

УДК: 316.774:316.325(497.7

MASS MEDIA AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: Mass communication – feature of modern society

Aleksandra Zezova

*Associate professor, Ph.D., Goce Delcev, University of Stip, Faculty of tourism and business logistics,
aleksandra.zezova@ugd.edu.mk*

Abstract

Media information presentations and nature of mass communication contents from long ago are not the fruit of simple collecting and describing activity which gives only elementary reports and descriptions of social life.

An array of modern social living actors enabled media activities to transform their own communication and information content from a pure collecting and describing emulsion into a purposeful social activity, into a human activity. Communication and information content and the media practice upgraded and constituted itself as more than a collection of facts, more than describing events.

Specifically, the media and their communication and information content gained influential and value standardization, concentrating within the sole modern activity, which will emphasize and affirm the need for ethical struggle of humanity. We can talk about activity that will emphasize and nurture cognitive, moral and research capacity of its contemporaries but also about a profession that will advocate a change (revolution or evolution) of political and economic forms of social organization, governance and production of forms that would alienate man from his own nature, which are inhumane regarding universal ethical standards.

Therefore, today the mediological-journalistic work entirely with sovereignty and value equally spreads interestingness, exclusivity, importance, poignancy or the virtues of ethical action and lessons. The moral of the fable, the moral lesson of the myth, the ethical message of literature in the age of information and the informatics society, in the era of globalization, have lost primacy to pass and spread a moral idea or concept.

Media and communication and information systems are tied to morality. On the one hand, the media preparation of reporting should follow morality as deontology through standards of discovering, collecting, defending and placing the truth, the information to the public, but also, on the other hand, the media structure should affect the production of morality, that is to give moral significance to the message, and ethical doubt to the social events themselves.

Since media are creators of morality, a research of the media coverage about some of the contemporary moral challenges, is totally justified. The analysis of the communication content in informing about the legal possibility of homosexual marriages, as well as the possibility of adoption of children by same-sex spouses, formally legal ban on abortion, despite formally legal permission of euthanasia may nominate how and to what extent Macedonian information systems contributed to the bio-ethical and thanato-ethical moral scandals of the established moral conscience and consciousness.

Key words: mass media, contemporary society, contemporary moral challenges

Introduction

One of the types of social communication is mass communication, which in developed form is characteristic of contemporary society. Rapid social changes, numerous innovations, improvement of the quality of life, and decline of some traditional forms of control and power etc., follow and influence

the development of mass communications, and all this leads to formation of a special relationship with the public.

Communication is one of the characteristic concepts of the 20th century. It became central point in the considerations of democracy, love and our changing times. Some of the main dilemmas of our time, both public and private, are oriented towards communication or towards failed communication.

Mass communication means all forms of communication in publicly disseminated statements by technical means of distribution (media), indirectly (ie, spatial-temporal distance between partners in communication) and unilaterally (ie without change of roles between the sender and the receiver) to dispersed (vs. present) audience.

Ironically, the concept of mass communication, as expressed in the 1950s, indicated just what the mass media seems to have lacked in direct conversation: a large audience, one-sided messages and impersonal address (Питерс, 2003:104).

The process of mass communication is not reciprocal like the communication process, but starting from the intention, mass communication is directed toward other individuals (recipients), although not directly related to their activities. From that point only radio, television, press and film are treated as media or means of mass communication.

Consequently, the means of mass communication (media) are regarded as technical means of dissemination of content to the audience. It is deliberately not specified the mass distribution to the dispersed audience because the development under the influence of so-called "new" media leads from mass communication to individual communication, even to "communicate by wish". (Кунчик, Ципфел, 1998:30-31).

The word mass is not compatible with the new situation in communicating, because the individual communication or communication by wish progresses more and more. The individual, on his own initiative and by his own will becomes involved into public or private information and interacts with certain data banks. This mode of communication or information changes classical understanding of mass communication, and there are major social consequences because in the new situation the individual has the opportunity to acquire a new quality of knowledge and to expand it according to his own needs and interests.

Key concepts of communications (T.O'Sullivan, J.Hartley, D.Saunders, M.Montgomery, J.Fiske.1995:176) define medium as an intermediate agency, which facilitates communication. Furthermore, it is noted that more specifically, this term is defined as a technological development that expands the channels, range or speed of communication. As a medium of communication in the broadest sense, it embraces speech, writing, gestures, personal research, and clothes, acting and dancing. Each of them is capable to transmit codes through the channel or channels.

Every attempt, even the most ambitious one, to provide unbiased information, awhile not losing "direction" faces the same obstacle: mechanisms for achieving free press. The question is: What does the regulation serve for, if it contributes to sacrificing individual liberty, ordering of freedom of information and the search for truth, the achievement of objectives that are clearly defined.

Today, the people most of the time, besides professional duties, consume the media (Корни, 1997), and they "not only affect our views in a specific manner, but also constitute instruments for acquiring knowledge of which many social activities depend on".

Constantly, there are things happening that are important to people and thus attract their attention. The information represent primordial social need. Their distribution is enabled in various ways, through numerous means and thus contributing to the realization of social communication.

Just to mention that the distribution of information was characteristic of all periods of the development of human civilization, but over time, it would change its intensity (Груевски, 1999.).

The influence of the media and the means of public information

Opinions are divided about the positive and negative impact of mass communications on the formation of public opinion.

There is no doubt that the media are the main driving force behind the creation of the opinion of the people in a society. But to realize the impact it should be noted that depending on the topic there are various opportunities for influence. Thus the rule is that the less the primary experiences of consumers or the capacity of the information, the greater the possibility of influence of the media. The more an event, issue or phenomenon is reported about, the more it provokes public interest and retains interest at the highest level.

Media influence the process of structuring topics in public opinion, when such conditions exist. Such conditions include the differences between the media; the importance of certain topics; development of the topic and the intensity of reporting. The media are penetrated in the society, in all its institutions and the real values and realities are deleted. The influence of the media is everywhere around us, it is part of us.

Mass media are defined as media that have an appropriate programme and its own audience. The mass media have a programme: content-packages distributed by a core mode and a timetable - they are media for the masses of meanings. In terms of audience, technical requirements and opportunities of mass media sketch the boundaries of their use, so that, in general, they are available to every member of a nation or community language than limited social groups.

Mass media are anchored in national society; individual media are anchored in - as is Internet jargon - "Communities" which are based on personal, though not face-to-face relationships (Hallin, Daniel, Mancini Paolo, 2004:26.). Until now, modern societies have only three categories: (daily) newspapers (including periodicals), dating from the 17th century; radio, originating in 1920; and television in 1950. The Internet, however, will not deal with it as an individual rather than mass media. (Bonfadelli, 2002:33, as in Heiner Meulemann, 2009.).

Moral panics

Moral panics include individuals or groups that are targeted for special treatment by the media. This often occurs during social crises or changes and, of course, represent an attempt to limit the impact and pace of such change. At certain times the media have been used to divert people's attention from the real problems in society (high level of unemployment, social unrest, etc.) with topics that would cause moral panic.

A dramatic, sensational story can be used to increase ratings or audience. The main interest of researchers is whether the mass media are biased in their selection and presentation of news (Meulemann, 2009:79).

Media created fears can sometimes develop into a moral panic as a result that the principles of human rights, civil liberties and fair trials, can be destroyed. Society can focus on increasing social problems under these conditions, but would reduce the capabilities of the system to solve these problems.

The concept of "mass society" is associated with the concept of mass culture, and it has long been a major topic in the discussions about the nature of modern media. Since the late sixties, such concept loses the status of exclusivity: it is replaced by new tags in order to describe working society through new technologies for information and communication.

In the seventies, important relationships for the future of the “information society” increase in major industrial countries. In 1978, informatization of society appears, written by Simon Nora and Alain Minc. They believe that the new technologies of information and communication can provide a way out of the economic and political crisis, described as ‘a crisis of civilization’.

Popular media can make a rough view of complex ideas and moral considerations, but it can also serve well to bioethics. What is the function of the media in bringing issues to the attention of the public and the strengthening of bioethics as a field? There is dissatisfaction with the media within the field of bioethics.

Although the popular media gave considerable publicity during the past two decades to bioethical issues, researchers in bioethics are often concerned with media coverage but also concerned about their own shortcomings. Perhaps these doubts are inevitable. (Simonson, 2002:17).

Means of public information today: The role of media

Functionalist sociology developed in the seventies through ethnographic studies and through the movement called Applications and developments, which is interested in the ‘satisfaction of users’, asking the question: what do media make of people? (Katz, 1975, as in Matelar, 2003:75). Elihu Katz, one of the central figures of this sociological movement, reflects on this issue. He moves away from theories of direct effects (behavioral hypothesis and its variants) and tries to overcome “theories of indirect effects and limitations”, especially diffusionist theory and “regulatory studies”.

According to them, the media do not present what they think, but what to think; they play the role of “master of ceremony” or a role of a bulletin board used for writing down problems-subject to discussion in society. Such theories are also called ‘theories of limited effects’ because the ‘agenda’ rule does not prevent the networks of interpersonal relations to play their intermediary role.

Practically, a preference is given to the analysis of the effects in close interrelationship with this, to the analysis of the content submitting to the researcher elements that can orient his approach to the audience. The influence of the media is limited (the “selectivity” of the recipients makes obstacles); it can not be direct (there is a manner of organization); it can not be indirect (impact is a matter of time) (Van Dijk, A. 1991:98-113).

The mass media in their news and editorial stance, interpretation and comments allow understanding of events, issues and processes in society and the world. They can accurately reflect and evaluate events, to elucidate them critically, to warn of current social issues. In commenting on the events and issues they allow their better understanding, encourage people to establish interaction with the message, to form new knowledge, to respond to the event in the environment, to create a judgement about the event and to accept a certain decision.

The power of the mass media is by the method of hierarchy of publishing information, comments, to award status to certain issues, themes, personalities, organizations and social movements, as well as to increase and decrease their reputation, authority and influence in public. Thus, they impose social norms and can start an organized social action by “stripping”, those relationships and phenomena that do not coincide with public morality. (Shopar, 2003:292-295).

In a society there can be registered some realistic conditions, tendencies in these moral challenges and the question is how the media, i.e. the press reflect such situation in society, and on the other hand, how such media image influences society, or in those areas.

Media and communication and information systems are connected with morality. On the one hand the media preparation of the notice should follow morality as deontology through standards for discovering, collecting, defending and placing the truth, the information to the public, but simultaneously on the

other hand, the media structure remarkably fruitfully influences the production of morality, to give moral significance to the message and ethical doubt to the same social events.

Once media are creators of morality, then it is completely legitimate such survey of media information in Macedonia about some of the contemporary moral challenges. The analysis of communication content in the reports on the legal possibility for adoption of children by same-sex spouses, the legalization of post-mortem organ donation or formal legal ban on abortion, despite formal legal permission of euthanasia may nominate how and to what extent Macedonian information systems covered bio-ethical and thanato-ethical moral scandals of the established moral conscience and consciousness.

Definition of basic concepts

Media or mass media is a term commonly used to denote, as a class, a part of the media which intended to reach a very large audience (usually at least the population of a nation state). The term was coined in the 20's with the emergence of national radio networks and newspapers and magazines with mass distribution.

The term contemporary moral challenges concerns some debates on abortion, homosexual marriage, organ donation, euthanasia and other debates that structure the principle of free choice of individuals who are opposed by the arguments of religious tradition.

Abortion is a termination of pregnancy. There is no single view on abortion. Defenders of abortion has based their view that women have an inalienable right to her own body. The topic of abortion is central to feminist theory and politics. The arguments for abortion are based on the view that women should have control over their bodies and power of self-determination because they are most affected by reproduction and they have to decide; according to other views, abortion is murder. The social acceptance of abortion as a control of the growing number of populaion.

Homosexuality refers to sexual affection and sex life with person/s of same sex. Homosexual marriage means living communities of same-sex persons. Homosexuality became a separate subject in the late 19th century, at a time when psychology began to develop and to show interest in human sexuality. At the same time (late 19th century) there are advocates of the thesis that homosexuality is a disorder, as well as those who conspire social tolerance and acceptance of homosexual people. Today homosexuality is a subject to broad scientific treatises in biology, psychology, politics, genetics and history, seeking to understand complete human sexuality and different sexual practices. The legal and social status of homosexuals in the world differs from state to state.

Euthanasia is mercy killing. The term euthanasia comes from the Greek word (euthanasia) and literally means easy and beautiful death. Today it is used as a term for a painless death, caused in order to alleviate the suffering and termination of the lives of people who are terminally ill. Most legal systems consider it as a murder, though in many jurisdictions a doctor may legally decide not to extend patient's life or to issue drugs that mitigate the pain, even when such drugs shorten patient's life. In many countries there are associations that advocate legal euthanasia.

Cloning is the process of copying genetic material from a living organism. In biology, the procedure of reproduction of organisms based on the nucleus of a cell, which results in an organism with the same genetic composition as the provider of the gene. While cloning animals is considered particularly important for preservation of rare species, cloning of people is considered as highly immoral and prohibited by law in developed societies. In recent years, some countries have recognized the possibility of cloning only specific organs for medical purposes.

The common, general view is sublimated based on affirmed values, relationships and processes, ie based on denial and rejection of certain conditions and movements in contemporary moral challenges.

Positive attitude to contemporary moral challenges refers to promotion, support and design of relations of tolerance, respect for human rights.

Negative attitude is considered to promote intolerance and bigotry, as well as all those actions aimed at stigmatizing certain phenomena. Neutral attitude is a result of strict adherence to facts (events, statements, data) and their correct layout and placement in media organizing and publishing of content.

The attitude towards contemporary moral challenges is determined according to the same criteria as in the general attitude towards contemporary moral challenges, except that “positive” attitude towards contemporary moral challenges has a different connotation – it means favoring or glorifying relation to these phenomena.

Editorial policy is understood as a realization of the general concept of the newspaper contained according to the time and frequency of its publishing and global approach to the treatment of topics and content. Thus the editorial policy stems from the predominant/underlined informative function in daily newspapers and the analytical approach in weekly magazines.

Editorial policy consists in building and applying principles for selection of content published in the newspaper, on the manner of their professional handling/forming and placement according to volume, page and place it as well as art and graphic elements that provide certain dimensions of the meaning of individual supplements.

This also includes the criteria, values, the starting perspective in assessing the situation, relations and processes, especially in the expression of editorial/copyright stance in analytical journalistic genres.

Conclusion

The process of informing and educating through media should be a constitutional part of a wider social action to inform the younger generation in schools and in the families by putting the accent on the processes of protection. The media should also find their ways to open the questions of the attitudes of society towards these contemporary moral challenges. The media themselves should more profoundly start dealing with these topics and not just limit themselves to informing about specific occasions or actions of the nongovernmental organizations.

There is an evident need of coordination among media, schools and nongovernmental organizations. The print media should provide a specialized section where they would present basic information about abortion and its consequences, the latest findings of its condition in the country and the world and finally to provide advice for protection.

It is also advisable in such sections to present, anonymously or openly, people’s testimonials (for instance, women who have had abortions, people of diverse sexual orientation) of their own experiences, to open up debates where professional from the appropriate fields would participate.

Globally speaking, it can be stated that, quantitatively, the number of articles and other journalistic products that deal with these contemporary moral challenges in the print media is not on a satisfactory level, i.e. it does not correspond to the significance of the issue and the needs of the citizens / audience of such type of content.

This claim is based on the facts about the ratio among the all published contents in the newspapers, from one hand, and the existing (but not yet used) possibilities of the media to deal with this valuable media topic more closely and with a better quality, from the other. There are still some valuable attempts mostly through the research of experts to make a more profound treatment of both the psychological and social aspect of this phenomenon of contemporary moral challenges. The ration between the mostly informative contents (news) and the analytical research texts is almost 7 to 3.

The Republic of Macedonia mostly through actions of the organizations and bodies that deal with the right of choice have prepared, have published and distributed materials with a rich content (brochures, analyses, leaflets) that do inform in a very appropriate way about all relevant issues related to homosexuality.

It is the practices of the journalists to use their own 'popular' terminology related to the topic they write about, in order to bring the topic closer to the audience. Almost all media in the Republic of Macedonia in their texts and articles that deal with this issue, do try to support the fight against stigmatization of the homosexuals. But when the fact that they do not completely and regularly, and sensationally transfer the information, and mostly a priori, some groups of people consider them 'risky' and they actually don't help to eliminate the stigmatization and discrimination of homosexuals.

It is also required that we employ a more responsible approach by the authorized institutions to invite experts from the more developed countries so that they transfer some of their experiences, and to finally draw a National Strategy and make certain alterations in the legislation as well as to continue with the campaigns by the Citizen's centers.

The media with their informing activity about all events, ideas, attitudes and organizations in the society should have the task to also provide an instructive influence and signalize to the audience that there are people with similar interests and ideas, that there are organizations that can serve each other in one too many ways, that there are reasons to make new organizations and groups for the goals that can be from trivial to significant. Media is the reflection of the character of the civil society that exists in the society itself and its educator as well.

References

- Aguero, Jorge., Bloch, Ernst. 1984. "The Relationships Among Sexual Beliefs, Attitudes, Experience and Homophobia". Journal of Homosexuality, vol. 10.
- Almagor, Raphael. 2001. The right to die with dignity: an argument in ethics, medicine and law. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.
- Андревски, Живко. 1995. Живот со мас-медумите. Скопје: ИП Љуботен.
- Bal, Fransis. 1999. Moc media. Beograd: Clio.
- Blumenfeld, Warren. 1992. Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Boonin, David. 2003. A Defense of Abortion. Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Public Policy. Boulder: University of Colorado.
- Bopp, J.-Burtchaell, J. 1988. "Report of the Human Fetal Tissue Research Panel". Vol. I. US Government Printing Office: Washington.
- Cohen, Stanley. 1980. Folk Devils and Moral Panics: the Creation of the Mods and Rockers. London: MacGibbon & Kee.
- Colson, Charles. 2004. Human Dignity in the Biotech Century: A Christian Vision for Public Policy. Illinois: Downers Grove.
- Devine, Carol., Wilde, Ralph. 1999. Human rights: The essential reference. Orux Press: Phoenix.
- Gruevski, Tome. 1999. History of journal, НИП Студентски збор. Скопје.
- Hall, Stuart. 1992. The west and the rest: discourse and power. Polity press: Cambridge.
- Halloran, James. 1970. Demonstrations and Communications: A case study. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Keane, John. 1992. Mediji in demokracija. Ljubljana: Znanstveno na publicisticno sredisce.
- Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal. 1988. The Moral Status of the Embryo (u: Treat Me Right-Essays) in Medical Law and Ethics: London.
- Korni, Daniel. 1997. Etika informisanje. Clio: Beograd.
- Lee, Patrick. 1996. Abortion and Unborn Human Life. Catholic University of America Press.
- Levine, J. Robert. 1996. Research Involving Children as Subject, in: Birth to Death-Science and Bioethics. ur. Thomasma, D.C.-Kushner, T. Cambridge.
- Lichtenberg, Judith. 1990. Democracy and the mass media. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Luhmann, Niklas. 2000. The Reality of the Mass Media, Polity Press: Cambridge.
- McNaron, Toni. 1997. Poisoned Ivy: Lesbian and Gay Academics Confronting Homophobia. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- McLuhan, Marshal. 1994. Understanding Media. The MIT Press: London.

Шеста Меѓународна Научна Конференција
ПРЕДИЗВИЦИТЕ ВО ТУРИЗМОТ И БИЗНИС ЛОГИСТИКАТА ВО 21 ВЕК »ISCTBL 2023«
Sixth International Scientific Conference
CHALLENGES OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS LOGISTICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY »ISCTBL 2023«

Merton, Robert K. (a). 1938. "Social Structure and Anomy". American Sociological Review,3 (5).
Palmer, Michael.1991.Moral Problems.Cambridge: Lutterworth Press.
Schwarz,Siegfried. 1990. The Moral Question of Abortion. Chicago: Loyola University Press.
Simonson, Peter.2002. Bioethics and the Rituals of Media Journal article. The Hastings Center Report, Vol. 32.
Williams, Frederick.1988.Research Methods and the New Media. New York: Free press.