

THE NEGATIVE ROLE OF MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS IN CREATING AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

NEGATIVNA ULOGA MEDIJA I NOVINARA U KREIRANJU SVIJESTI I PERCEPCIJE MLADIH LJUDI

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Abstract

The role of media and journalists in modelling a social reality in the modern environment is extremely important. They have at least three important functions: to inform, educate and influence opinion. Hence, their major impact on perception of young people of the surrounding world, which, unfortunately, has been transformed into a media spectacle, especially through electronic media, social networks and the Internet.

Media industry, through content and messages has reformed and deformed reality on a large scale; it has given a false image of the environment and has "contaminated" the young mind, leaving visible consequences. Therefore the purpose of this paper is to emphasize professionalism and ethics of media and journalists who should be competent creators of objective information.

Keywords: media, communications, journalists, youth, public awareness.

Sažetak

Uloga medija i novinara u oblikovanju društvene stvarnosti u modernom okruženju izuzetno je važna. Imaju najmanje tri važne funkcije: informisanje, obrazovanje i uticaj na mišljenje. Otuda je njihov glavni uticaj na percepciju mladih na svijet koji ih okružuje, što se na žalost pretvorilo u medijski spektakl, posebno kroz elektronske medije, socijalne mreže i internet.

Medijska industrija, kroz sadržaj i poruke se promijenila i deformisala u višem smislu; dala je lažnu sliku okruženja i zatrovala je mladi um, ostavljajući vidne posljedice. Zbog toga je cilj ovog rada da se naglasi značaj profesionalizam i etičnosti medija i novinara koji bi trebali biti kompetentni stvaraoci objektivne informacije.

Ključne riječi: mediji, komunikacije, novinari, mladost, javna svijest.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation in the field of media and communications in the world is a result of dynamic social changes, accelerated scientific and technological development in the field of information systems, telecommunications, increased development and spread of mobile communications, satellite transmission of information and the emergence of the Internet,

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which opened wide communication possibilities. The main advantages of the Internet are the following: easy access, availability (in any language at any time, e-mails, news, blogs, audio, video, open or encrypted communication), lack of legislative, the absence of censorship and government control, potentially large audience worldwide, anonymous communications, rapid flow of information, low-cost web sites, the constant movement and evasion (creation and deleting addresses) and critical infrastructure as a potential target.

The information revolution has fueled the exchange of scientific, commercial and strategic information that have become a common public welfare. The benefits of globalization and modern technology rely on modern communication facilities and enable us to overcome geographical limitations. This global system exceeded national and natural boundaries, which led to the merger of young people in a "virtual electronic community", turning the world into a "global metropolis", with no social intimacy.

We are witnessing the emergence of a global culture, in which information and access to them is a factor that determines the way power and prosperity continue to exist. Natural elements of psychological - propaganda advertisements, via electronic and printed media as well as journalists, overwhelms the youth – the main consumer of information from the widespread network of interrelated information system. Thus, they have been exposed to the unscrupulous impact of various "creators of consciousness" that manipulate the individual. This points to the deliberate (ab)use of psychology, religion, politics, technology, journalism, which systematically influences the young psyche, thus forming a distorted perception of society as a whole.

THE POWER OF THE MEDIA

The media plays a major role in creating public opinion and has an influence on young people, in a positive or negative manner, depending on how it is being used. It has the power to influence their perception, so it is increasingly becoming the dominant form of education.

The gigantic network of electronic media today expressly programmes the consciousness of young people, artificially distorting the reality. Young people are naturally inclined towards alternative media forms and this is why they "govern" the cyber-world. Rapid and easily accessible information and content increasingly become the mainstream informal education where they learn new forms of culture, thus creating an image of different behavior patterns from those present in the wider social and cultural community.

As a result of fear, hatred, aggression and suffering, media and propaganda create a global vision, which is manipulative and forges a new collective identity. The almost perfect "noble lies", distributed on a daily basis, contribute to the loss of real human and social values and build a new distorted perception of the world. So, the young man willingly becomes a prisoner of the mass media.

In terms of the information society, those who create, control and have access to information, are one step ahead, so that power is spreading from those that are rich with money to "the rich with information." In certain situations, especially during crises and major social changes, the media intensely manipulate the perception of citizens, especially that of young people, hence they emerge as superior media players competing to air sensational news, while the citizen is transformed into an ill-informed consumer. However, "power

does not reside in information perceived as a sequence of values, but the rules of the public presentation receiving pragmatic value.”³

The information conflict is a modernized version of the psychological war, which by using modern technological weapons provided by mass media shapes public opinion and seeks to control it. Today the main struggle for domination over human consciousness is conducted through the media, the use of IT-intelligent weapons and by building sophisticated information flow. In this electronic giant empire, the truth gets lost in the maze of information media.

One of the strongest media tools is advertising which, through fun and information, subtly anesthetized consumers. Advertisements have their own background, which may be aimed at shaking the authority or identities. Unconsciously, the young man they can stimulate the sense of loss of self-esteem, insecurity, fear and so on. Often, their content can be seen hidden negative social, political, family, gender, national, cultural and other messages. Precisely because the general public, advertising spots and content play a significant role in the “social control” of the masses. Using the techniques of seduction, persuasion and stereotyping they affect the consciousness and perception of young generations.

In the absence of control and regulation of age, the media offer a program that often obstructs the program of institutional education. Interactive political and media relations, skillfully concealed dominant influence of political power and the leading media productions. The media have become powerful machinery that creates “consumers” ruled by drug dependency media. Thus young people lose their individuality and while fighting for survival and being concerned about the imposed existential needs, “they receive free education” through media and skilled marketing campaigns. The media are no longer just a tool for collecting and distributing information, but rather a generator, controller and a master.

It is clear that our society is reflected power from the center to the periphery and that the public shows little civic integrity and initiative but the more clear that the media possess dangerous great power, typical of democratic societies. If there are social mechanisms can often direct the media power of the legal framework, there is a danger of the media to be irresponsible in the way they use their influence in public, in the interest of individuals or groups motivated clan.⁴

The concept of media presentation should be based on confrontation with the global digital machine, which “steals” not only personal identity, but the identity of society and the wider community. Virtualizacijata reality becomes a new powerful force that can easily manage time events, masses, youth, and even become their life.

IMPACT OF JOURNALISTS

Contrary to the well paid journalistic bias and fanaticism, the professional journalistic products such as: research objective, open debates, columns of independent intellectuals, bringing arguments that encourage public dialogue on values, freedom and equality among people, receive little appreciation.⁵

³ Zinovjev, A., *Slom ruskog komunizma*, BIGZ Publishing, Beograd, 2003.

⁴ Drtkovski, D.: Mediumite kako ilegalen politicki faktor, Politicka misla, Mediumi i sloboda na izrazuvanjeto, Fondacija “Konrad Adenauer”, Institut za demokratija”Societas Civilis”, Skopje, 2012, p.13.

⁵ Ibid.

In a state of pronounced erosion of professional ethics and the absence of the sense of ethical journalism it becomes necessary to find the moral imperative of the journalism. But there is lack of courage among journalists to resist the stereotypes and the dominant opinion prevailing in newsrooms, so here is where the worrying apathy and conformism stems from.

In the Macedonian Code of journalists, among other things, Article 10 refers to the imperative of non-discrimination and the use of hate speech: "journalists shall not consciously create or process information that jeopardizes human rights and freedoms, will not speak the language of hatred and shall not encourage violence and discrimination on any grounds (national, religious, racial, gender, social class, language, sexual orientation, political ...). Among other things, it stipulates respect for privacy (Article 7), reporting free from sensationalism (Article 8), and adherence to generally accepted standards of decency and respect for diversity (Article 11).

Everything act contrary to journalistic standards is not considered journalism, although a content of a medium. Journalists should always take care of the context in which they act. "No media product does not exist outside the context of the public who, ultimately, reality is overexposed by the sum of the media mixed messages created by other actors in society and expectations and knowledge of the audience, that create the context."⁶ "Awareness of the context, in essence, should help in the selection of topics that are essential for the social agenda."⁷ Unfortunately, more and more, we face the journalists that "no hearing" about the consequences of its activities and does not want to compensate for their shortcomings, and consequently it adversely affect young people.

According to the Broadcasting Council in Macedonia "a focal point for consideration of the need to increase the level of professionalism in broadcasting is discrimination on different grounds, violation of human dignity and hate speech".⁸ Therefore, "the higher the level of media literacy and the longer the democratic traditions, the faster and easier the public recognizes genuine journalists, compared to those which are represented as such, but in fact do the opposite – the lower level of media literacy and long non-democratic history cause the public to see all those who, in any way participate or occupy the media space as journalists or journalism."⁹ In fact, at stake is the survival of the fundamental journalistic mission - to telling the truth, being independent and responsible towards others.

Uncontrolled degradation of professional standards and ethics of journalism imposes the need for self-regulation, which should correct ethical principles, criteria and standards of professional and responsible journalism and to promote them, all the while finding the moral imperative of the journalistic profession.

CONCLUSION

Media, modern means of communication and journalists have a significant impact on the perception of young people about events in society. If you are asked whether they su-

6 Trajanoski, G., Chausidis T., Belichanec, R.: Mediumite, govorot na omraza i marginaliziranite zaednici: Vodic za mediumi, Koalicija "Seksualni i zdravstveni prava na marginaliziranite zaednici", Skopje, 2013, pp. 38-39.

7 Ibid, p.56.

8 Strategija za razvoj na radiodifuznata dejnost vo Republika Makedonija za periodot 2013-2017, Skopje, 2012.

9 Trajanoski, G., Chausidis T., Belichanec, R.: Mediumite, govorot na omraza i marginaliziranite zaednici: Vodic za mediumi, Koalicija "Seksualni i zdravstveni prava na marginaliziranite zaednici", Skopje, 2013, p.6.

support the negative experience of the environment and society, the answer is yes. The easiest excuse is to say that any publicity is good publicity.

Professional journalist standards require respect for human dignity, avoiding hate speech, discrimination on grounds of belonging to a marginalized group, sexual orientation, gender, health status, etc. Hence, their role is essential in conveying accurate, objective and balanced information to the general public in order to increase understanding of current and future social trends, to share political ideas and concepts that will lead to the formation of individual opinion on a specific topic or issue.

Impartiality should be a permanent feature of the media and journalists because distorted or inadequate reporting represents a danger to the true interests of society. They have an ethical duty to verify the availability of the material and to examine whether it meets the criteria for getting published.

Media and journalist culture are very important for their successful functioning. This culture is an integral part of general culture and should represent a positive model for establishing order in the information space. However, if we analyse the developments in the media environment, we come to the conclusion that it is "contaminated" and that the situation there is not good. What is worrying is not only conformism of media and journalists with regards to the basic principles of their profession, but also the fact that many of them do not notice that something is wrong with their approach and do not seem to care that their consumer is the young population.

Where should the fault be traced? Is it in the ownership structure of the media, journalists or in the apathy among young people?

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