a medium of public communication, while also shedding light on the limitations it retained in its character and content.

## **2 . Literature Review**

The following section provides a detailed review of the existing literature on radio broadcasting in Greece, mapping the available research contributions, highlighting key gaps, and situating them within the broader international academic context.

The academic study of radio as a medium in Greece remains, to a large extent, an unexplored scientific field, with the relevant bibliography being limited or even non-existent in most thematic areas of this field. The present literature review attempts to map the available contributions, highlighting both the existing research and the available bibliography, as well as the evident significant gaps in the study of Greek radio and, consequently, in the history of the media in Greece. The aim is to highlight the main axes of the existing discussion, the methodological and theoretical approaches that have been adopted, and the needs for further scientific investigation of the subject.

The researcher of Radio in Greece faces the absence of previous comprehensive scientific studies. This can be partly understood and explained by the fact that in the first decades of radio in Greece, there was no scientific field, interest, or funding for the study of modern mass media. However, there is no sufficient explanation as to why Radio, as a key pillar of mass media in Greece, did not attract the interest of contemporary researchers and academic institutions. The indifference of scientific research resulted in a significant knowledge gap in this particular

scientific field of media history, depriving us of a tool for understanding not only the medium itself but also important aspects of society and modern Greek history connected to it.

The available Greek bibliography is classified into two categories. In the first category, we encounter scientific studies where radio either constitutes an aspect of the research or is limited to reproducing the scarce available bibliographic sources (printed materials, memoirs – testimonies of radio people). In none of these has a systematic study of the radio program been carried out. In this category of scientific studies, we encounter an important study by Marina Petraki, "Marina Petraki (2021)", regarding the propaganda of the Metaxas regime. The study concerns all available mass media in Greece and is based on the collection and processing of archives and the press, without systematic processing of the radio program. A similar study-monograph is found in the book by Cheretakis. M ("Cheretakis.M (2014)"), which refers to the period 1930–1950. This study presents information from the press, archives, and the available bibliography of the time, again without processing the radio program.

In this category of scientific studies, we also find some collective volumes on Greek radio broadcasting. These collective studies are limited to articles that also classify and reproduce the limited bibliography on radio. Additionally, there are some more specialized scientific studies concerning legal issues of the mass media in Greece, including radio (N. Alivizatos, P. Dagtoglou, and T. Doukeris). A notable study on radio is that of Vasso Psimouli, which does not concern Greek public radio but the history of the Communist Party of Greece's (KKE) radio station. Nevertheless, it constitutes an important source of information in order to understand the role of radio during the Civil War and the relationship between the two opposing radio broadcasters (E.I.R./Armed Forces Station/ K.K.E).

The second category of bibliography on Radio includes albums and studies by amateur researchers and collectors of radio, focusing on Greek radio, as well as books with testimonies from people who collaborated with Greek Radio. These are works that did not follow a scientific methodology of documentation, source collection, and processing. They often reproduce previously published texts and certain "myths" associated with Greek Radio, adopting a more literary narrative style. Nevertheless, they remain important efforts in collecting information and testimonies. Such a valuable amateur study can be found in the album by G. Chatzidakis ("Chatzidakis G. (2014)"), a former employee of radio broadcasting, researcher, and collector of Greek radio material. This album includes and classifies radio material (photographic, testimonies, press, etc.).

Another notable amateur effort is the publication by the commercial organization the organization of Radio Karayiannis ("Karayiannis, K., Lambrinos, M. & Nomikos, K. (1952)"). This publication constitutes a reference point and a source of information for any radio researcher. It is a commercial catalog-book that nevertheless contains documented information about the history and the state of Greek Radio as it had developed by the early 1950s, as well as its trajectory up to that point. This book served as a key tool for all subsequent writing efforts (articles, albums, etc.). In some cases, large excerpts from it were even reproduced without proper references to the book.

Also included in this second category are the books (testimonies, memoirs, personal opinions) of people who collaborated with radio. An extremely useful source of information for researchers in this field are books recording personal and professional experiences as well as the work produced within Greek Radio by its collaborators. Among these efforts we can distinguish: a) in the book by T. Aeneas ("Aeneas, T. (1967)"), an attempt to present the Radio, its operating mode, its programming, radio specialties, and some examples of practices and broadcasts; b) in the books by G. Carter (1928–2012), a long-time collaborator and important figure of Greek Radio and Television, various aspects of Greek radio, personal experiences, as well as views and perceptions regarding the role of radio, as these had been shaped during the early decades of radio; c) in the book by Dimis Apostolopoulos — a particularly important collaborator of E.I.R. —, who, in various capacities (director, writer, producer, etc.), participated in the production of the radio program. In this book-album ("Apostolopoulos, N. (1956)"), Apostolopoulos attempted a systematic recording of all broadcasts (categorized) in which he participated in their production; and d) in the book by Dimitris Chronopoulos ("Chronopoulos, D. (1981)"), a significant source of information on various aspects concerning his personal experiences and views, especially regarding the field of news broadcasting in Greek Radio.

In contrast to the Greek reality, the international bibliography on radio, especially in developed countries such as the United States, already records a rich history of scientific engagement from the 1930s onward. Iconic figures such as Paul Lazarsfeld developed theoretical and research frameworks aimed at understanding the functions and possibilities of radio. At the same time, critical voices from the Frankfurt School, as well as Bertolt Brecht, approached the medium as a vehicle of ideology and social manipulation. Of particular interest are studies on the role of radio during times of crisis (World War II, Cold War), as well as analyses of different radio models (public/commercial). The contribution of Ch. Siepmann focuses on the connection of radio with the social and cultural context, while Cantril & Allport highlight the significance of radio content as an indicator of the quality of democracy. The rich foreign bibliography has provided valuable theoretical tools and comparative perspectives, necessary for understanding the Greek radio reality.

The existing bibliography on Greek Radio proves to be extremely limited, and none of the research efforts so far has attempted a systematic study, processing, classification, and measurement of the radio program. This gap renders the image of the state, content, and dynamics of radio production unclear—elements absolutely necessary for understanding both the development of radio and the history of the media in Greece. No study concerning Greek radio—or the media more broadly—can be considered complete without the analysis of their content (in this case, the radio program) and its historical evolution.

Responding to this need, the present dissertation was based on the systematic collection and analysis of the radio program. The program was studied as an autonomous object, aiming to understand the structure, evolution, and physiognomy of Greek Radio during this period, and also as a source of documentation and verification of other aspects of radio activity, such as the investigation of the application or deviation from institutional commitments and legislative regulations.

### **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Methodological Approach**

The methodological approach followed in this dissertation is based on content analysis, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. The central focus of the research is the study of the radio programming in order to record the main categories of broadcasts, highlight their key characteristics, and trace their development over time. The quantitative depiction of the programming and its qualitative interpretation allow for the identification of broader patterns and changes in the character of Greek radio broadcasting. At the same time, the study is enriched by recording necessary historical data concerning the operation of Greek radio as an institution and organization, within the specific political, social, and historical context of each period, aiming at understanding the broader environment in which the radio content is produced and shaped.

### **3.2. Use of Archival and Historical Sources**

Apart from the content analysis of radio programming, it was necessary to broaden the research perspective; thus, a wide range of archival and historical sources was also employed. In particular, legislative texts (laws, ministerial decisions, government gazettes), archival sources, as well as publications from the daily and periodical press of the period were used. These sources supported the documentation of institutional changes, the shaping of radio policy, and the mapping of public discourses around radio broadcasting. The cross-referencing of the content of broadcasts with institutional developments and public discourse offered a more comprehensive picture of the function and role of radio within the specific historical framework.

### **3.3 Sources and Documentation**

The analysis of radio programming was supplemented by the systematic use of selected primary and secondary sources, aiming at the cross-referencing and documentation of findings. These sources were critical for understanding both the content and the broader operation of Greek radio within its historical context. The primary sources, which served as the main source of information and documentation tool, include: (a) the Greek press from 1930 to 1966, (b) printed material and magazines of the Greek Radio from 1938 to 1966, (c) the limited available archive of ERT (1945–1965), (d) private archives, and (e) testimonies (interviews with collaborators of Greek radio). These sources were also essential for the processing and interpretation of the radio programming, which is analyzed not as an autonomous datum but as part of a complex and dynamic historical and social environment. Simultaneously, international — and to a lesser extent Greek — bibliography was used to strengthen the comparative and theoretical foundation of the analysis.

### **3.4. Collection and Processing of Radio Programming**

The collection and processing of the radio programming constituted the primary empirical material of this dissertation. Specifically, an extensive and representative sample of programming was collected from the two main stations of the EIR: “Ethniko” (1938–1966) and “Deutero” (1952–1966), which produced the bulk of broadcasts, many of which were transmitted or rebroadcast by regional and shortwave stations. The sample includes, for the National Program, two weeks per year (one summer and one winter week) for the entire period examined

(1938–1966), and for the “Deutero” one week per year from 1952 (its year of establishment) until 1966. In total, the sample comprises 18,130 entries (Total Cases N=18,130), which include information such as date, time, title and duration of broadcast, categories and subcategories of programs, and other supplementary indications.

The collection of the radio programming sample had a dual use and purpose. First, it allowed for statistical processing and quantification of the data, making possible — for the first time — the quantitative depiction of the main categories of radio broadcasts and their evolution across the different historical periods covered by the study. Second, it contributed to the analysis of the qualitative characteristics of the programs and broadcasts, which served as a critical source of information and understanding of the internal functions of the Greek Radio as well as the social context in which it operated.

The radio programming itself, beyond its analytical value, often served as a starting point for further historical investigation of aspects of modern Greek society. Moreover, it functioned as a tool for verifying or questioning other sources, as it provided indications of whether and to what extent programmatic declarations, legislative provisions, or official statements by the political and administrative leadership of Greek radio were actually implemented. Indicatively, the radio programming reveals discrepancies between declarations and application, such as the proclamations of Th. Nikoloudis — Minister of Press under the Metaxas regime and political overseer of Greek Radio — about the exclusion of foreign songs from programming, or the EIR’s declarations about limiting radio advertisements, which ultimately were not realized.

The statistical descriptive representation of the results was carried out using appropriate tables and corresponding charts. More specifically, for categorical variables, Single and Double Entry Frequency Tables and corresponding diagrams (Pie Charts, Relative Frequency Bar Charts) were used, while for continuous (numeric) variables, Descriptive Measures Tables and corresponding diagrams (Central Tendency Measure Bar Charts, Time Series Graphs) were used. The processing of the collected data and the statistical analysis of the results were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Ver.23) and EXCEL software.

In addition to the quantitative depiction of the six main categories of radio programming through quantitative processing, other aspects of the radio programming were also collected and recorded in tables, such as: (a) period-specific tables with the average daily program hours (for Sundays and weekdays) and program time zones (morning, midday, evening), and (b) tables with other useful information, such as the number of hours of foreign-language programming broadcast for foreign audiences by Greek radio, etc.

This statistical processing was not merely descriptive but also functioned as an interpretative tool, revealing important diachronic trends and changes in the content and orientation of radio programming.

The subcategories of broadcasts are a key source of information mainly about the qualitative characteristics of the broadcasts. In some cases, quantitative processing (quantitative depiction) was also carried out, though it concerned some limited cases of large (quantitative) subcategories. Such cases, for example, were the subcategory of sponsored/advertising

broadcasts during the period 1960–66, whose processing allowed us to record and confirm the increased role of advertising and the transformation of “Deutero” into an informal commercial radio. Another case concerned the quantitative depiction of the "foreign broadcaster" subcategory, the processing of which enabled us to identify tendencies of extroversion or introversion in Greek Radio during the periods 1950–59 and 1960–66, respectively. These quantitative depictions, although limited, strengthened the qualitative analysis, confirming or highlighting trends that would not have been equally discernible solely through thematic categorization of content.

### **The Six Main Categories of Broadcasts**

Regarding the statistical processing and the quantitative (descriptive) depiction of radio programming, six main categories were selected. This choice corresponds on the one hand to categories of radio content found in all relevant studies of foreign radios, such as music, information, or radio drama, and on the other hand to categories reflecting the specificities of the Greek radio landscape and the information we seek to draw from them, both about the functioning of Greek Radio and its interaction with Greek society — such as the "Special Theme and Audience" category.

The six main categories developed are:

1. Music,
2. Information,
3. Special Theme and Audience,
4. Radio Drama,
5. Education – Art – Culture, and
6. Variety Programming
7. Unknown Content( $\alpha$  technical category)

One aspect of our study concerns the quantitative depiction of the radio programming regarding these basic categories and their evolution during the period under study, which we attempt to interpret with the support of primary and secondary sources, embedded in a broader historical (Greek and international) context.

The radio programming was also subdivided into specific subcategories, such as various music genres (Greek, foreign, traditional), news and informational content, themed broadcasts for specific audiences (e.g. children, women, farmers), and programs on education, science, and literature

### **3.5. Periodization**

The study covers Greek radio broadcasting from the establishment of the state Radio in 1938 until 1966, when Greek television began operating, marking the end of radio's monopoly as the only electronic mass communication and entertainment medium in the country.

The periodization of Greek radio broadcasting arose from the historical analysis and findings of the radio programming processing and is divided into six subperiods, as follows:

1. **1907–1938:** Prehistory of Greek Radio, focusing on the introduction of wireless technologies and the processes leading to the creation of public radio under the Metaxas regime.
2. **1938–1940:** Establishment and organization of Radio, with the foundation of structures and ideological management by the regime.
3. **1941–1944:** Period of War and Occupation, during which the radio functioned as a tool of propaganda, resistance, and international communication (e.g., BBC, A.E.R.E.).
4. **1945–1949:** Reconstruction phase after Liberation, marked by the Greek Civil War, the strong impact of the Cold War, and the foundation of public radio with international support.
5. **1950–1959:** Period of stability, strengthening, and flourishing of Greek Radio.
6. **1960–1966:** New phase, with introversion due to television and weakening of international radio networks, strengthening of the entertainment character, and the emergence of “Deutero”.

Overall, the methodological choice of content analysis, combined with the use of primary and secondary sources, allows for a multifaceted and well-documented interpretation of the historical development of Greek radio broadcasting.

#### **4. FINDINGS – DISCUSSION**

This doctoral dissertation presents a synthetic historical analysis of Greek radio broadcasting, based on primary and secondary data, the volume of which exceeds the limits of this text. The following section briefly outlines the key categories of findings, in order to highlight the scope and nature of the newly documented evidence. First, the new evidence that emerged from the study is recorded, followed by a summary of the main characteristics of each historical period.

##### **4.1 Overview of Newly Documented Findings**

The documented findings, derived from the systematic study of primarily primary and secondary sources, form the basis of the historical analysis of the only legal broadcaster in Greece during the period under investigation—Greek public radio.

These findings are organized into the following main thematic categories:

##### **(a) The evolution of radio as an institution and public organization:**

- Documentation of the legislation defining the legal framework for Greek public radio.
- Political management of radio: goals and objectives set by successive governments and the radio organization, as well as discrepancies between declared intentions and actual practices.
- Issues of funding and staffing in Greek public radio.

##### **(b) Technological specifications of Greek public radio:**



- Comprehensive documentation of the type and transmission capacity (coverage) of available medium-wave and shortwave transmitters (tables).
- Recording of the available technology and the staff's ability to utilize it effectively.

**(c) The full set of Greek public radio stations:**

- Detailed documentation of all stations (with tables), the reasons for their establishment, and their interaction with society and historical developments.

**(d) Key features of the radio programming ("Athens Radio Station/National" and "Second Programme"):**

- Recording and analysis of the daily radio schedule (weekdays and Sundays).
- Presentation of central tendency metrics for broadcast durations (mean, mode, minimum and maximum duration, total airtime), both overall and by program category (tables).
- Graphs showing the distribution of airtime percentages across six main broadcast categories.
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the content in each main broadcast category and its relationship with society and the historical context.
- Technical aspects of transmission methods, retransmissions, and content variations.

**(e) The relationship of Greek public radio with other radio networks:**

- Collaborations with foreign networks, either through bilateral agreements or broader political frameworks (e.g., Cold War communication strategies).
- Relations and interactions with other Greek radio stations, both legal (e.g., Armed Forces Station) and illegal (e.g., the Communist Party of Greece station).

**(f) The interaction between Greek public radio and Greek society:**

- The reception and integration of radio into Greek society; listening practices (e.g., collective listening).
- The public radio's national and social role: cultural and social initiatives (e.g., competitions, festivals) and its contribution to the management of national crises.

**4.2.1 Period 1907–1938: From the Introduction of Wireless Communication Technologies in Greece to the Establishment of Greek Public Radio**

The extensive military use of wireless communication technologies, particularly during World War I, and related experimentation by military personnel led to the emergence of radio stations worldwide—a development that was mirrored by Greek radio amateurs.

The period leading up to the establishment of the first public radio station in 1938 was marked by contradictions, with the state's failure to create a public broadcasting system coexisting with the active and successful initiatives of radio amateurs and private individuals.

State efforts were largely limited to repeated but unsuccessful attempts to establish public radio in Greece, accompanied by legislative measures securing the state monopoly over wireless

technology and rendering all private use illegal. Despite these prohibitions, a degree of tolerance was shown toward certain private initiatives, which the authorities occasionally used for communication purposes. At the same time, strict regulations were imposed on the purchase and use of radio devices, including complex licensing procedures and heavy taxation.

As for private initiatives, despite the hostile legal environment, individuals developed significant activity, especially during the 1930s, including:

- An extensive network of suppliers and retailers of radio equipment, alongside the production of low-cost radio sets.
- Structures for private training in wireless communication and radio use.
- Strong networks of radio amateurs from diverse backgrounds (merchants, students, university professors), many of whom went on to work more broadly in the radio field as educators, traders, or craftsmen.
- The creation of a large-range radio station (Chr. Tsiggiridis Station) in Northern Greece.

Greek society, despite the objective difficulties in accessing radio devices and services, embraced the new technology with enthusiasm. This attitude is reflected in the press of the time, which both fueled public curiosity through informative articles and harshly criticized the state's ineffective efforts to establish public broadcasting. From the mid-1930s onward, the appearance of Greek-language broadcasts via foreign networks (e.g., Poland, Italy) and the availability of cheaper Greek-manufactured radios led to increased public interest in radio, evident in the rise in sales, particularly in urban centers. For both the political leadership and society, the public broadcasting model was a non-negotiable choice, as radio was from the outset perceived as a public good.

#### **4.2.2 Period 1938–1940: The Foundation of Greek Radio Broadcasting by the Metaxas Regime: From the Launch of the Athens Radio Station to the Outbreak of the Greco-Italian War**

Greek radio broadcasting was established belatedly on May 21, 1938, by the Metaxas regime, under strict censorship. Although it was designed as a tool of propaganda, its operation was undermined by serious structural weaknesses and the outbreak of World War II, which shifted the focus to wartime developments. The main problems are identified as follows:

- The fragmented legislative framework, consisting of successive emergency laws that attempted to regulate its operation.
- Inadequate technical infrastructure: the station broadcast with a 15kW transmitter, although studies had recommended 50–100kW for full coverage of the national territory.
- The limited degree of public access, due to financial and technical obstacles, insufficient electrification, and low sound quality.

The foundation of Greek radio broadcasting coincided with the rise of fascist and Nazi regimes in Europe and with the rapid transformation of radio into a tool of propaganda and foreign policy around the world. Within this context, several countries broadcast programs in the Greek language. Among them, the French and Italian radio (the Bari station, active since the mid-1930s) stand out.

In 1939, the Greek section of the BBC began its operation, developing close cooperation with Greek radio on matters of technical expertise and program exchange, mainly through the daily rebroadcast of news programs by the Athens Radio Station. During the war, the BBC conveyed developments in Europe to the Greek audience with immediacy, reinforcing the sense of participation in international events.

Alongside the public radio, two more Greek radio stations were in operation. The first was the station of the National Youth Organization (EON), which from 1939 operated as a propaganda tool of the Metaxas regime. The second was the station of Christos Tsigiridis in Northern Greece, which, although illegal, filled a critical gap in radio coverage, acting as a counterweight to the propagandistic activity of the Italian Greek-language station during the period before and at the beginning of the war.

### **Radio Programming**

The radio programming reflects the historical circumstances of the period, showing clearly the influence of both the role of the Metaxas regime and of World War II, as follows:

- a) The Metaxas regime exerted decisive influence on the orientation of radio content, enforcing strict state control, particularly over news broadcasts, with the aim of shaping public opinion. Specialized programs were developed for targeted social groups (workers, farmers, youth, women), while the radio was systematically used for the broadcast of ceremonies, official celebrations, and speeches by Metaxas himself, reinforcing the ideological consolidation of the regime; and
- b) The outbreak of World War II, combined with the use of radio as a tool of propaganda by international networks, strengthened the informative role of Greek radio broadcasting. The radio schedule was adapted to the new conditions with an increase in both the number and duration of news bulletins. From an average of four daily bulletins (10–15 minutes) in 1938–1939, in 1940 five to seven were broadcast daily, two of which had extended duration (30 and 45 minutes), replacing the shorter bulletins of the previous period.

#### **4.2.3 Period 1940–1944: Radio Broadcasting in Greece During the Greco-Italian War and the Occupation**

##### **The War Period**

The conditions of war played a decisive role in the strengthening and upgrading of Greek radio broadcasting.

- Its technical infrastructure was reinforced through the installation of a shortwave transmitter, which for the first time allowed it to achieve nationwide coverage and to extend its reach internationally, including the Greek front and foreign audiences.
- Radio broadcasting was established as a public good, intertwined with the notion of national sovereignty, gaining significant social acceptance, which largely shaped its development in the postwar period.

- At the same time, it developed a strong outward orientation:
  - a) by strengthening its collaboration with the radio stations of Allied countries (such as the BBC and American radio networks),
  - b) by providing information to international networks regarding Greek military successes, and
  - c) by broadcasting ten daily foreign-language news bulletins (accounting for 28% of the daily schedule) in Albanian, Yugoslav, Romanian, Bulgarian, Italian, German, Turkish, French, English, and Spanish, targeting international audiences.

During the Greco-Italian War, the radio schedule maintained its basic structure, yet was substantially adapted to the exceptional circumstances of the time, responding to the public's increased need for immediate and reliable information.

- Special broadcasts were produced for soldiers, such as the *Announcements of the Frontline Solidarity Communications Department* and the *Special Broadcast for the British Forces Present in Greece*.
- Programs from international partner stations, such as the BBC, were integrated into the schedule, including declarations of solidarity from foreign peoples and messages of support from prominent political figures, such as Charles de Gaulle and Winston Churchill.
- News coverage was strengthened through regular and emergency bulletins reporting on developments at the front and internationally.
- The remaining programs were shaped with a patriotic orientation, incorporating speeches, national-themed theatrical plays, and satirical musical pieces targeting the enemy.

### **The Occupation Period**

During the Occupation, Greek radio broadcasting, like every aspect of public and private life, came under the control of the occupying forces. Three radio stations were available to the Greek public:

- a) the private A.E.R.E., as a continuation of the Athens Radio Station,
- b) the stations operated by the German forces in Greece, and
- c) the Greek section of the BBC, broadcasting from London.

Reflecting the dual governmental reality (the occupation regime and the government-in-exile), two main channels of radio communication emerged: A.E.R.E., fully controlled by the occupying powers, and the Greek BBC, which expressed the “voice of free Greece.” Listening to the BBC, although prohibited, became rooted in the collective memory as an act of solidarity and resistance.

A.E.R.E. (Anonymous Greek Radio Broadcasting Company), a private station operated by Telefunken, was the only case of private Greek radio broadcasting, imposed by the occupying forces. It produced exclusively entertainment programming, as news was controlled by the occupation authorities. Though considered unreliable and a propaganda instrument, it nonetheless offered a sense of normalcy through light programming and the retention of elements from the pre-war schedule, serving as the only available radio source for the citizens.

#### **4.2.4 Period 1945–1949: The Foundation of Postwar Greek Radio Broadcasting (E.I.R.) in Conditions of Civil War and Cold War**

In the first three years following Liberation (1944–1947), Greek radio broadcasting fell into decline. Its limited technical capabilities—already insufficient before the war—had deteriorated further due to damages sustained during the Occupation and the general state of economic hardship. Additionally, the Thessaloniki Radio Station of Tsingiridis was no longer in operation.

However, the exceptional circumstances created by the Greek Civil War and the new reality of the Cold War radically altered the situation, paving the way for the establishment of a strong postwar radio system. The founding of the National Radio Foundation (E.I.R.), along with the development of a robust network of military radio stations (“Armed Forces Radio Station”), was due to:

- Financial tools such as the Marshall Plan and specific funding programs for radio broadcasting (and education);
- The urgent need to address the communication demands of both the Cold War and the Greek Civil War;
- The interventionist role of the United States in radio-related matters (funding, planning, technical expertise, etc.).

During this period, the strengthening of radio broadcasting was substantial and multifaceted:

- a) coverage was significantly expanded through the installation of new transmitters (with a total power of 65 kW and shortwave capabilities);
- b) the network was extended with new stations in Volos and Thessaloniki;
- c) human resources were reinforced through staff increases and the recruitment of intellectual creators;
- d) preparations began for comprehensive radio broadcasting legislation;
- e) the programming was gradually upgraded, with thematic diversification, a strengthening of news content, and qualitative improvement of entertainment programming.

During the period under consideration, the National Radio Foundation developed multilayered international activity, integrating itself into the broader framework of Cold War communication strategies. In this context, its contacts with foreign broadcasters and international organizations were strengthened through three main axes:

- (a) regular rebroadcasting of programs from international stations such as the BBC, French Radio, and the Voice of America;
- (b) incorporation into E.I.R.’s schedule of broadcasts produced by foreign entities, including French, Canadian, British, and South African stations, as well as the United Nations (“The United Nations Hour,” beginning in July 1947). In 1948, the U.S. program “The American Hour” was also added;
- (c) cooperation in matters of radio production, transfer of technical know-how, and provision of support during times of crisis.

From 1948 onward, a new radio broadcasting condition emerged with the establishment and rapid development of a network of military radio stations under the auspices of the Hellenic Army General Staff. This network served, on the one hand, the communication needs of the Cold

War, and on the other, the strategy of the “Directorate of Moral and National Education of the Army,” which aimed at the ideological instruction and entertainment of enlisted soldiers. Very quickly, this network evolved into an alternative, often more popular, radio proposition that sometimes operated competitively toward the E.I.R.

During this period, Greek society was confronted with a national tragedy—the Greek Civil War—which stood at the heart of the geopolitical rivalries of the Cold War. The E.I.R. served the communication needs of one side of the conflict, functioning as a key propaganda tool of the state apparatus.

In the early years of the Civil War, the two Greek radio networks—mutually competitive and hostile—were of limited strength. This was due to the small technical coverage of their broadcasts, the limited access of citizens to radio receivers, and the lack of experience in producing effective propaganda content, especially on the part of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). Gradually, however, the E.I.R. network, in combination with that of the Armed Forces, acquired vastly superior capabilities on all levels—technical, organizational, and communicational—ultimately dominating the country's radio landscape.

In conclusion, amid the circumstances of a national tragedy such as the Civil War, Greek radio broadcasting leveraged both reconstruction funding programs and the pressures imposed by the war itself to lay the foundational infrastructure for a powerful national radio system in the coming decades. Radio was embraced by the Greek people, demonstrating steadily increasing levels of social penetration. In the bleak conditions of the Civil War, and under the heavy shadow of War and Occupation, radio functioned as a refuge: it offered comfort and relaxation, and for children and youth in particular, it provided a medium that kept alive the hope and the possibility of dreaming of a better future.

#### **4.2.5 Period 1950–1959: The Development and Peak of the E.I.R. Institutional and Technological Maturation of Greek Radio Broadcasting**

During the 1950s, Greek radio broadcasting entered a phase of institutional, technological, and organizational maturation, consolidating its public character and strengthening its role in the social and cultural spheres. Specifically:

- At the level of technical infrastructure, the full development of medium and shortwave transmitters was implemented, enabling program broadcasts with strong reach, accessible to both domestic and international listeners.
- On an institutional level, the functioning of the E.I.R. was rationalized, with a major milestone being Emergency Law 1755/1951, which constituted the most comprehensive legal framework for radio broadcasting up to that time, despite the implementation challenges it faced.
- The radio network was expanded with the establishment of the "Second" Program (1952), with an entertainment focus, and the "Third" Program (1954), specializing in classical music, endowing the E.I.R. with a multifaceted and polyphonic character.

However, these developments coexisted with persistent dysfunctions. Political manipulation of radio broadcasting undermined its ethical autonomy and, ultimately, the quality of democracy, while clientelist practices continued to shape staff recruitment. Moreover, the loss of revenue

from unregistered radios and the absence of a policy for managing and preserving archival material revealed the structural weaknesses that continued to characterize the institution of radio.

### **The E.I.R. as an Active Member of International Radio Networks**

By the end of the 1950s, radio on the international stage functioned as a tool of foreign policy with a dual purpose:

a) as a medium of international cooperation and peaceful coexistence, through the promotion of cultural diversity and mutual understanding among peoples. The E.I.R. was an active member of these networks, and this was reflected in its programming, as evidenced by primary research findings in the context of this dissertation. During the 1950s, foreign-broadcast content made up 6.7% of the programming on the "National" Program and 9.8% on the "Second" Program. These broadcasts included both daily retransmissions of programs from French radio, the BBC, and the Voice of America, as well as thematic programs provided by official entities of foreign countries, such as "French Broadcast," "South African Broadcast," "Canadian Broadcast," "Swiss Broadcast," "Egyptian Quarter," and "Brazilian Broadcast," among others.

b) as a propaganda tool within the context of the Cold War, under the influence of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In Greece, the U.S.I.S. of the American Embassy developed a close and interventionist collaboration with the E.I.R., promoting the technical reinforcement of the organization, the integration of Voice of America broadcasts, and the strengthening of the E.I.R.'s foreign-language transmissions to Balkan audiences—whose reception was monitored by Voice of America services (e.g., in Bulgaria).

### **The Radio Program**

Programs with specialized thematic content and targeted audiences were further expanded. The E.I.R. now addressed not only broad audiences—such as children, farmers, and workers—but also more niche groups, such as philatelists. This expansion aligned with the fundamental principle guiding public broadcasters: to represent the entire spectrum of listeners.

Alongside the strengthening of entertainment and information content, the same period saw an enhancement of cultural programming, such as the segments "Education – Art – Culture" and "Radio Theater." These numerous, original, and high-quality broadcasts were largely the result of the passion and creative dedication of key figures in radio, most notably Dimis Apostolopoulos, and made a decisive contribution to the cultural mission of the E.I.R.

Cultural broadcasts of the period included:

- a) classical music programs, supported by the "Third Program," a station dedicated exclusively to the genre;
- b) quality theater productions featuring prominent actors of the time;
- c) programs with scientific content involving specialized scholars, as tools for understanding and improving reality;
- d) pioneering broadcasts covering topics from world art, science, philosophy, and literature.

Radio theater and literary broadcasts, with their daily presence on E.I.R. stations, became particularly popular among both initiated audiences and the broader public, including many uninitiated—even illiterate—listeners. In this way, they contributed significantly to the

democratization of entertainment, as well as to the gradual formation and expansion of audiences for theater and literature. Moreover, broadcasts featuring experts and scientists, beyond their practical value, offered Greek citizens a long-term new perspective for understanding reality. For example, frequent talks by scientists after the major earthquakes of the period (in the Ionian Islands and Santorini) helped the public comprehend earthquakes as natural phenomena rather than divine punishments. At the same time, they highlighted the role of science in the prevention and management of natural disasters, such as through seismic protection.

### **Radio and Society**

During this period, the social and cultural role of the E.I.R. was strengthened through the organization of the Light Song Festival, competitions for young artists, and support initiatives for vulnerable groups, such as the sick and earthquake victims.

In the same period, Greek radio was called upon to manage a major national crisis: the Cyprus issue. With special broadcasts and an emphasis on supporting national claims, the E.I.R. assumed an active role in the public discourse surrounding the matter. This stance, however, led to the unfortunate end of a long-standing collaboration with the BBC, resulting in the closure of the Greek section of the British broadcasting organization.

Radio during this period achieved high levels of acceptance and diffusion in Greek society. It was integrated into and became part of the practices and activities of Greeks' daily lives, reinforcing existing habits, preferences, customs, and traditions, while simultaneously creating space for encountering the different, the distant, and the modern.

The limited spread of radios, particularly in rural areas and among poorer social strata, favored collective listening: in cafés, schools, and town squares. Listeners would gather in groups with shared characteristics or identities (neighborhood, village, sports fans, friendships) and respond collectively—through discussion, emotions, and commentary—to what they heard, thereby shaping a framework of lively and socially active listening.

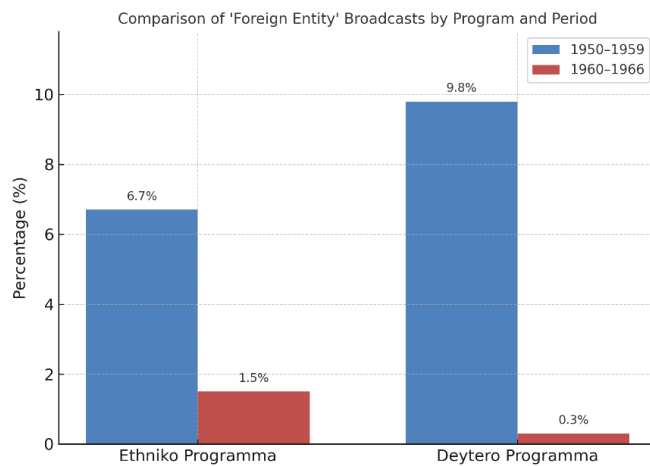
### **4.2.6 Period 1960–1966: A Transitional Period of Introspective Radio Broadcasting**

A key feature of this period was the gradual decline in the use and significance of radio as a tool of communication diplomacy, particularly within the context of the Cold War. This shift led to the weakening of the strong network of cooperation among national radio broadcasters, which had flourished in the post-war period. As a result, Greek radio lost the economic and technical support—mainly from the United States—that had shaped its momentum during the previous decade.

At the same time, long-standing pathologies and dysfunctions of the National Radio Foundation (E.I.R.) came to the surface and were widely discussed in public discourse—by the press, political parties, and civil society. However, despite the intense criticism expressed, the public nature of radio broadcasting was never questioned. On the contrary, the existence of a state-run, national radio service was considered by nearly all of Greek society to be necessary and self-evident, as the only institution capable of representing national interests and serving the public good.



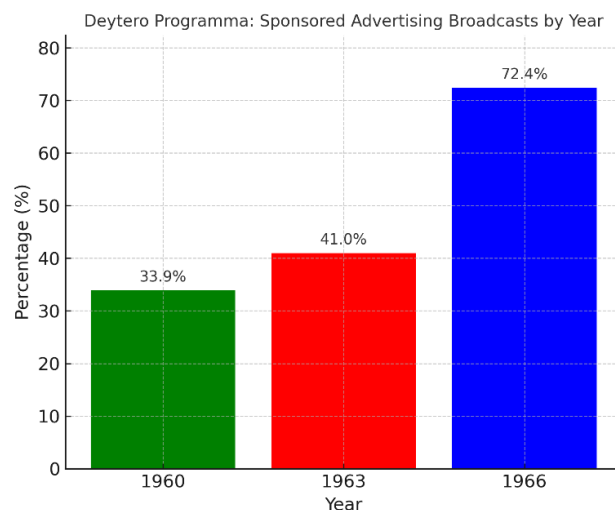
The E.I.R., interacting with society, the organization's need for funding, and the Greek market's need to advertise products and services through radio, found itself in a new transitional condition due to the contraction and weakening of the active international radio network that had flourished in the previous decade. This new condition led it to seek a renewed identity and to resolve vital issues, such as financial sustainability. This transition is documented and reflected in the analysis of primary sources used in this dissertation concerning the radio programming. Specifically:



**A)** The contraction and introspection of Greek radio, evident in the gradual disappearance of foreign broadcaster programs (broadcasts and rebroadcasts). In the comparative chart of two periods—(a) 1950–1959 and (b) 1960–1966—regarding the percentage of "foreign broadcaster" programs, we observe a continuous decline that essentially leads to their disappearance from the programming of the Athens stations of the E.I.R. From the significant presence of "foreign broadcaster" programs in the daily schedules of the "National" and "Second"

programs during the previous decade (1950s), the current period records a dramatic contraction and even disappearance of these programs. In the "National (Ethniko)" program, they shrink to just 1.5% of the total programming, and in the "Second(Deutero)" program, they almost vanish, at just 0.3%. This development was not the result of a deliberate decision by the E.I.R., but rather a new reality shaped in the international field of radio networks. As a consequence of this new reality, there was a shift from a worldview composed of distinct nations—represented through various "foreign broadcaster" programs—to a new perception where emphasis moved to more global forms of "foreign," such as music.

**B)** The creation of an "informal" commercial radio station within the public radio framework of the E.I.R.—the "Second(Deutero)" program—yielded to the market's demand for advertising and the financial needs of the E.I.R.



As shown in the chart of the percentage of "sponsored programs" per year (1960, 1963, 1966), the percentage of sponsored (advertising) broadcasts recorded a notable increase: from 33.9% in 1963, it more than doubled in 1966 to reach 72.4%. This clear shift of the "Second(Deutero)" program—from a public, high-quality entertainment radio to a "commercial" one—had serious

consequences on programming quality, with a dominance of shows featuring popular music, comedy sketches, and a gradual prevalence of serialized radio dramas (romances and crime stories), weakening the types of programs that characterized the previous period.

The transformation of the Second Program into an informal commercial radio station brought certain benefits but also consequences, which can be summarized as follows: a) it helped address the financial difficulties of the E.I.R. and met the advertising needs of the Greek market; b) it contributed to a balance within the E.I.R., allowing the “National Program” to retain the features of a national public broadcaster with a serious, high-quality schedule; c) through sponsored programs, it resulted in the lifting of the previous exclusion of popular (laïkí) music from the E.I.R.

During this period, radio broadcasting saw increased diffusion, especially in major urban centers. There was also a noticeable shift toward more individualized listening habits (more radios and transistors, more radio options). Collective listening practices continued in the case of homogeneous groups (youth, sports fans, etc.) and in areas where neighborhood networks had been preserved.

## **Conclusion**

This dissertation has highlighted radio broadcasting as a field of complex interaction between the state, technology, and society, tracing its transformation from a tool of state propaganda to a medium of public communication. Through the analysis of the radio programming itself, it revealed the medium’s evolution and the ways in which it reflected—or resisted—social and political change.

The research was based on the systematic analysis of an extensive and representative empirical sample, which allowed for a well-documented interpretation of radio production and its historical development. At the same time, situating the radio content within its broader institutional and sociopolitical context provided a comprehensive understanding of the medium’s functions and limitations.

The dissertation thus offers the first complete and well-substantiated history of the radio medium in Greece, based on primary archival sources and employing content analysis as its core methodological approach. This study contributes to the formation of a historiographical field for Greek radio, presenting radio not merely as a tool of communication but as a subject of rigorous and autonomous scholarly inquiry.

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