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EUROPEAN MEDIA CULTURE, IDENTITIES AND PARADOXES OF THE CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract

The local and the global, as explained theorists of cultural globalization Robertson, Giddens and Waters are not mutually exclusive but there are two dimensions of dialectical opposition to the uncertain process of global culture. Local must be understood as an aspect of global and globalization as highlighting or creative association of local cultures. At the time of postmodernism, according to the proposal of Roland Robertson, inevitably replacing the concept of cultural globalization with a new amalgam - globalization, which is a combination of the words global and local.

The development of cultural concepts in cultural policy worldwide cannot be understood without phenomena of cultural diversity of nations, attempts to European cultural homogenization and the already established angle of Americanization especially the media space in the world. They exist as a cultural identity separate level and unification of standards, norms and rules globally. Localism does not mean simply moving to globalism, nor does de- location or relocation term define global nexus.

Where should the European Union go? Civic concept of organizing the European family with more than 500 million citizens in the spotlight put the category of being European- a category that lately defines Europe's identity crisis. Its efforts to build its identity were very difficult out of the narrow, national framework of EU members. That in turn qualifies the Union as a community of national and cultural diversities, despite her plotting for Americanization of European cultural space, as a synonym for globalization cultural values, especially- the media space.

This paper wants to show the contemporary analysis of the relationship between media and cultural identity in the EU from several different theoretical approaches, as well as through comparative analysis of European media policies and regulations and their applications in some European countries and candidate countries for membership. The purpose of this research is to prove that the EU has failed to create appropriate media culture or a base for European citizenship, and so the issues of identity and citizenship- become two separate issues.

Key Words: postmodernism, identities, europeanization, globalization, new amalgam – Glocalisation.

Introduction

To understand the culture in the postmodernism era, the greatest importance lies in the media culture, dominating many forms of the social living, because there is no cultural heritage which would be

shaped without the media. Hence, the universal definition of the culture is that culture is communication, and communication is everything. The modern world observes its culture, but also creates - conveys and develops it as a culture of communication. The development of the information and communication revolution is increasingly underlining the influence of the mass communication means (especially electronic and new online, social media) in the creation and the channeling of the public opinion with regards to every segment of the social living. According to a postmodern theory position, different information and communication matters circulate on international level, enabling the people to integrate in all life areas preparedly and in a creative manner. On the other hand, the democratization of human rights – freedom of speech, opinion, multiculturalism, tolerance, recognition of the national identity, solidarity, unity and equality universalize the Western values as civilizational gain of the global society. These are just some of the reasons making the globalization unique in terms of economical, political and most importantly social-cultural process. However, in no case it approves its absolute and total domination.

The contemporary analysis of the relation between the media and the cultural identity is increasingly actualizing the questions regarding the influence of the media over the multi-connotation of the cultural identity-and not as an alternative to the discourses of the cultural and media imperialism, but rather as a necessity, a response, and most importantly, a request of the globalization of the society. The multinational and global corporations must not be seen as economical, cultural and political risk faced by the indigenous cultures of the invasion of the Western cultural industries. The postmodern theory approach places the connection between the global and the local and the possibility for revitalization of the national identities in the middle, between the black and white point of view.

In Europe we cannot speak of one European identity, because there are as many identities as there are nations. However, on a European level there is one system of rules, norms and values regulating, at times in a concealed manner, the relations between the European nations. Their role is ever more important, so that, as time goes by, some of these norms and values are codified and presented in the European treaties, thus having a legal effect. Hence, for example the values as: solidarity, equality of opportunity, freedom of expression, tolerance and care for the cultural heritage are included in the preamble of all European treaties, while the European map of human rights was represented in the Agreement of the unsuccessful constitution for Europe.

The politicization of the European Union, particularly with the Agreement of Maastricht in 1992 by establishing common policies of the Member States, among which, the introduction of European citizenship or the term European citizen, which purpose represents higher degree of unity among the Member States, in practice only extends the cultural differences of the nations. There is a risk that the cultural heritage, as feature of diversity and hallmark of the Euro-integrations, acts in a contra productive manner in terms of we and you, the big and the small cultural identities, hegemony of one over the other, due to which the Members of the Union itself are informally called between themselves – old and new “ladies” of Europe.

Media, modernity and cultural identity

The electronic media in Europe, the radio at the beginning, and later the television, were instruments which created the collective life and culture of the nations. They created culture which became common for the entire population and a new kind of collective public life. The situation was similar also in the USA. While the commercial electronic media over there represented a standard, the national networks ABC, CBS and NBC were used for the same purpose, i.e. focusing on the national interests and activities. Today it can be said that the electronic media have double role in terms of serving the political public field of the national state and being the focus for national and cultural identification.

Contemporary views regarding the influence of the media over the social organization of time and space

Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan are the first modern scientists who studied the relation between the means for communication available to one nation and the manner they influence the shape and the scope

of the society and the culture. Exploring the relation of the means for communication and the character of the society in the ancient world, Innis (1950) recognized the biasness involved in all media.

“Some insist on time, others on space, which inevitably has different implications and repercussions over the social life. The messages written on paper are easy to carry and spread out the information to a larger distance. The messages carved in a stone are permanent and stationary monuments of an era of a culture, preserving and conveying the information to many generations. Thus, in a very generalized and fundamental manner, the characteristics of time and space of the means for communication available to a society impose the limits of the scope and the relations of its functioning. Within the limits of their functioning, they contribute to the formation of the character of the social institutions and social interactions.” (1)

McLuhan, expert on English literature, takes over the ideas given by Innis and extends them to the modern period. Considering the influence of the press, “typographic man” and the manner in which the printed book served as influential mean to communicate the knowledge and the idea in the center of creation of modern Europe (1962), he moved from analysis of the “civilization of writing” to analysis of the new electronic cultures of the modern media, in particular radio and television (1964). As the first true analyst of the influence of the new communication means over what is comprehended as contemporary, modern society, although he was preceded by some British modernists as Wyndham Lewis, Thiessen, who had similar focus of interest, McLuhan used a particular aphoristic manner to express his ideas which he called “probes” and which had vast influence in the 60’s of last century in North America and in Europe. According to him, the influence of the modern media may not be regarded as a characteristic of only one society. The novelty of the electronic media is their global influence, which created the opportunity for instantaneous communication with any place on the globe, creating thus “global village”, McLuhan’s infamous metaphor. He did not perceive this expression in terms that we will all soon become one big happy family, but in terms that with the numerous different information circulating in the world, we will become aware of any movement, in all kinds of situations from one end of the world to the other. In Australia in the beginning of the ’80 of the 20th century, the one-hour news program of the “Special service” channel was created to broadcast news and information from the areas uncovered by the other network stations, in particular by those from the countries with highest emigration in Australia. This service gave a different perspective of the world, but also the process of news collection and their presenting was completely different from that of the TV stations in Britain, Europe, USA or Canada. The interests of the U.S. media are so closely related to the national interests, so that some events and world areas are left uncovered unless they have foreign political implication for USA. This means that if CNN fails to respond to such occasion, there will be opening of an opportunity on the market for a world information service or a consortium of services.

One of the risks of the approaches of McLuhan and Innis is what Raymond Williams calls technological determinism – placing central emphasis on the form of the media, and the other elements of the communication process, the media contents and the manner in which the production institutions create the media products are marginalized. (2). Meyrowitz was influential in the U.S. by claiming that the electronic media, in particular the television, weaken the once strong relation between the physical and the social space. In particular, taking into consideration the perspectives of McLuhan and Erving Goffman, Meyrowitz explains that:

„(...) the electronic media, by invading social spaces hitherto kept apart, tend to undermine traditional settings of social interaction that maintained distinct and separate social identities. (3). For example, he thinks that the boundaries between children and adults and men and women have been blurred by the impact of broadcasting, with consequences for the character of social relationships. In India the social organization of domestic space in the household tended to keep men, women and children apart from each other for much of the time, thereby maintaining their distinct and separate social roles and identities. The arrival of TV sets in the households of rural India has considerably disturbed traditional relations between the sexes and between young and old by bringing them into each other’s presence in the context of watching. (4).

Giddens has stressed the relevance of McLuhan’s idea about the social organization of time and space as fundamental to any analysis of the concrete forms of social life and interaction in the UK. However, the modern media culture in Europe and in the world should strive to avoid the limitation of the perspectives based on the ideas of McLuhan and Innis. On the contrary, they should be broadened with the points of view of the other creators of the communication process and with such elements as the influence of law and policy, proprietorship, professionalism, the nature of communications institutions and interculturalism. Placing the emphasis on the media with a capital M, the McLuhan’s phrase “the medium is the message” – refers to how society organizes itself around its dominant medium of communications.

The cultural identity as basis of the cultural policy

The democratic development of the culture is a global challenge faced by the modern societies. Depending on the local, social and political conditions, the democratization is manifested through different manners of creation of the cultural, national and social identities. The analysis of the cultural practice shows that the crucial identity issues within the societies in development are connected with the history, the struggle for emancipation from the colonization cultures and the clash of the systems of traditional values with the modern trends. These are the frames, within which their cultural policy is created, changed and developed. Unlike them, the developed industrial countries are faced with totally different challenges. Or, more precisely, their cultural policy is focused towards democratization of the high culture, the purpose of which is to overcome the gap between the high (intended for particular elites) and the popular culture and to create or protect the values of the citizen society. This faces all the countries in the world with several fundamental points of view and action. First of all, as a product of the modernization it is necessary to overcome the alarming alienation and to protect the cultural tradition. Thereafter, the issue arises to search alternative solutions for communication between the different cultures, such as tolerance, i.e. cosmopolitanism, interculturalism and cultural globalization perceived as universal culture. Even afterwards we can speak of the support of the means for cultural production and their spreading, and as final stadium in the development of the democratic cultural policy – the cultural self-actualization or the cultural participation and the support of the means for its realization. Therefore, the cultural identity should not be viewed as an abstract concept, but as living, unavoidable and complex anthropological and social phenomenon represented by different cultural facts emerged from the different experiential life segments. In line of understanding the culture in its thoroughness and versatility lays the standpoint of Denys Cuche:

“There are no consequently “pure” on one hand and “mixed cultures” on the other hand”. Pursuant to the universal fact of cultural contacts, they are all mixed cultures, with a particular degree of diversity, created by continuity and discontinuity. (6)

Taking into consideration the increasingly closer communication between the cultures, one cannot speak of a true discontinuity between them. Even when they emphasize their differences for a better affirmation and distinction between them, the cultures may not be completely unrelated to each other. However, the idea of diversity is precisely the one related to the cultural identity. A phenomenon as complex and significant as the culture itself, which in a manner operationalizes it. The question remains open whether this re-actualization of the cultural identities today is a consequence from the “loss of breath” of the process of existence of a nation-state. Is it a counterpoise of the concept of supranational policy or is it some kind of fluid form of the door-opening towards the economical and every other globalization. The extended context which includes the cultural identity as its most significant component is the social identity which conducts the principle of including or excluding the representatives of a group according to different indications by which they can be separated from the representatives of another group. The cultural identity is the self-consciousness of one group created historically and developed according to the criteria this group establishes in the relations with the other social groups.

Paradoxes of the cultural globalization

There is one inevitable practice on the European historical stage that whoever is in position of power creates and imposes the basic mechanisms for establishment of the values included in the cultural identities and pursuant to the principle of hierarchy. Therefore, in the context of the traditional scheme of the social inequalities, the basic questions of the modern cultural policy of the globalization given by Xordan and Vedon (1999-2000) remain open:

“Which culture should be official, and which subordinated? Which cultures should be qualified as cultures deserving to be exposed, and which should be hidden? Which history should be remembered, and which should be forgotten? Which images of the social life should be projected, and which should be marginalized? Which voices to be heard and which to be silenced? Who represents whom and on what base? (7)

The national cultural identity is also a very complex and multilayer concept, although it is not as complex as the idea of European identity. Described as social achievement it bears in itself the signature of history and is therefore related with the concept of citizenship, and the risk of it being used i.e. misused for

nationalistic purposes is always present. However, the cultural identity is a dynamic concept and depends on the conditions in which it develops, because the cultural identity of one country in the year 2000 is not the same as 20 years ago. Marselino Oreja, former commissioner of the European Union who was responsible for the audiovisual area says that:

“The identity is something that is felt, and not something that is imposed. Therefore, it is a matter of a concept which is defined as something that is at the same time artificial, imaginary, subjective and in motion. (8).

The globalization as a new amalgam

Roland Robertson, one of the founders of the theory and researches of the cultural globalization constantly emphasizes that the globalization always includes a process of localization. The cultural studies in this direction rebut the thesis on closed societies each with its own cultural space, but there is a dialectical process where there is possible activity and actualization of the dissimilarities. The analyses of the globalization should not be dimensioned only to the de-location or relocation in terms of economic resources. Thus, Coca Cola and Son, for example, describe their strategy as “global localization”.

Their bosses and managers stress that the point of the globalization is not to build factories all over the world, but rather to become a part of individual cultures. They call their strategy – localism – and it is related with the spreading of the globalization. (9)

Therefore, the contemporary debates should be focused towards the transnationality of the local cultures and in the process they should not be justified, formed and renewed in seclusion from the rest of the world. Instead of traditional defense with traditional means called by Anthony Giddens “fundamentalism”, the de-traditionalized traditions are constrained to act in a global context as exchange, dialogue or conflict of the local or national cultures in a multicultural communication. The mutual dependency outside the national borders is replaced with transnational interdependency. However, Robertson makes a crucial step forward and emphasizes how profound and deep “(...) the consciousness of the world as unified place has become a part of the daily reality. (10). In this context, the further researches are of interest from the point of view of the opening of the world horizon for intercultural production of meaning and enrichment of the cultural symbols as a product of the cultural differences.

The local and the global, as explained by Robertson, Giddens and Waters, are not mutually exclusive. As two sides of the same process, Robertson proposes replacement of the concept for cultural globalization with glocalization – as a new amalgam having important methodological and pragmatic use.

“The globalization - which seems to be the super-dimension, appearing at the end from outside and overshadowing everything else - can be grasped in the small and concrete, in the spatially particular, in one's own life, in cultural symbols that all bear the signature of the "glocal". This can be explained with the assertion that the sociology of the globalization becomes empirically possible and necessary only as a glocal cultural research of the communication, industry, technology, inequality and the policy. (11)

Comparative analysis of the influence of the media in Europe and the affirmation of the national (cultural identities)

In practice we have been witnesses of the creation of a new media regime characterized by new type of services, new broadcasting systems (satellite and cable TV, internet), as well as convergence of the media systems and the telecommunication industry. The most recognized broadcasting policy of the European Union, the European policy commonly referred to as – television without borders, promotes open air and free flow of information to be transmitted by the national electronic media at a European level and to function as integrative homogenized force which produces consciousness of the informed community of its common history and traditions.

The actualization of the issue on European level in the media space opens the dilemma arisen from the policy of quotas and other interventionist measures applied by EU Member States and included in the European directive for television without borders and how deep it is in collision with the principles for program

autonomy of the broadcaster. The analysis of the European audiovisual space is increasingly affirming the thesis that EU has not succeeded so far to create suitable, i.e. common or, not to speak, unique European media culture or base for the European citizenship. That is, the issues regarding the identity and the citizenship become two separate issues. There is a real danger in the European audiovisual space that the compensations of the cultural identification become dominant relative to the political goals of the debate of the public communications.

From a historic point of view, the leading role in the imagination of the national communities was played by the media and ever more often the thesis of Morley and Robins (12) is being confirmed that the creation of the modern culture and cultural identity could not have been realized without the contribution firstly of the printed and afterwards of the electronic media. The claims of Stewart Holl regarding the London BBC are moving in the same direction, according to which this at the beginning national public broadcasting service was instrument and apparatus through which the nation to which it later on referred to was constituted. The same can be said of the other national media in Europe taking into consideration that they were the principal broadcasting systems in the European national states, which is also shown by the analysis of the media practice in the European public broadcasting service. The Western European and the former Eastern European systems, from the models of the public broadcasting services of Great Britain and Western Europe to the models of the public broadcasting systems of the former Eastern Europe, had great control over the media content broadcasted outside of the national borders.

In the U.S., where the commercial media represent a standard, the national networks ABC, CBS and NBC were used for the same purpose, i.e. they were focused on the national interests and activities, that is, through them the audience began perceiving itself as members of the national community.

The dramatic changes with the larger globalization in the international communication occurred in the media regulative sphere of Western Europe, where the citizens of the national community were not addressed to as political, but rather as economic entities, i.e. as parts of the consumer market. On the other hand, the democratic revolutions encompassing the former Eastern Europe towards the end of the '80s and the beginning of the '90s are frequently related with the free flow of communications and the breakup of the centralized and often monopolized media systems. This is the second important event helping us realize the relation between the media and the actualization of the issue regarding the creation of the European cultural identity. The national media in the former socialist revolutions boosted the integrative socialist culture, and afterwards they took over the role of national media and functioned as instrument in the formation of the nation, instrument for cultural emancipation and for rediscovery of the proper culture. This is of particular importance since in the former socialist countries two parallel processes have been developing, i.e. a process of formation of the national media with all its functions and simultaneously a process of increased transnationalization due to the presence of the processes for technological changes and the convergence. Due to the additional process of globalization with its localizing effects, many of the countries of the former socialist regimes are now faced with the struggle between the building of the nation and the diversity coming from the numerous ethnical groups in these states.

European interventionist policy and system of quotas

The provisions for quotas serve as instrument for protection of the cultural identity in Europe. Pursuant to Article 4 of the Directive for television without borders, all Union Member States must ensure that the countries under their jurisdiction, where applicable, broadcast large part of the European opus, i.e. 50%. The objective of this provision is to stimulate the broadcasting of European opus in the audiovisual media and eliminate the American sitcoms and movies from their program. The Member States are even allowed to apply even stricter measures for the broadcasters under their jurisdiction. For example, in France the radio and TV programs must broadcast at least 60% European opus. Although this measure for the quotas within the EU was primarily intended to stimulate the flow of programs in Europe in order to strengthen the European identity concept, still, a large number of the programs being broadcasted in order to satisfy the requirements for European quotas in the Member States are of national origin.

Also, one of the methods used in Europe for protection of the cultural identity, above all referring to the protection of the national identities from the Americanization in Europe, is the language policy. In France

the broadcasters must broadcast part equal to 40% of audiovisual and cinematographic opus primarily created in France. In Holland, the broadcasters are required a quota of 40% original programs in Dutch.

For protection of the European cultural identity special program requirements are provided in the broadcasting laws or the licenses (permits) for operation of the programs in the cultural area. For example, in the French speaking area of Belgium, the public broadcaster must broadcast a minimal number of programs from the cultural area (literature, music, dancing etc.) determined by the management board of the channel. In Holland, 20% of the broadcasting time must be dedicated to the culture, of which, 10% must refer to art.

Non-quantitative measures for protection of the cultural identity in Europe

The first non-quantitative measure is the provision of the necessary resources from the television organizations. This in particular means provision of financing of the public broadcasting organizations in order they are able to fulfill the mission of a public service in terms of diversity of the programs and representation of the cultural identity.

The second non-quantitative measure is the cultivation of the European and the national production. These are the programs encouraging the European and the national audiovisual industry, i.e. the programs for the media on EU level and the national and local program schemes. As it is laid in the policy of the European commission: "only a strong European industry may provide diversity of the programs and international influence of the European culture". (13)

The third non-quantitative measure is the organizational configuration of the television. The cultural identity as development concept may be preserved and developed through the stimulation of alternative and innovative programs within the national channels or with the existence of channels with particular commitment, as Channel 4 in Great Britain or ARTE in France and Germany, which offer alternative ways of observing a country or the world. However, the cultural identity may be expressed also through the internal structure of the broadcasters or the regulators. In Germany, the different socio-cultural groups in the German society are represented in the structure of the public broadcasters and in the regional regulatory bodies.

European policies and regulations on television culture

Two different models of national regulations can be identified in the media sphere in Europe. The first approach qualified as regulatory is based on a more restrictive definition of the culture (in terms of art culture), emphasizing the legal provisions particularly in terms of the quantitative measures such as the quotas, dominant role of the public authorities and tradition of the quantitative evaluation of the program scheme with evaluation models. The second, institutional approach is based on the more extensive concept for the culture, emphasizing the social role of the television (in particular the public sector), emphasizing the self-regulatory system for the public broadcasters, the representation of the citizen society in the broadcasting and the regulatory organs, the importance of the concept for program autonomy of the radios and televisions and the tradition of the quantitative evaluation of the programs, because the quality is what matters.

France and Belgium chose the regulatory approach, while Germany, Great Britain and Sweden adopted the institutional approach. Holland is somewhere in the middle between these two approaches because it uses quotas for cultural programs, and the public electronic media structure is characterized with significant representation of the citizen society. The standpoint of a country in favor of a specific model or in favor of the solution – somewhere in the middle, is naturally connected with the national characteristics and the history of the suitable audiovisual landscape. In Sweden there is a strong tradition of public broadcasting service. In Germany from historic reasons there is a tradition of program autonomy of the broadcasters and minimal interventions by the state. In Belgium that is the case due to the size of the country and the existence of "major" neighbors speaking the same language.

Republic of Macedonia as candidate state for accession in EU accepts the European audiovisual policy and endeavors to harmonize its media policy with the European one. Within the frames of the European

Council and EU multiple acts, conventions, directives, recommendations referring to the regulation of the broadcasting area have been enacted, whose implementation in the national legislation is obligation for Macedonia as a member of the European Council and as a country aspiring to become a member of the big European family. The obligation for harmonization of the domestic broadcasting regulation arises also from the Agreement on Stabilization and Association and the Treaty on stability for Southeastern Europe, as well as the Directive – television without borders.

Conclusion

The transnational media have in reality decentralized the process of globalization and are producing new patterns of advantages and disadvantages. They are being recognized as affirmation of the proper cultural values in the global world or as unification of the cultural products deprived of individuality in a standard cultural homogenization. Lately, the emphasis is placed on the diversity, rather than on the unity. Emphasis on the need for recognition of the cultural differences also within the frames of EU, emphasis on the preservation of the different European identities. The recognition of the cultural belonging within the multicultural policies of some countries assumes new form because the multiculturalism issues and the provisions for securing the multiculturalism are taken outside of their national frames and are calculated in new global context. Further on, with the opening of the opportunities for the minority audiences to receive programs directly from their motherland, new transnational communities and transnational diaspora audiences are being created. For example, in Republic of Macedonia despite the policy for procurement of program on the languages of the minorities on the third channel of the national television, the researches show that the ethnical groups prefer the programs they receive from the Albanian, Turkish or Serbian satellite television. The situation is similar in the larger part of Europe. The Turkish minority in Germany mostly follows the programs on the Turkish satellite television, and the Indian community in Great Britain developed very strong Indian television industry. The Indian programs produced in Britain circulate in the Indian communities around the world along with the programs produced in India. The media have a major role in enabling the familiarization with the different cultures of the ethnical communities and, through the presentation of the differences, in developing the intercultural communication. Thus, they will contribute to the strengthening of the dialogue between the different cultures.

Thereby, when speaking of the European cultural identity, it is not expressed as one gender, or nationally, ethnically or regionally, but as a synthesis of cultural traditions, creation of the intercultural communication between the cultural individualities and as projection for the national strategies of the cultural policy.

Notes

- 1.Lorimer, *Masovne komunikacije*, 29.
- 2.Williams, *Television; Tehnology and Cultural Form*,74.
- 3.Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*,179.
- 4.Malik, *Television and rural India, Media Culture and Society*, 459.
- 5.Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 123
- 6.Cuche, *La notion de culture dans Les sciences sociaux*, 66
- 7.Xordan and Vedon,(1999-2000) according to Petkovska, *Cultural identity-difference in oneself*,234
- 8.European Commision, *Communication from the Commision on the Application of State Aid Rules to public Service Broadcasting*, 233.
- 9.Bek, *What is globalization*,70
- 10.Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 184.

11. Giddens, *Zabegan svet*, 12.

12. Morley and Robins, *Spaces of identity: Global media electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries*, 156.

13. European Commission, *Communication from the Commission on the Application of State Aid Rules to Public Service broadcasting*, 233.

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