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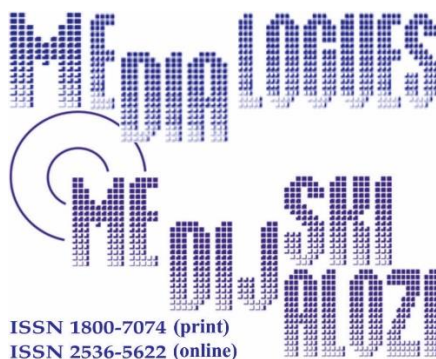
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The Press Crisis

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ABSTRACT

The newspaper industry is in crisis and with it journalism in general. The crisis started years ago and has recently reached the critical point. The consequences are dire, and the worst is that the collapse of the newspaper industry presents a serious threat to the very foundations of democracy. To make the bad situation worse, there is still no consensus among experts on how to proceed to rescue the collapsing sector. However, one thing is clear: the business model on which the newspaper industry rested for decades is no longer sustainable. One of the reasons is that the dependence on advertising revenue brought most newspapers to their knees, serving

the interests of profit-driven media owners and advertisers rather than the public interest. The author looks into various proposals for future funding models, assessing their advantages and shortcomings. She argues for elaborate and innovative mechanisms of state support to the media that will take into account the changes brought about by the Internet and will place more power in the hands of readers. Finally, she lists proposals that could be used as a starting point in the effort to revitalize the newspaper sector.

KEYWORDS: *Newspaper industry, crisis, public interest, online media.*

1. INTRODUCTION - THE KILLING AND THE SUICIDE OF THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

Amid concerns over media concentration during the 1960s, the renowned American journalist A. J. Liebling wrote that the disappearance of each newspaper meant the disappearance of a point of view or at least of a place where it could have found expression. A city with just one newspaper or a city with a morning and an evening newspaper published by the same outlet is like a man with one eye only – and a glass one at that. Half a century or so later, the number of such cities is vast. Moreover, there are entire regions and states where media ownership is concentrated in the hands of few individuals, while daily newspapers with long-standing tradition have been gradually disappearing. Popular views about journalists and journalism have essentially changed over this 50-year period as well. The bold men (note that the image was never that of a woman) with a notepad and pen painstakingly researching stories about political or corporate corruption in an effort to uncover the truth for the benefit of readers (Humphrey Bogart in *Deadline – U.S.A.*, Jimmy Stewart in *The Philadelphia Story*, or the unforgettable Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman in *All the President's Men*) were replaced by millions of individuals who post items on the Internet contributing their own bits of truth. The city with one eye has been replaced with the city with a million eyes, says Mark Bowden (2009)¹.

In 2009, the American non-governmental organization Pew Research for the People and the Press² published the findings of the regular annual opinion survey about Americans' views on the news media. The interviews (conducted in July of that same year with 1,506 adult Americans) showed that 63% of respondents thought that news stories were often untrue – the percentage almost twice as large as that in 1985, when the survey was first conducted. Approximately the same number of respondents (60% compared to 45% in 1985) thought that media coverage was biased.

¹ Mark Bowden, *Atlantic*, *The Story Behind the Story*, October 2009, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200910/media>

² Pew Research Center, "Public Views of News Media 1985-2009, Accuracy Rating Hits Two-Decade Low", <http://people-press.org/report/543/#prc-jump>

The Republicans' traditional criticism of the liberal media's servility to Democrats was countered by Democrats who increasingly believed (67% of respondents) that the media favored a specific side over the other. The ideological divide of the media space is, according to this survey, most evident from the answers relating to The New York Times - the newspaper boasting the status of opinion leader and of the most credible information source as chosen by American journalists caused the most severe split between the Republicans and the Democrats.

Similarly, the authors of the report on the state of American news media published yearly by the Project for Excellence in Journalism³ argue that the current crisis will have a long-term effect on the media. The recession that struck the media industry is compounded by the "*recession of trust*" on the part of readers, listeners and viewers. When assessing the work of the news media, 32% of respondents described it as immoral (compared to 13% in 1985), 22% said that it was unprofessional and 55% that it was politically biased. More than one third of respondents (32%) thought that the way in which the media operate is detrimental to democracy.

The analysts of the Project for Excellence in Journalism drew attention to the changing trends within the media industry as early as 2008⁴. They pointed out that one of the key trends was the turning of news into a service (no matter where the news was published). News was no longer a consumer product, but an unfinished story that could be checked for credibility several times (with various sources), compared (across various sources) and changed (through one's own action). Rather than facts, consumers of news want assistance, advice, guidance and moral teachings, or instructions on how to proceed and obtain as much further information as possible about the issues in which they are interested. News organizations (the media) are no longer the ultimate destination for news consumers. The era of "fenced (media) gardens" has come to an end. Media companies (formerly accustomed to "*monopoly and political nepotism*") must today compete on the market where supply and demand are governed by the quality of the services offered. The attention of service users, on the other hand, is not guided by standards set by the media industry (selection on the basis of professional demands in journalism), but by personal preferences. The media industry has increasingly been turning into an industry that endeavors to appeal to the tastes of its consumers. The key role here is played by advertising.

1. QUO VADIS THE MEDIA INDUSTRY?

The media industry is in crisis. It is not solely the crisis of the business model that affects only media owners and profits, but a crisis of journalism about which its

³ Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2009, The State of the News Media 2009, An *Annual Report* on American Journalism, <http://www.stateofthemedias.org/2009/index.htm>

⁴ Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008, The State of the News Media 2008, An *Annual Report* on American Journalism, <http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.com/2008/>

protagonists refuse to talk, cannot talk, are not allowed to talk, or do not want to talk. In their public appeals to rescue the collapsing industry, publishers of daily newspapers (in Slovenia and elsewhere) start from the correct premise that the shaping of media policy is closely related to the issue of public interest. The question, however, is not only who determines the public interest but primarily what the public interest within the media field actually is. Too often the public interest is simplistically equated with the national (or European) interest and described in terms of economic categories put forward as the basis for obtaining state subsidies (the financial support by the state is supposed to be provided only to the media or programming content that serve the public interest), or with a specific sector of the media (so, for example, thanks to their news-provision role, the newspapers are classified as serving the public interest).

If in shaping media policy the public interest is defined as described above, then the practical consequences are what we have in Slovenia right now: the state (politics) acts subjectively and voluntarily, subsidizing only specific media in accordance with its own preferences or expected political influence. However, the public interest is not something that can be defined in the legislation or by media owners who exploit their property in the same way as any other owner - to make profit. The public interest is a subject of citizens' public debate and ongoing negotiations. The media as such are not an a priori public interest, nor do they a priori serve the public interest. They are a form of organization used by the public to accomplish communication. Therefore, the public interest is communication, public debate, the possibility of publicly expressing one's opinion and influencing political decisions. A law cannot define the public interest, but it can set down clear criteria (and safety valves) which the state should observe when allocating budget funds (state aid) to the communication projects (not only media projects) that enable citizens to actively participate in the public sphere.

In its public appeals, the newspaper industry explains its importance for citizens (the public interest) by saying that the newspapers are the "*tip of the information pyramid*." The argument goes that for centuries the print media (primarily daily newspapers) have been the most influential setters of the news agendas, which earned them the reputation of credible sources in matters relating to public issues. The news coverage provided by the newspaper industry is supposedly the foundation of the news coverage across the entire media industry – radio, television and online media. Put differently, newspapers are believed to produce news, while other media mainly recycle news items and repackage the stories. While it may be true that the newspapers represent the largest source of content for the online media, it is not true that they are the most important information providers.

Another argument often used in explaining the special (and important) role of the newspaper industry is that precisely the newspapers create content that is not motivated by commercial interests (profit). Its proponents frequently refer to foreign correspondent networks, culture and other newspaper sections whose production is

very costly. Undoubtedly, viewed from the perspective of economic indicators, investigative journalism and the coverage of issues that do not come under the tabloid category require a lot of professional effort, knowledge and investment in human resources (journalists) on the part of media owners. While this type of content indeed does not contribute to the basic goal of the owner (profit), it is an invaluable source of information for the public about the issues which they cannot judge based on their own experience or about which they have insufficient knowledge. Data, however, show that precisely this content is subject to the most severe “streamlining”, or put differently, its share in the entire newspaper output has been declining.

The findings of the Media Standards Trust survey *Shrinking World* revealed a drastic decline in the coverage of international issues in the British press⁵. The survey that looked into the international news coverage by four quality British newspapers during the period 1979-2009 showed that the number of articles covering international issues declined by 39% over the 30-year period under scrutiny. The report claims that a matter of concern is not solely the smaller number of international news items, but the changed perception of what international news actually is. Of the two stories related to India and covered by the *Mirror* in the first quarter of 2010, one was about the arrest of two UK nationals who were accused of spying at the airport, and the other about the spiritual enlightenment of the American star Lindsay Lohan during her visit to India. On the other hand, India itself as one of the most expanding economies, its military power and internal political issues were never the subject of the coverage (Willmot, 2010).

The “*shrinking of the world*” in newspapers automatically means the shrinking of the world in the heads of readers. The readers see the world beyond their home country borders only through the glasses of the national interest (coverage of the developments in other countries is related to a specific state’s political and economic interests), or in terms of accidents and excesses of celebrities. Probably the most tragic consequence of the shrinking news agenda is the dependence of citizens on the very limited number of media sources that exchanged their information provision role for that of the commentator. Owing to the competition presented by television as the primary source of information, the newspapers have increasingly been turning from news providers into commentators, abandoning news and rather presenting and selling views of, as A. Currah (2009, p. 65) says, “*star commentators*” and “*super journalists*”. If the corporate newspaper industry no longer has monopoly over the production and distribution of news, the question that imposes itself is who has taken over its role? If the media no longer do it, who will watch the watchdogs?

⁵ Media Standards Trust, 1.11.2010. *Shrinking world: The decline of international reporting in British press*, <http://mediastandardstrust.org/publications/shrinking-world-the-decline-of-international-reporting-in-the-british-press/>

The renowned American media researcher and newspaper analyst Paul Starr (2009)⁶ writes that the era of the domination of newspapers has been drawing to a close, and that we are in for an era of corruption. The news coverage, says Starr, is not the only function that the media performed over the centuries since their inception. Their basic function was to provide citizens with an effective means of control over the state and its institutions. This function is today jeopardized. The media business, which is deeply interspersed with the interests of capital, is in crisis. Its rescue is a matter of preserving the foundations of the democratic system. If the watchdogs that should identify corruption are corrupt themselves, who then still has the power (and responsibility) to operate in the interest of the public, asks Starr?

Responding to Starr's criticism of the media industry, Yochai Benkler (2009), the author of *The Wealth of Networks*⁷, says that the media performed its watch-dog function far from ideally. During the Bush administration, large American media took part in the manipulation of the public opinion and many among them continue to do so. The model of information production and distribution that has been in place in the mass mediated world should, in Benkler's opinion, be replaced with the new model of networked communication. The corporate media industry no longer holds monopoly over the production and distribution of information. It is now dispersed and networked in the form of a vast number of individual or personal views and information sources available on the web.

The current economic crisis has revealed that the large profits earned by the media were not derived from the products or services production (media content) and their sale to the best customers. The real profit emerged from the process of complex financial transactions, complex financial products and their (re)selling to potential customers. The American newspapers began to confront this issue during the early 21st century. For years, the average annual profit of the newspaper industry amounted to 26 percent (Schiffrin, 2010 p. 14). Florence Noiville, a literary editor for *Le Monde* says in her book *J'ai fait HEC et je m'en excuse (I Went to Business Schools and I Apologize - Stock, 2009)* that most of the renowned French business schools do not teach students how to manage a business or how the economy operates, but how to maximize profit, including through "painless" layoffs. Precisely this rescue "model" - newsroom layoffs and the shrinking of news agenda - was chosen by large newspaper owners. Let us have a look at certain data.

In 2008, the newspaper industry in the US laid off 16,000 employees, with the further 10,000 losing their jobs in the first half of 2009 (Pérez-Peña, 2009). For the first time since 1978, the number of journalists working for the news media fell under

⁶ For a historical overview of the development of news media in the USA and a critical view on their social role see Paul Starr, 2004. *The Creation of the Media. Political Origins of Modern Communications*. New York: Basic Books.

⁷ See also Benkler, Yochai. 2006. *The Wealth of Networks. How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. London: Yale University Press, <http://yupnet.org/benkler>

40,000 (The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, *The State of the News Media*, 2013). During the same period, certain renowned newspapers drastically curtailed the international news coverage as well as the coverage of local politics although data showed that local politics is most vulnerable to corruption (Downie and Schudson, 2009). Readers are not blind to the effects of the decades-long cost-cutting within newsrooms. Almost one third of American readers stopped reading newspapers because they no longer provide information they grew accustomed to finding there (*The State of the News Media*, 2013).

In the early 2009, the American newspaper industry saw its sales drop by 2.6 billion dollars, which translates into a 10.6 percent drop in the copies sold. Put differently, this means that every day 44 million copies less were sold, which is the largest drop in the newspaper sales since 1940. It was influenced by the 16.8 percent drop in advertising revenues in 2008, and a further 28 percent drop at the end of September 2009 (Pérez-Peña, 2010). According to the Newspaper Association of America, advertising revenue continued to fall in 2012. For every 16 dollars lost in print newspaper advertising there is only one dollar earned from online advertising. In 2011, this ratio was 10 to 1, meaning that the revenue from online advertisements is much lower than expected (*The State of the News Media*, 2013).

These trends are not characteristic of the American market only. Data for France are similar. *Le Figaro*, for decades the most widely read and the most successful daily newspaper in France, saw the decline of EUR 40 million in advertising revenue between 2003 and 2007 (from 120 million to 90 million). *Le Monde's* financial loss is even greater. Between 2001 and 2008, its advertising revenue was halved. In 1970, its share in the total income was 60 percent, while today it is barely 20 percent. Similarly, the total number of French newspaper copies was halved during the two decades (1970-2007), falling from 3.8 to 1.9 million copies only. In Great Britain, the most affected were tabloids (Schiffrin, *Ibid.*, p. 62).

2. THE CRISIS OF WHAT?

Ever since 2009, the media industry of the western world has been drawing attention to the crisis within the media sector⁸. What is interesting, though, is how it presented the crisis to the public and to whom it turned for help. Unlike *Le Monde Diplomatique*, which appealed for help to its readers to protect the content that they could not find in other media, the majority of other newspapers turned to their governments. The Slovenian newspapers were no exception - after a decade of financi-

⁸ The 2012 report on the state of the American news media points out that the vanishing of newspapers is a threat to democracy. Most people obtain information about the work of state institutions from newspapers. If the newspapers cease to exist, the question that remains unanswered is who will perform this role in the future. See *The State of the News Media 2012*, <http://stateofthemediamedia.org/2012/newspapers-building-digital-revenues-proves-painfully-slow/>Richard Pérez-Peña, "US Newspaper Circulation Falls 10%," *New York Times*, October 27, 2009, B3

ally lucrative operation accompanied by the layoffs of journalists and the shrinking of coverage of key social issues, when confronted with the crisis for which they themselves were responsible, they turned to the government with the request for a specific state aid, i.e. zero VAT.

The crisis of the newspaper industry is a consequence of wrong decisions on the part of media owners (not only Slovenian) and their unwillingness to understand changes and respond to them. For decades, the only development “strategy” at the basis of the media industry was prevention of competition and the raising of the entry threshold for new publishers (Knee et al., 2009). At the same time, precisely the newspaper industry was the first to begin the true persecution of the web media, web journalism and bloggers, accusing them of being responsible for the shrinking newspaper readership that supposedly exchanged newspaper reading for the superficial browsing of the web in pursuit of free of charge content, for the flourishing of “copy-paste” journalism, plagiarism and worthless journalism in general. While this may be true, the questions that usually remain without answers are: why do multitudes of readers turn away from newspapers and opt for the leisurely browsing of the web? Why are people willing to sacrifice their spare time to create and recycle web content for free? Why does not the newspaper industry contend with large telecoms and news aggregators for its just share of profit from content provision? Why should only consumers pay the price for irresponsible media policy?

The print media may be in crisis, but the reader’s interest in content is not affected by it. Walter Isaacson of *The Time* has established that the number of newspaper readers has been increasing (including that of young readers) and that newspaper content is ever more popular (Isaacson, 2009). The problem is that increasingly fewer people are willing to pay to read this content. The traditional tripartite funding system underlying the newspaper industry – subscription, newsstand sales, advertising – increasingly depends on one source only – advertising. The irony of the “free lunch” business model is that the advertisers are no longer willing to pay the “full” price for content production (journalistic work). The only beneficiaries of this “free lunch” model are internet providers who charge users for their access to the Internet where they can then search content “for free.” In Isaacson’s opinion, a solution for the print media industry would be the introduction of so-called micro-payments, i.e. the payment of specific content which would force journalists to produce content that consumers are willing to pay. If journalism becomes dependent on readers and their payments, says Isaacson, it would return to where it should have always stayed – to the public.

Discussions on the potential financing models for the news industry mainly rest on wrong prescriptions for the disease it has been diagnosed with. Micro-payments⁹

⁹ Newspapers offering online content have been increasingly introducing one or another type of digital subscription. One of the more efficient models is a metered model used by *The New York Times*. Digital subscription is a matter of survival for newspapers. Since 2007, 15 daily newspapers on average

for online content or non-profit media organizations cannot provide an efficient remedy for the current crisis. A micropayment model has already been turned down by the Internet users, while a non-profit ownership model would be encumbered by insufficient endowments, so it cannot become the dominant model for the entire newspaper sector (Robinson, 2010).

Since the newspapers have not come up with an adequate funding model for the future, it can be expected that they will attempt to obtain the missing funds (missing with regard to expected profit) from the government and Internet users. The first step will be to establish connections with mobile operators who will offer to their subscribers a “bundling” option – a tablet at a reduced price plus a newspaper subscription. This means that the price a consumer will pay to a mobile operator for a “tool” will include content (newspaper). Imagine yourself going to a shop to buy a specific product and realizing that the price of that product is twice the price you would pay if you bought it along with two additional items which you do not need. If this happened in a grocery store, everyone would protest. However, if the lower price is tied to buying a newspaper or a mobile phone, we are willing to buy something that we do not need or do not want only to obtain a lower price (which is at any rate never too low, since at the end of the day we overpay everything). The newspapers that so far based their sales strategies on the “*tie-in sales*” (e.g. a newspaper plus a book, with a book being a complement to a newspaper), will themselves become a complement, a “gift,” when you buy another item (a tablet). It would be too naïve to expect that in such a constellation journalism will pursue the public interest.

3. HOW CAN JOURNALISM BE RESCUED?

The basic question with which future media policies will need to deal is how to rescue journalism, and European policy (particularly the European Commission policy) is a clear indicator of the destiny that awaits the media. In the parlance of Brussels politicians, the term “media” has been substituted with the collocation “*content creators*,” and the term “*media industry*” with “*cultural and creative industry*”¹⁰. On the other hand, in response to the increasingly frequent appeals to save the media industry, the European Parliament produced a vague document proposing the shaping of a European public sphere that should be created by (pan)European media. Instead of concentrating on the information and communication needs of European citizens,

disappeared from the American market every year, which amounts to app. 1 percent of the entire newspaper industry. Many experts predict that within the next five years the majority of the daily newspapers will print only Sunday editions, while all other editions will go online. See The Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism, The State of the News Media 2012, An Annual Report on American Journalism.

¹⁰ “Commission launches public consultation on future of cultural and creative industries” IP/10/466, Brussels, 27.4.2010 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/466&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN &guiLanguage=en>)

European parliamentarians devoted attention primarily to their own needs: how to ensure a greater media coverage of the work of EP and European institutions¹¹.

If the media and journalism no longer exist and if they have been replaced with creative content producers, then it is clear that no one (including newspapers) any longer has a privileged role in serving the public interest. The British National Union of Journalists drew attention to the “*death of journalism*” saying that it is “not merely the loss of jobs, it is the death of democracy¹².” In appealing to the EU to take urgent steps and rescue the newspaper industry, they proposed certain measures that could help resolve the crisis. Among other things, they proposed that the governments should introduce a strict implementation of copyright rules to prevent the theft of content produced by journalists, prohibit low-paid “internship” journalistic work and the reprinting of journalistic articles via email or discussion boards, scrap the funding for the media that slashed their editorial staff, continually monitor the situation of press freedom in all member states, prevent ownership concentration, prohibit cross-media ownership, and support public broadcasters in developing online services. Finally, their main proposal is the introduction of what has been termed a “European democracy voucher,” effectively meaning that citizens would finance journalism directly. According to this scheme, citizens would annually receive special certificates that could be used to pay access to the media (regardless of the platform) that ensure the sufficient scope of “*hard news*”. The scope and content of this news would be prescribed by national legislations, while citizens would be free to choose which media they want to co-fund. Instead of a governmental body deciding which media outlet to support, the support will be provided by citizens (through certificates) so the “survival” of individual media will be entirely in their hands.

From what is said above it is clear that the media industry has come to the “*critical juncture*” as Robert McChesney (2005, p. 9) put it, with old institutions collapsing and transforming even before the new ones came into shape. How is it possible to democratize the existing corporate and profit-oriented media to serve the public interest? The existing model on which the production and distribution of news is based is in need of radical transformation. As early as 2009, Robert McChesney and John Nichols (2009) argued in *The Nation* that it was time for the state to come up with an adequate subsidy policy (regulation) to rescue American journalism. The urgent measures they proposed included the following:

– The subsidizing of distribution, i.e. the elimination of postage for all periodicals that earn less than 20 percent of their revenue from advertising, with this mea-

¹¹ On journalism and new media – creating a public sphere in Europe. 2.7.2010. (2010/2015 (INI)). <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2010-0223&language=EN#title2>

¹² *Death of Journalism – more than just loss of jobs*. http://www.nujcec.org/brussels/index.php/latest-news/curr_evts/death-of-journalism-more-than-just-loss-of-jobs

sure meant to be applied to journals of opinion that offer quality content and to investigative journalism projects.

– Tax reliefs for readers – the state should grant a tax relief for the first 200 dollars spent for the daily newspapers that provide a specific amount of news content (e.g. 24 broad pages every day), are published five times a week at least and have less than 50 percent advertising. The government would then make a payment to the newspaper, depending on the choice of individual citizens.

– Support for schools and universities for establishing print, radio, television and internet media – to be a journalist and to know how to create media should become basic civil right and duty.

– An adequate funding of the public and community media – the resources should be used primarily for the production of content on the local level.

Many things have happened in the meanwhile, since the publication of this article. The media industry crisis grew so severe that in the US it triggered a serious public debate on not only how to rescue the disappearing media companies but primarily on what the future role of the media and journalism should be. The Democratic Senator Benjamin Cardin tabled a bill in March 2009 called the Newspaper Revitalization Act¹³. It was meant to help the vanishing local and regional newspaper survive by transforming them into not-for-profit organizations.

In the book *The Death and Life of American Journalism*, McChesney and Nichols (2010) have proposed new proactive interventions into the media sphere. The authors argue that throughout their long history, the American media and American journalism received extensive state subsidies which, unfortunately, did not bring about the greater influence of the public but a greater profit for owners. McChesney and Nichols also stress that the existing corporate media should be transformed into non-profit and not-for-profit (low profit) institutions. The corporate media sector, whose business model is based on advertising revenue, is in crisis as is the model of superficial, trivial, recycling, PR-driven and scandal-pursuing journalism. Apart from organizational changes, McChesney and Nichols (Ibid., p. 159) also propose that the collapsing corporate media should transform into the “post-corporate” digital newspapers, that the public and community media should transform into true civic and democratic media, and that with the help of state subsidies innovative forms of web journalism should be supported. If the state was willing to invest billions of dollars to rescue the financial and economic sectors (e.g. the car industry), one would expect that it would set aside the same sum to rescue the industry whose “products” enable democracy to function.

With the development of the Internet and new online media, citizens who for decades had no option of taking part in public communication, obtained a chance to intervene into journalists’ monopoly over the production and dissemination of infor-

¹³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE52N67F20090324>.

mation. The issue that should be the subject of the public debate is not whether journalism is possible without journalists, or whether various forms of content published on the web deserve to be called the media, but whether we as citizens will have access to all the necessary information needed for our active participation in public life. The future of the media and journalism is no longer the question that concerns media owners (and their rights) but the fundamental question of the future of democracy.

Columbia Journalism Review (a publication of the faculty of journalism of the Columbia University in New York), commissioned Leonard Downie and Michael Schudson (2009) to carry out research on the reconstruction of American journalism. Their article appeared in October 2009 opening a broad public debate on the future of journalism. In contrast to McChesney and Nichols, who advocate a comprehensive state aid to the media and journalism, Downie and Schudson concentrated on various forms of indirect state support to the most jeopardized segments of the media industry – the news sector and investigative journalism. To boost various sources of independent news coverage, Downie and Schudson proposed the following measures:

- The tax department or the Congress should support the establishment or reshaping of independent news organizations that predominantly cover public issues into non-profit organizations or low-profit corporations that work in the public interest.

- Individual supporters, donors and foundations should provide greater support for the media organizations which in the past devoted attention to the key public issues and responsible coverage.

- Public radio and television stations should reorganize their operation in such a way that the greatest part of their airtime is devoted to news relating to the local communities in which they operate. This would inevitably entail the reshaping of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a larger financial support from the state and changes in guidelines on their operation.

- Both public and private universities should, by virtue of their education role, become a sustainable source of accountable, local and national journalistic work. Universities should have their own media, recruit top journalists to perform the teaching tasks, and become live laboratories for digital innovations and all forms of innovative collection, dissemination and sharing of information.

- It would be necessary to establish a national Fund to support the local coverage that would be partly financed from resources accrued by the Federal Communication Commission and partly from additional funds obtained from the users of telecommunication services, television and radio frequencies and internet service providers. The resources thus obtained would be distributed by way of the public calls for applications, and would be awarded by the Fund's local councils.

- Journalists, non-profit organizations and state institutions should invest more effort to increase the practical usefulness of information and access to it, sustain

various platforms for information collection and distribution selected by citizens themselves, and raise public awareness of the existing sources that could become an important impetus for citizen's mobilization.

The Knight Foundation, renowned for its funding of non-profit media projects, led an extensive national debate with the participation of many public figures, journalists and NGOs' representatives, followed by a book containing recommendations on the protection of the information needs of (primarily local) communities in the digital era¹⁴. The commission has established that the current financial crisis faced by many private media presents a serious threat to democracy. If citizens cannot obtain relevant and credible information, they cannot participate in the co-administration of the state, either on the local or on the national level. Well-informed communities can improve their "information health" by supporting innovative business models for the media that will ensure quality journalism, by increasing the support for the public broadcasters endeavoring to satisfy the information needs of local communities, and by supporting education institutions and non-profit organizations in developing new forms of journalistic activities based on information sharing in various local environments. In addition to emphasizing active support for local media organizations, the report devotes special attention to the activities oriented towards strengthening information and communication knowledge of citizens and to the issue of equal access to the latest technologies for every individual. The result of such active policy is expected to be the development of new participative forms of political activity in which various IC platforms will be a vital tool in the shaping of common public space.

The lively public debate on the future of journalism in the US resulted in various proposals on how to democratize the media and how to place them back at the core of the democratic public sphere. What is interesting is that most of these proposals refer to the positive effects of various types of state support in Europe (primarily the efficient model of financing the public media). In contrast to the US, where the breakdown of the existing media models provoked serious deliberations as well as misgivings about the role of the state in meeting the citizens' information needs, Europe (under pressure of these same American media corporations) has been shifting away from the public media model and state support for the media sector. Paradoxically, the EU, which over the decades of its existence failed to shape common media policy, became the biggest advocate of the corporative media model even as it was breaking down in the US.

¹⁴ The Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy, *Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age* (Knight Foundation, 2010) http://www.knightcomm.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/02/Informing_Communities_Sustaining_Democracy_in_the_Digital_Age.pdf

4. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Instead of inventorying the more or less catastrophic situation of the media industry, let us rather take a look at what could be done to weather the crisis. In late January 2009, The New York Times published a commentary by David Swensen and Michael Schmidt (2009) on the future of American newspapers. In line with the well known statement of the great American President Thomas Jefferson, that well-informed citizens are the foundation of democracy, the rescue of American media was in their opinion mandatory. Swensen and Schmidt proposed that newspapers should be transformed into non-profit organization which would free them from the obligation to serve the media owner (and profit) and enable them to turn to their primary task - serving the interests of citizens. To preserve and even revitalize the newspapers, say the authors, it would be necessary to transform newspaper companies into non-profit institutions funded through donations, like universities and colleges. Donations would ensure greater autonomy and would protect newspapers from the economic forces that now keep them on their knees. The hitherto cost-cutting approach to the crisis will in most cases have long-term effects on content. The decades of cutbacks (the so-called 3P model – people, paper, price) resulted in the radically smaller number of journalists and other employees (between 2002 and 2006, the American media reduced the foreign bureaus staff by one quarter); certain newspapers reduced the number of pages, others dropped certain sections and supplements, or changed format etc. A trend currently on the rise is the “*free lunch*” model (free of charge papers), with the entire price of the newspaper being covered by advertisers.

Donations would transform newspapers into strong, more stable and more independent organizations that would be able to serve the public good more efficiently, explain David Swensen and Michael Schmidt. Journalists would not be exposed to the pressure exerted by media owners or advertisers. Similar to the scholarship model in education institutions, newspapers would derive revenue from subscription fees for printed copies and access to their web content. Donations would be adjusted to newspapers’ revenues. However, since only several foundations and wealthy individuals have enough money for donations, enlightened philanthropists must take steps now, say Swensen and Schmidt.

Dan Kennedy (2009) responded to their proposals in The Guardian, a newspaper itself owned by a non-profit foundation. According to Kennedy, to be able to establish non-profit media, the American legislation should first be changed, since it “robbed” non-profit institutions of their First Amendment rights. Swensen’s and Schmidt’s idea has a positive and a negative side. The worst outcome, says Kennedy, is that “*under US law, our self-styled watchdogs of democracy would become lapdogs, eschewing partisan politics in order to obtain a precious federal tax exemption.*” As a matter of fact, under the current American legislation, non-profit organizations cannot “*influence legislation*” or “*participate in any campaign activity for or against political candidates.*” What is then left to the media that are prevented

from covering political issues and the operation of governmental bodies? Moreover, this prohibition has further implications. As a matter of fact, the prohibition to “*influence legislation*” means that even those non-profit organizations that would campaign for changes in legislation relating to abortion and same-sex marriages, or against politicians who endeavor to restrict the rights of these groups, would be prevented from engaging in the struggle. As Kennedy says, the right to free speech (even if applied to the operation of non-profit organizations exempt from tax payment), is the right of everyone and not only of those with whose opinions we agree.

For decades, the media industry gained profit from deregulation, which in successive waves diluted demands to serve the public interests, say John Nichols and Robert McChesney (2009). It is time for the state to rescue American journalism through an adequate subsidy policy (regulation).

Le Monde diplomatique acted in response to the crisis of journalism and the media several times. As early as 2005, its former editor Ignacio Ramonet (2005) publicly appealed to the readers to actively engage in the struggle for the right to obtain verified and credible information. This is also the context in which it is possible to place the appeal of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (2007) published in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in May 2007 (indeed, not well received in Germany) for a state support to quality newspapers. Without newspapers of opinion we cannot hope to have a public space for citizens' debate, and no democracy can afford to have such communication deficit. Habermas (2008) repeated his appeal in 2008 in an interview for *Die Zeit* in which he emphasized that certain delicate areas of our lives must not be exposed to the risks generated by stock market speculations. Democracy includes certain public goods, for example, undistorted political communication, which cannot be tailored to the needs of profit-making investors. The citizens' need for information cannot be satisfied in a culture of fast-digested political sound bytes that flourish in the media landscape dominated by commercial television.

CONCLUSION: ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACKWARD – OR THE OTHER WAY ROUND

The creators of new media policy should elaborate in detail the new mechanisms of state support to the media. Rather than media owners, it is media content producer and citizens who need support. A state subsidy should be given only to the socially responsible media that respect their employees' rights and professional standards, operate in a transparent manner and serve the public interest.

Non-profit ownership cannot become the dominant model within the newspaper sector, because endowments would not be sufficient to sustain it. Below we list several alternative funding methods:

– A part of the monthly fee paid to Internet access providers could be used to finance the online news media based on the percentage of people who consume their content.

– Internet retail shops. These shops would connect producers and consumers and substitute the sale of advertising space; they would be used for transactions between companies and customers, while one part of the transaction cost would be paid to the web page that serves as the entry point.

– Boutique news. It would be produced by topmost journalistic and research teams specializing in individual areas and offered to customers who seek an in-depth coverage of a specific subject (see, for example, the project ProPublica – Journalism in the Public Interest, Kaiser Health News in Inside Science)¹⁵;

– News aggregators such as Google could devote part of their income to news organizations that produce information.

– Journalistic collectives. With the power shifting away from media institutions and towards individual journalists, the latter could establish collectives through which they could offer their content. Collectives would not be composed of professional journalists only but also authors who have professional knowledge about a specific topic. The collectivist journalism model would be a joint project of all members of the collective and the funding would be based on the number of published texts. Media collectives would be legal persons catering for the needs of their members. Their members would be both “suppliers” (authors) and “customers” (readers). A media collective would be self-managed by its members who would also choose the management model. Each member of a collective would take commitment to respect the professional standards in journalism. A collective would be funded exclusively through the voluntary monthly contributions of its members. The amount of such a contribution would be determined by members themselves, and the report on the spending of funds would be published monthly. Access to content would be granted only to members, but the collective would also have the option of selling its members’ texts to other media companies for a pre-determined price. Media collectives would therefore be self-managed community media. The line ministries would secure initial capital from the budget needed to establish a media collective. The amount would correspond to the share of content and number of members (e.g. for each member, the collective would receive a 10 euro extra subsidy a year).

– Relevant institutions should ensure free access to analogue frequencies for NGOs and local communities for the production of non-commercial radio and television programs. These programs would also be funded from members’ contributions and the local community budget. The local community would cover the employment costs for journalists and other media workers.

The above-said is just a proposal for the future discussion about the new ways of organizing the public media sphere. The crisis of media industry is not the crisis

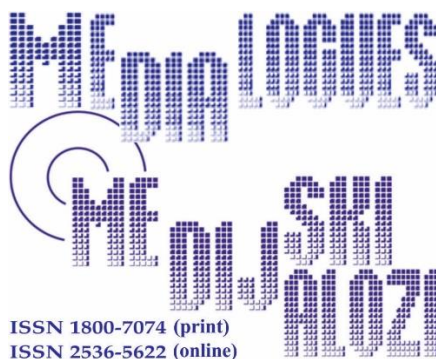
¹⁵ www.propublica.org, www.kaiserhealthnews.org. in www.insidescience.org

of the underlying business model, but of mass communication in general. The industry that has for years been serving the interests of owners and payers (advertisers) can no longer be sensitive to the needs of citizens. For decades now, citizens have been mere statistical exchange currency in national surveys on readership, or percentages in audience ratings. The time has come to take our communication rights in our own hands. This time, let the price of the “free lunch” be paid by those who “cooked” it.

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Network Communication and Ethnic Communities in Poland

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the principles of the activity of ethnic groups in the area of the new media in Poland. The paper aims at presenting the internet as a alternative tool for ethnic groups and migrants. The internet helps them to create new „virtual” ethnic identities. The paper includes also theoretical discussion of on-line communication and concepts of ethnic identities.

KEYWORDS: *Network, communication, Poland, ethnic communities*

INTRODUCTION

Experience that has been gained so far has shown that using traditional, old media is still quite common among national and ethnic minorities in Poland. What is noticeable is that new forms of communication in the domain of the new media are being sought. An analysis of the extent to which new communication tools are used and how the selected ethnic minorities in Poland are active on the net. The aim of this analysis is to indicate how varied communication tools are used by minority groups in Poland. At the same time the different aims that are served by this can be observed.

Selected examples illustrate how expert use can be made of global communication tools for the use of local communities. This means that we can, at the same time, make use of global media in order to create small, local, ethnic communities. K. Krzysztofek concurs with the view that after a period of infatuation with the global reach of information, more and more people are reaching for the internet to contact one's own, local community. In the virtual reality new local communities are appearing, with the global internet existing on a local or 'glocal' basis.

In analyzing the behavior of the users of social network sites P. Levinson (2010, pp. 200-204) has noted that cyberspace has become a place where special communities are taking shape. The users of the new media create characteristic communities, often termed as 'virtual communities'. What is particularly valuable, from the perspective of ethnic communities, is that the internet and the 'virtual communities' created in its space are becoming a significant element of the public sphere. It can be said that they contribute to the creating of a multi-ethnic public sphere, in which a cultural heterodoxy is seen as a common good accepted by the majority as well as minority.

2. ET@NET

In recent times the internet has been a harbinger of changes in the way ethnic communities communicate. There are different degrees to which these groups perceive the need to and possibilities of reaching for the new media. The mass society and networks have both a global, as well as local reach. In society webs create virtual times and spaces. Direct communication remains, in many respects, the most important type of communication. It is, however, gradually becoming supplemented by indirect communication. Apart from the existing, traditional mass media, new forms of group communication are developing in cyberspace on both an interpersonal and a mass level, including chat lines and internet communicators as well as virtual communities, united by common interests. Activity on the web is not replacing direct contacts but is more and more often supplementing other types of communication. One of the most significant trends in the web society is the growing significance of

the significance of interpersonal relationships. The effects of these are clearly visible in the economy, politics or culture (Van Dijk, 2010, pp. 56-62).

The internet also helps foster relations based on common goals, interests or ideas. What is created in this way is 'virtual web communities'. As W. Burszta notes the awakening in ethnic awareness is not only a phenomenon that is evident in the context of the internet and by means of using this type of communication. The move of communications to the web was not the only factor that contributed to these changes. What is significant, however, is the role, which new technology plays in these processes. „Thanks to the internet the phenomena of ethnic, social and cultural integration have been given impetus. People can communicate more quickly and easily and exchange information. This is the first and significant step to meetings and undertakings in the real world. In Poland many ethnic and national minority groups, including Armenians, Tartars, Karaims or the Lemko people, have their own web sites, which play the important role of a post box and give access for users to reach information of importance to them. The internet today is an impetus for many social phenomena, which does not, of course mean, that it is their sole reason or the source of all social changes” (Wywiad & Burszta, 2005). What is certain, however, is that it plays a significant part in shaping cultural identity and pride in belonging to a social group. It can be seen that there is no agreement as to how the internet can be defined from a social point of view. It can be seen, following the view of M. Castells, that it is a new multi-medial means of communication between people and institutions. Another way of looking at the internet is as a new community, which exists in cyberspace. It has its own institutions, norms and culture. The possibility that it creates for meeting social needs is the preordinate factor that indicates that the internet should be treated as a society (Nowak & Krejtz, 2006, pp. 6-7). W. Gustowski (2012, pp. 97-106) is of the view that internet communities should be divided according to different criteria. From the perspective of the activity of ethnic groups on the web I would like to point to a number of types of e-communities:

– A virtual community- i.e. a group of people who use the net as the only means of communication. These are people who are not in everyday contact and often live in distant countries. A good example of these can be served by dispersed ethnic groups or religious groupings, such as trans-national Islam.

– Support community- the internet serves as a means of rapid, constant communication for real communities. Ethnic groups have contact but the internet serves as an additional tool within the group as well as with other communities.

– Discussion communities - groups of people for whom the main aim is an exchange of views and information. These are usually centered on a web site with a discussion forum and also make use of discussion lists.

– Civic communities- groups of people whose aim is to disseminate information to a wider audience. Their activity is the result of a certain sense of mission. In this case there is also an expectation that the texts will be commented on.

The theoretical framework in research on diasporas is based on categories of culture and national identity. What follows from it is that diaspora media, with transnational media in the forefront, which can include the websites, build a platform which facilitates the construction of emotional links and a feeling of belonging to a certain 'imagined' transnational community (Bailey et al., 2012, p. 73). It is also, at the same time, a platform where global mixes with local and where identities of being a migrant and a new citizen are negotiated. The new media play a very intensive part in building a certain 'new ethnicity', as a result, among others, of negotiating a cultural identity.

The internet today provides great opportunities for those communities, which for economic, technical or geographic reasons lack access to other types of media. The internet is used in many different ways. The main communication tools are web sites, discussion for a and blogs. Ethnic communities are publishing papers online, radio and TV programmes online ever more frequently. What is worthy of note is the creation of communities by means of social media. Often Facebook contacts serve as a bridge between the current homeland and their parents 'or grandparents' country of origin (Vittadini et al., 2013, pp. 61-67).

T. Eriksen (2011) pay attention on four diverse communities. They are used the internet as the important communications tool:

- Nations which have lost their territory.
- Nations which are for political reasons dispersed.
- Nations with large temporary diasporas overseas.
- Nations where many citizens work temporarily or permanently abroad.

In addition to the classification articulated by Eriksen above, I would add two more communities where the internet is playing an increasing role. First of all this is the sphere of indigenous communities, for whom the internet has become an important communication tool-both within and outside the group. The internet is a platform for active participation in public discourse, even that, which is ignored by the mainstream media, concerning indigenous communities. It is often the case that such communities are dispersed and therefore contact is more difficult. We will later come to the cases of the Jewish and German communities in Poland as a case in point. As W. Burszta points out: „*One of the first groups who appreciated the huge potential of the internet and to make use of it were the Native Americans, in particular the Oneida tribe. Their experience was later used by other indigenous cultures. The internet proved to be the best means of integrating the people from the Oneida tribe. They are dispersed throughout the world and the net enabled them to communicate and to take effective, joint actions. In this way they were able to create a common literary language and create a cultural elite. They were able to effectively influence the US administration in order to obtain necessary information but already as the 'Oneida nation'*“ (Burszta, 2005). Their example has been followed by

many other ethnic groups. The phenomenon of using the internet by indigenous groups is widespread in the USA.

A second example are small language minorities the speakers of which treat the internet as a tool to support actions taken to protect their language from extinction. These language and indigenous minorities often find access to the traditional media difficult because of their small numbers. The internet has provided them with a platform to talk about themselves, sometimes to remind others about their history. What is interesting it is also possible to find pages on the web created by people who do not belong to the given group but want to support them, help preserve the language, get to know its users and their history. These undertakings give a chance to give the language a life-line and what is important make it possible enable it to be studied. Linguists have drawn attention to this on-line communication. It will probably not be possible to save most languages threatened with extinction but it is important to study and document the existence of as many as possible. Later in the article I will analyze the case of the Kaszub community in Poland.

2. POLISH ET@NET

Poland is one of the European countries with the quite low percentage of ethnic and national minorities. According to the Census of Population from 2011 acknowledged minorities make up 3.8 per cent of the Polish population.

The Act on national and ethnic minorities and regional language, which was adopted by the Parliament in 2005 recognizes:

- nine national minorities: German, Russian, Belorussian, Lithuanian, Czech, Slovakian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Armenian,
- four ethnic minorities: Roma, Karaims, Lemko and Tatars,
- one community which used regional language – Kashubian.

But Poland is inhabited by the representatives of many other ethnic groups: Greek, Chinese, Vietnamese.

Minority communities in Poland, using different sources of financial support, are reaching more and more often for the tools offered by the new media. The majority of the national and ethnic minorities have their websites or pages on the net. Most often these are pages of organisations or minorities associations. In this part of the article I'd like to point to three selected examples of the use of the media by the German, Jewish minorities and the Kaszub community. Each one of them constitutes a distinct example of the use of the new media. The subject of the analysis are the German www.vdg.pl, Kaszub www.naszekaszuby.pl and the Jewish case of the Bente Kahn Foundation www.fbk.org.pl. The websites, which are the subject of analysis are not the only ones that these communities have at their disposal, but are noteworthy for a number of reasons.

The first one of the cases under discussion is the www.vdg.pl website- edited by the German community in Polish and German. It is called The website of the German people in Poland. It is an example of the new media being used in a skilled way. Below - a brief description of the website. At the top of the page there are the following page directories:

- *News*, which is divided into the different regions, in which the German community lives.

- *Politics*, in which government agreements. Acts of Parliament, Bills and other significant documents on the national and European level.

- *Culture* - with information about annual pilgrimages of the German community and detailed information about weekend courses for children, meetings at community centres, seminars and conferences.

- *About us* - this is information about the German community in numbers-according to the census and the factual situation. In this section there are news about the Union of German Communities. A history of union is presented. On the map one can find all the German minority groupings, which are active at the local level. Next is the strategy for development between 2010-2015 and the organisation's partners in Germany and Poland. There also pieces of information about bilingual gminas and roadsigns.

- *Education*- a section in which the legal basis for education for the minorities is outlined. One can also find practical information about minority language teaching and a list of schools where bilingual teaching takes place.

- In the *Media* section there is detailed information about all radio and TV broadcasts addressed at the German community. Furthermore there is a list of press publications edited by the German Social and Cultural Associations in Poland. In this section there is also press information and press releases of the German minority in Poland. There is also information about a newsletter and details of how to order it.

- *Youth* - in this section there is information about German minority youth organisations.

- *Medioteka* - in which broadcasts of the Schliesen Journal and Schliesen Kompakt. There is also a photo gallery of the numerous conferences, meetings and workshops of the German minority.

- The last section on *Becoming a Member* provides information on how to join the German organizations.

On the main page on the top left side there are a lot of slides with the latest information on various topics. The most important information is under the slides and is divided into the latest and older information. There is a banner about the German Bundestag elections due in September 2013 with instructions on how to register and vote. The left hand column is completed with the blog by MP Bernard Gaida with the four most recent entries.

The right side is divided into numerous entries, maps and links. Just below the links is a map with details about the German minority in the different parts of the country. There is a timetable of events and a map entitled Find an organisation in your *region*. There also links to the TV journal Schliesen Journal, the „Wochenblatt” paper and the Pro Future production team. Below there is a section entitled Last Commented with a link to the *Mittedrin* programme. Under that is the Ask a question section. There is information that the website has been financed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the German Federal Republic. The Union of German Social-Cultural Associations is on Facebook and has over 360 people who like it (as of 09.07.2013).

The website covers a wide range of subjects with political, cultural and social areas among these covered. This does not stand in the way of a clear and legible style. In using the classification put forward by W. Gustowski in this article it can be said that the site supports the shaping of a virtual, supporting civic and discussion-based community. In this way www.vdg.pl is a communication tool for a varied and dispersed community living in the western, northern and southern parts of Poland. It is also a platform for shaping a supporting community as we are dealing with a group that uses other very active forms of communication acting through numerous associations and organisations. The internet is also a conduit for contact with other communities. Most certainly the site constitutes a discussion forum for an exchange of ideas and information. We are also dealing with a group that wishes to assert its separate status and aims to disseminate information to the wider public. Their action stems from a certain sense of mission. This is clear from commentaries, discussions . and questions asked.

Another example is provided by the Pomeranian community site www.naszekaszuby.pl. On the main page is the Kaszebsko Jednota banner- the association of people of the Kaszub nationality. Below is the banner of the Year of Zrzesincy (1933-2013 Zrzesince First for Kaszuby), which is being commemorated in 2013. In the middle of the page is the category of *We recommend* in which two books by Artur Jablonski, a well-known Kaszub journalist and activist are advertised. The first, entitled *Namerkony* (Marked), is described as the first story in the Kaszub language for a number of years and *Kaszubi. Wspolnota Narodowa* (Kaszubi. A national community). Both were published in 2013. Below there are three more categories News, Latest Comments and Forum - latest statements (news and forum is also contained in links at the top of the page).

In the left-hand column there are selected photos and articles, a link to the latest edition of the „Pomerania” magazine and the number of registered and anonymous users. In this column we can also find the *We Recommend* section with the Kaszub coat of arms, flag and holidays listed, a test on Kaszub writing, Kaszub writing on the computer and Kaszub lessons. In the right-hand column there is also a list of articles and photographs. Below is the computer Kaszub and a Kaszub

computer keyboard. In this column are also Friendly pages, among which are The Kaszub dictionary and Associations of Young Kaszub Artists.

At the top of the page the following tabs have been placed:

- *News*, where news of forthcoming book promotions and other news are listed.
- *Articles*, divided into Education and regional activities, History, Kaszub Language Council and Literature.
- *Photographs*, including news, landscapes and thematic ones.
- *Scans*.
- *Forum* - which is sub-divided into sections on general matters, language and history.
- *Links* - with varied categories.
- *Material for downloading*.
- *Questionnaires*. One of the questionnaires worthy of attention was ‘Why do you visit our site?’ Of the 54 people taking part 64% of the respondents answered to follow news of Kaszuby and Pomerania, 12% articles on Pomeranian and Kaszub matters and 11% discussions on forums.

It is worth noting that the portal is meant both for Kaszuby and to disseminate information about Kaszuby. A very important element is the discussion forum which is a space for an exchange of information and ideas to take place. We are also dealing with a community that is asserting its individuality and wishes to communicate to the wider population. What is particularly noticeable is that this activity is prompted by a sense of mission.

The association of people of Kaszub nationality is a user of Facebook and has over 1059 users who like it (as of 11.07.2013). The third case is rather different. This is the site of the Bente Kahn Foundation and the Centre for Jewish Culture and Education at the White Stork Synagogue in Wroclaw. The Foundation started its activity in 2006 with the aim of restoring the White Stork Synagogue and the aim of creating Jewish education and culture centre. The founder, Bente Kahn, is a Norwegian actress and singer of Jewish origin and is now one of the foremost singers of Jewish songs in Europe. The page is in three languages - Polish, German and English and there are the following tabs on the first page:

- *Foundation*. Information about the foundation, team and how to become a volunteer.
- *Synagogue*. Information about the history and opening of the Synagogue and its reclaiming.
- *Current affairs*. Information about current events in the Synagogue.
- *Projects*. This tab is sub-divided into the following categories. Centre of Jewish Education and culture, White Stork Gallery, Mutual Respect Days, Summer at

the White Stork Synagogue, Educational events and a permanent exhibit entitled 'History Regained'.

- *Gallery* - photos of the synagogue and events taking place there.
- *Contact* – Diary of events.

Forthcoming events planned for the month ahead have a central position on the page. The site is very different from the two analyzed above. The main aim is the promotion of events, cultural events organized by the Foundation and undertakings aimed at promoting Jewish culture. This means promotion of the language, holidays and Jewish customs. This activity is more aimed at promoting inter-cultural dialogue and reconciliation. What is significant are activities aimed at building knowledge and recognition of the White Stork synagogue itself.

The Foundation can also be found on Facebook, Youtube and Twitter.

At the end of the analysis of these selected examples I would also like to point to another interesting project, disseminated with the aid of on-line tools. What I have in mind is the social campaign of Prom (Ferry) Social Integration Foundation- 'One of Many'.

This project is co-financed by the European Union within the Social Fund. The project by Chad Evens-Wyatt- entitled Roma Rising, about the Roma living in the Czech Republic. The Prom Social Integration Foundation decided to launch an analogous project in Poland named Roma Rising.pl At the beginning there was an album of photos taken by Chad Evans Wyatt, who photographed Roma people throughout the country. These people, also began to figure as the faces of the campaign entitled 'One of Many' Its aim is to change the attitudes to the Roma minority that prevail in Poland. 'One of Many' are the Roma, who in the view of the campaign organisers, have achieved social and professional status with acceptance by society in general. They portraits of the Roma are presented with the aim of showing the wider audience how important is the role of social integration and coexistence in a local environment. The tools that have been used have included the internet, including social media sites, billboards, radio ads and press articles¹.

I would like to mention one more event here, namely the National Census carried out in Poland in 2011. It concerns all the minorities and it demonstrated that the internet had not been utilized to a sufficient degree in the past as a tool of communication, promotion and what inequalities could be experienced by users. For the first time citizens were able to file their entries to the census using the net.

„The innovative way of conducting the census with the use of modern techniques opened new possibilities, but also, in the absence of information entailed certain risks”, according to P.Tyma chairman of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland.

¹ Zob. więcej www.jednizwielu.pl (10 IX 2012).

„The failure to conduct a wide and multi-faceted campaign of information meant that a chance to interest more citizens in the census was lost”².

In context of the NSP it is worth pointing to one of the first campaigns of this type in Poland. The Ukrainian Union received a grant from the Batory Foundation. Apart from leaflets in Polish and Ukrainian funds from the grant were used to buy modems for volunteers and a special website was designed. On the www.perepys.pl page there was information about the census, links to the GUS (Central Statistical Office) pages and other state institutions involved in the census, links to press articles, radio and TV broadcasts on the subject of the census. Volunteers also conducted an information campaign on social media sites including their own site- www.hazard.net³.

In my opinion the ethnic minorities could have been expected to use the web more extensively to exchange information and shape opinion on the subject of the problems concerning these communities at the time of the census.

3. UNCRITICALLY IN THE NET?

The cases listed above are proof that the internet can not be viewed uncritically. It is worth to refer once more to J. Van Dijk who noted there has always been inequality on social network sites. *„When these were supplemented media webs, a new extension of this phenomenon appeared. The technology that we use is divided, both in terms of its physical accessibility, IT skills and their use in practice. In the most extreme examples IT exclusion (in terms of access, skills and use) can be transformed into structural inequalities”* (Van Dijk, 2010, p. 63).

G. Murdock is of the view that there are two forms of inequalities. *„The first is simply the one between the IT haves and IT have-nots with a significant minority permanently lacking access to the new technologies. The second form shows the gap between the quality and power of the communication capacity of goods available to groups of consumers with different purchasing power at their disposal”* (Murdock, 2010, p. 121). This means that people on lower incomes often have inferior and more limited products. They are less able to replace their equipment or upgrade their software on a regular basis.

As experience has shown in many countries in the case of the Roma the internet can be, at the same time a useful tool as well as a barrier to communication. The Roma very often face many social problems in the places where they live. They often live in very difficult conditions and it is unrealistic to expect such a group to have unlimited access to the internet. It is a tool, which divides, in this case between those

² Interview with Piotr Tyma, chairman of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland, Warszawa, 29.10.2011

³ Raport Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011 w ocenie mniejszości ukraińskiej, Warszawa, wrzesień 2011.

few who use it and the majority who do not have access to this type of communication. This is a problem that affects many groups. We experience inequalities on the net in terms of social, racial, gender and age divisions.

With the awareness of the significance of the new media for many communities it is worth noting some of the dangers that stem from communication on the net. The interactive media are deeply immersed in society so it is difficult to ensure their independence and maintain the highest standards. This does not, however, mean that quality and objectivity remain important criteria in assessing the supply of information. „*On the net everyone can be both a recipient and supplier of information. Everyone can practice their own journalism, have their own blog, moblog or be a paparazzo. This means that every user has the potential to define people, things and phenomena according to their own concepts and meanings*” (Krzysztofek, 2007, p. 234).

As K.Krzysztofek notes this why the internet is cluttered with a lot of rubbish and it is easy to get lost in this without intellectual guidance. For this, among other reasons, that multi-media education is necessary for the young in order to help them use the internet as a repository of useful information and not sifting through rubbish. The same problem is cited by A.Keen who is not interested in the whole net but just a part of it called Web 2.0. He writes, „*the dawning of the age of the amateur has blurred the distinction between the reader and writer, artist and opinion shaper, art and product, amateur and expert*” (Keen, 2007, p. 45). This, according to the writer, has an influence on the quality and value of the information we receive.

CONCLUSION

It is still too early to make any conclusions regarding the long-term effects of the Internet in multiethnic communities. But in the global communication era the Internet is typically used to strengthen, rather than weaken national identities.

Ethnic and religious groups rightly view the internet as an alternative information tool This is linked with the difficulty in reaching the public and commercial media and also the image that these groups have in the mainstream media. This form of communication opens new possibilities in giving shape to new transnational communities, international communication and building new identities. The internet, which is borne out by a wide body of research also reinforces existing identities shaping new relationships within groups. According to K.Krzysztofek views the internet as a metamedium, which absorbs interpersonal communication, which is institutional and on a mass scale.

The internet is not a risk for other media and does not destroy them, but changes their nature. The cases discussed in the text are proof of the different forms of communication used by ethnic communities. The web sites, which were subjects of the analyses provide a platform to communicate with their own community as well as

outside. There are also different forms of promoting one's own undertakings. A form that is used more and more often are discussion forums.

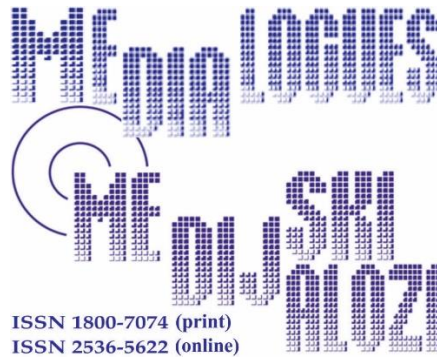
What is clear, however, is that ethnic communities in Poland reach for the new tools on offer in different ways. Not all of them notice of their huge potential and access to them varies from community to community.

In this paper I confront different approaches to the subject, rooted in political science, intercultural communication, mass media communication. The main questions of this article ask what the practice of network communication by ethnic communities in Poland. I present three main cases illustrating the process of implementing the network communication and how different tools are used to create the multi-ethnic public sphere. I have also attempted to explain the reasons and, most importantly, the consequences of Internet communication in Polish ethnic and national minorities.

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In Full View - Cybersuicide, Hypervisual Self and Public Showcase of Death (For Real)

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ABSTRACT

The practice of suicide has taken on a new meaning in the last decade: alongside the advent of media technologies and cybernetic communication systems, it has become an unbridled pursuit of global visibility. The transnational character of such an increasingly extended and accelerated visibility resides exactly in those possibilities of computer technologies that have become available through digital images

and the role played by vision. By putting into focus the hyper-visual properties of the Internet, as an aspect easily overlooked by medical studies around the troubling and increasing phenomenon of cybersuicide, I am arguing for a more nuanced, inclusive and interdisciplinary approach, complementary to the existent and valuable body of work already achieved by the scientific research in the context of medicine and psychiatry. This paper therefore treats the contemporary culture of display in general and the overexposure of self-inflicted death through the virtual social environment in particular as interdependent and highly mobile kinds of cultural practice: it highlights the nature of cybersuicide as a real-time event and a spectacle over the channels of popular social networks that have facilitated not only its live recording and transmission over the Internet, but also its online documentation, archiving and the possibility of repetition (in an al-most ritualistic way) for massive voyeurism at any given moment in time by any cyber-spectator. In order to get closer to the complexity of the term itself and to the individual and group responsibility it puts forward, I am dealing with cybersuicide as “Internet-assisted” suicide and the relevance of the Internet for understanding the ideation of self-inflicted death: not only as pertaining to the textual or hyper-textual self (embodied by verbal online communication) but also to the visual or hypervisual self, the kind of “self” that uses a new site for the public showcase of its own real death in full view - precisely the virtual domain of the Internet. For a human being thus exposed, is it assistance (in the process of looking) that becomes a mode of survival, of overcoming death, a “liberation” from it – as opposed to non-assistance which leads to the condemnation of death?.

KEYWORDS: *Suicide, cybersuicide, hypervisual self, public display of (self-inflicted) death, webcam, chikako Ozawa-de Silva, Marcus Jannes, Richard Gerstl*

INTRODUCTION

One of the major concerns in the current psychiatric debates around suicide - as applied to the media in general and the Internet in particular is related to the role that the computer-generated systems, services and devices play in suicide prevention and, unfortunately, also in suicide stimulation. Some of the leading scholars in the field of suicide studies, from Europe and beyond, have questioned in a number of texts the peculiar relationship between the computer technology and suicide throughout the last decade, when the popular spread of Internet communication has become prominent as a worldwide phenomenon, now reaching the number of more than 2.2 billion users (Internet World Stats, 2012).

The potential influence of the Internet on its suicide-sensitive users was examined and put into question by the researchers in the field as early as 1990s (Baume et al., 1997). This was especially relevant as regards the influence exerted upon the young people (teenagers and adolescents). Firstly, it relates to their higher level of vulnerability in comparison to the elderly parts of the population. Secondly, it also

relates to the inevitable, all the more increasing dependence - of their cultural habits and the personal, social and emotional domains of their everyday life - on the participation in the cyber communication (Wakefield and Rice, 2008). These are only two reasons why the issue at hand addresses the youth in particular. This kind of continuous interdependence has shown in many cases the high growth rate toward the addiction attitudes among the youth, due to their very frequent and long daily exposure to the Internet resources, which also includes their easy and free access to the suicide-related data available online. Accordingly, while introducing the term “*cybersuicide*” into the scientific literature, the early stages of research have been primarily concentrated on the effect of the existent interactive suicide notes on the behavior of young Internet users (Baume et al., 1997).

This initial research approach has been developed throughout the last fifteen years into a trend showing an increasing interest in the verbal nature of suicide-oriented communication over the Internet (especially when it comes to the analysis of its negative effects). The methodology applied would usually conceive of a series of steps, mostly relying upon the verbal/textual characteristics of analysis: scanning of webpages through selected keywords of scientific relevance (main identifier combined with co-identifiers, for example: “suicide” with “prevention” or “note”) via scholar or ordinary digital search engines and directories; textual database analysis following the relevant patterns preconceived upon the traditional material resources and methods (print publications, for example); focus on verbal descriptions of suicide methods and communication in pro-suicide websites, as well as on textual characteristics of messages written and exchanged in suicide notes, etc. The formalization and institutionalization of research analyses thus achieved (in accordance with the predominance of verbal over any other type of exchange) has been valuable in reaching the goals toward suicide prevention. However, it has also showed certain limits by its general reliance upon the verbal nature of human communication, thus establishing a formal and even exclusive procedure in the official analysis of the pathological Internet use nowadays.

Being relatively “novel” among the phenomena under the scrutiny of a medical gaze, the pathological Internet use in general and the so-called cybersuicide in particular have been investigated by methods that rely on the Western logic of the “civilized” gaze of the worldwide population, namely – the logic of the word. By privileging speech over images, the visual character of digital communication technologies has been left aside in most of the studies related to cybersuicide. Nonetheless, throughout the not so long history of the Internet as the HyperText Markup Language (HTML, initiated in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the United States in the symbiotic context of scientific and military purposes) the visuality has gradually developed into a privileged domain of the global network cultures as we experience it today. The introduction of the visual element to the coding language in the early 1990s is a simple yet very significant fact that should be taken more seriously into account in the study of cybersuicide.

Once the World Wide Web became configured to display graphic material, beside the display of hypertext documents, a new domain of communication possibilities opened up: “*The added element of the visual, along with the ease and freedom of electronic movement enabled by hypertext, pushed what was an obscure resource available to engineers and technocrats into the churning mainstream of popular culture and global commerce*” (Ferranto, 2010). One could even say that the existent body of work concerning the troubling issue of cybersuicide – insisting on the verbal features of online communication – has so far been generated by relying almost exclusively upon the hypertextual property of the Internet. The hypertextuality is, however, only one of its main characteristics: by introducing the graphic component, the hypervisual property of the Internet has gained the kind of prevalence that has not only become all the more evident nowadays but plays the most essential role in the global digital communication. Accordingly, the contemporary culture of display has become so much intertwined with the structural and functional properties of the digital communication technologies embodied by the Internet that cybersuicide presents but one of the components that have inevitably become embedded in those properties. It is precisely from this point of view that I want to address the notion of cyber-suicide in this paper alongside its implications both inside and outside of the virtual social environment.

The exclusion of hypervisibility from the scientific research of cyber-suicide shows only one side of the spectrum. On the other side, the clinical setting of neuroscience has been concerned with a relatively novel use of techniques and methods dealing with the procedures of the brain structure and functioning through the so-called neuroimages. As a visual scientific method of mapping the information generated in or by the brain and stored in its “database”, neuroimaging remains a privileged domain of neuroradiologists. Even if the neuroimaging is associated with the suicide research (which is, actually, the case) it gives but one possible way of addressing the significance of visuality and image-oriented research. In the context of suicide, and cybersuicide in particular, how many people (including the suicide-sensitive Internet users) are aware of the “virtual” reality constructed by the neuroimages in the brain, and who of them would know what such a reality actually means? Not too many, I believe. Perhaps only a few of them, or nobody.

This brings us back to the very beginning of questioning the roles played by images in the context of cybersuicide, especially the status of (hyper) visuality and the functioning of gaze within the suicide-related (verbal and visual) communication over the Internet. The aim of this paper is not to give immediate answers to the questions that must be posed in this context: a further analysis revolving specifically around these issues shall be enforced among scholars of various disciplines. My modest contribution will be limited by some early and personal ideas that are proposed within the body of this paper, as a rough draft rather than an in-depth analysis. If conditions for such an in-depth analysis would be beneficial enough, a more profound investigation shall be developed and finalized in the forthcoming paper thro-

ughout this year (2012), focused specifically on what I would like to name “*a suicidal gaze*.”

For the paper at hand, I would prefer to remain within the limits of its format, and will only accentuate the borderlines of the coordinate system of thought that brought me into thinking about the question “*What is suicidal about vision?*” My main concern here will be cybersuicide: the complexity of the notion itself, the individual and group responsibility it puts forward, and its relevance for understanding the ideation of self-inflicted death not only as pertaining to the textual or hypertextual self (embodied by verbal communication over the Internet) but also to the visual or hypervisual self. The notion of hypervisual self, as I understand it, denotes the kind of self that-in order to make visible (communicate, announce, stage, perform, document and confirm) its own suffering - uses a new site for the public showcase of its own real death, in full view: the virtual domain of the Internet. As mentioned earlier, already in the 1990s a new term has been coined in order to describe and define the particular nature of the evident inter-twining relationship between the role played by the World Wide Web as a tool for global informati- on exchange and the emerging trend of self-destructive attitudes among the youth.

“*Cybersuicide*” has thus become a common deno-minator for a phenomenon that has gained more and more prominence throughout the 2000s. However, the interpretation of the term has not been fixed to a single meaning: it can vary both among the specialists and the laymen. In order to start any future discussion concerning the issue I find it necessary to outline, from a personal perspective, an exemplary case alongside the terminological landscape within which a variety of meanings stem in regard to the notion of cybersuicide as it has been approached and understood in the recent scientific debates, as well as in the critical media theory and popular online communication.

1. CYBERSUICIDE: A LONG SPECULATIVE HISTORY OF THE TERM

The etymology of the term “suicide” alone stems from the Latin verb *sui caedere*, which translates into English as “*to kill oneself*”. It denotes an act pertaining to, or leading to, self-destructive, ruinous act, fatal to one’s life: a personal act by which one’s own death is intentionally caused. What could we say about a specific kind of suicide if we would add a prefix “cyber” thus forming a new word (“*cybersuicide*”)? In its antique Greek origins, κυβερ (Eng. governmental) denotes a relation to the notion of governance, order, (navigation) control. Widely used and recognized as an Internet- related prefix (similar to other terms in the same chain of signifiers, such as “virtual”, for example), all things “cyber”, we could say today, relate to those contemporary phenomena that are based on the proliferating use of “high tech” information technologies, dependence on computer-networks and their respective operative systems, as well as on the Internet access thus facilitated (cybernetics, cyber-

space, cybercafé, cyberpunk, even cybersex). The sense of controlling power inherent to the original Greek term is significant: it reveals an etymological and historical precondition for the humankind of our times, in a way that their inevitable dependence upon the cyberworld shall be understood as the sign of global governance by a new Internet regime to which they are all subjected.

Most of the recent theories facing the phenomenon of cybersuicide have come from the medical and psychiatric fields. They have stressed the link between the ideations of suicide on the Internet and the websites that not only contain information about “various methods and approaches to deliberate self-harm” but also provide easy access to such kind of information. This is all coupled with the high “*rate at which information is dispersed*” so that it could “contribute to the promotion of ‘off-fing’ one’s self which is particularly appealing to adolescents” (Birbal et al., 2009). The threat of a possible risk-increasing influence of the Internet has been repeated continuously in scientific efforts to bring its pathological use closer to our attention (Durkee et al., 2011).

This particularly concerns the pathological Internet use in relation to suicidality, namely “*those cases of suicide and suicide attempts in which a direct connection to the Internet can be demonstrated [through] different applications of the Internet, such as reading online newspapers, use of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and consulting Web pages with pro-suicide messages,*” all of them carrying a potential threat in exerting an effect on the suicidal behavior (D’Hulster and van Heeringen, 2006; Alao AO et al., 2006). Besides, following the results of some recent studies, we could also argue that since Internet has become an integral part of the life of millions of people in the developed and the developing world, it comes as no surprise that it has also, and unfortunately, become an integral part of their death (Sher and Vilens, 2009). By the risk it contains, it has certainly become an integral part of the potentiality of life-threat.

In their article “The Role of the Internet in suicide prevention” (2009) Swedish scientists Michael Westerlund and Danuta Wasserman use the term net suicides in order to analyze and frame the forms of online pro-suicide communication as opposed to the forms of online communication that defend a suicide preventive view. By contrasting the traditional media (TV, radio, press) to the medium of Internet, they are stressing the need not to “*underestimate the role played by the Internet in shaping attitudes towards suicide among the general public*” (Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009). The implications, both positive and negative, instituted by these forms of communication on actual human beings address their latent attitudes turning real upon consulting the web-based online contents. We shall accordingly challenge those implications, first of all, by being able to transgress the divisions between two types of social environments to which the generation of our times is necessarily subjected - the virtual (“real time”) and the actual (“real life”) social environment – as they function in a rather complementary and mutually dependent manner. This is an important point to be taken more seriously into account, since the virtual social

settings possess and offer an open access both to the positive and constructive as well as the negative and destructive elements inherent to those environments; once those elements translate into the opportunities and even values of significance for the Internet users, the consequences become more and more serious than we could have expected (in the negative case - even very dangerous and life-threatening): The Internet has thus provided a previously non-existent opportunity to publish material and discuss, confess and seek contact on a subject that has always been strongly taboo and therefore 'belonged' to only a few voices in public discourse. This opportunity has resulted in both constructive and strongly destructive contributions. (Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009).

From a more "popular" perspective, some other types of definitions are also available - where else but on the Internet itself. I am aware of the fact that the meaning of the words in dictionaries proposed by online encyclopedia (such as the Wikipedia, for example) imply a high risk of arbitrary interpretations that are usually not considered a reliable source of information, especially when it comes to a serious research. Nonetheless, I would like to indicate one of the possible formulations of the term "cybersuicide" exactly as it is presented by the Wikipedia, for a couple of very simple reasons:

- its popularity and frequency of consulting among the general population;
- its application of the term "assistance": by referring to cybersuicide as a form of suicide "*assisted by computer technology*" it gives an orientation that could be of significance for further examination toward what I would like to name "Internet-assisted" suicide;
- its application of the visual communication machines (Webcam) that facilitate the public display of suicidal behavior in "full view" in the online context.

In most of the Index sections of the available literature on cybersuicide the term "Internet-assisted suicide" as such does not appear. Its use is either very rare or extremely limited, in the sense that it offers an explanation of those kinds of suicides that have been facilitated, in one way or another, through online communication between the victim and someone else. The terms of significance (as related to "the Internet" and/or "assisted suicide" as the main identifiers) would include, among others: "legislation and regulation", "online therapy", "pro-suicide content", "self-help interventions", "suicide-pacts", "suicide prevention", "suicide-related material", "Netherlands", "Oregon, USA", "assisted suicide requests", etc. The nearest association can be found in the term "*Internet-related suicide*" - but to be related to someone or something instead of being assisted by are two different things. Instead of being focused exclusively on scientifically approved resources, one also needs to look for less official and more popular definitions.

In that regard, Wikipedia additionally offers an alternative definition of the term. It revolves around the identity-split between a “*cyber/online persona*” in the virtual social environment and a “*real/physical persona*” in the real social environment. It introduces a clear distinction between the two types of Internet suicide: one related to the “*deliberate destruction of one’s own online identity*” (virtual life) and another related to the deliberate destruction of one’s own “*real*” identity (physical life). The former case can be easily related to the existence of web sites such as the so-called Web 2.0 Suicide Machine operated by a medialab in Rotterdam [<http://suicidemachine.org/>]. What can they do for you?

Basically, they offer “*the social-media death*”, the possibility of self-erasure within your virtual social environment, “*a service to users who want to drop out of their social-network.*” By using the logic of computer graphic design tools, they allow you to delete your own social networking profiles (on Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and LinkedIn), and also “*to kill your fake virtual friends, thus completely doing away with your Web 2.0 alterego.*” A further and more radical reference is given by a digital media researcher Geoff Cox in his most recent text *Virtual Suicide* as decisive political act (Cox 2012) where, through the critical prism of communicative capitalism, he demonstrates “*how the control of networked relations is increasingly managed through the dynamic interactions of technologies and biologies (the mixed reality management of life and death), the significance [of which] is explained in terms of the construction of certain kinds of subjectivity through the use of networked technologies*”. Among numerous other examples, he also describes Seppukoo (2009) in the following way: [...] a platform for users to commit virtual suicide in a ritualistic removal of their virtual identity. Making their conceptual references clear, the project title is an explicit reference to the Japanese ritual suicide of Seppuku (literally stomach-cutting) and evokes the stubborn refusal to fall into the hands of the enemy - and the preference for autonomy even at the cost of one’s life. In such cases, suicide follows the Samurai code of honour (out of respect to the emperor, or perhaps disrespect to the empire in this case). Furthermore, the project is inspired by Seppuku!, the ritual suicide that some members of the Luther Blissett Project committed in 1999, to declare the end of their multiple identities project and the death of net.art as a temporary autonomous zone (Cox, 2012).

This is but one version of what we could understand by “*cyber-suicide*”, which is a version of the term I would prefer to keep between the inverted commas. Another aspect is what I am mainly interested in here, the one in which one’s own life could be finalized for real with the assistance of computer technology (due to the human involvement behind). However, Wikipedia - in its simple definition of the term (cybersuicide) - excludes any account on behalf of individual suicide cases, while highlighting the meaning of the cybersuicide (as opposed to the erasure of one’s own virtual alter-ego) in relation to the group suicide (“*such as suicide committed by several people simultaneously after meeting on the Internet*”). On the contrary, when addressing the notion of “Internet suicide” or “net suicides” the definition does not

exclude individual cases, but frames the performativity of the act in a very interesting way – in its relation to public visibility (“*a suicide conducted in full view of the public via Internet*”) resulting from individuals’ connectedness through a mutual online contact (“*or pursuant to a cybersuicide pact, which is a suicide pact made between individuals who meet on the Internet*”).

Before engaging with the dimension of public visibility in online suicide rituals, I would like to reflect on the concept of (cyber) suicide pact. According to the recent research results (including: Becker and Schmidt, 2004, Rajagopal, 2004, Ozawade Silva, 2008, Naito, 2007, Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009) the definition of a suicide pact is summarized in *Internet Pathways in Suicidality: A Review of the Evidence* (Durkee et al., 2011) as following: [...] A cooperative choice by two or more individuals who agree that both, or all, will commit suicide together, in a prearranged place and at a designated time. Research concerning the Internet and suicidal behaviour, in this aspect, investigates what is known as “net suicides”, i.e., suicide pacts made on the Internet. Evidence shows that suicide pacts often develop in chat rooms or on message boards, which endorse suicidal behaviours. This milieu attracts vulnerable persons feeling socially excluded from society. The socially-isolated individual can communicate interactively and anonymously, thus, exposing him/herself to impending prosuicidal incitement from one or more parties involved (my italics). This could potentially lead to the coordination of a suicide pact. An example of such a tragedy occurred in Japan during 2004 when nine people took their own lives, in a suicide pact, initiated and coordinated over the Internet. According to Naito, in Japan alone some 60 persons a year are presumed to have died from ‘net suicides’ and these trends appear to be on the increase. However, this occurrence is not only limited to Japan. Online suicide pacts have been reported in other nations as well, including the United Kingdom, Norway and South Korea.

The curious case of organized group suicides over the Internet deserves a special attention and requires more space for elaboration than the format of this paper allows. However, it is important to stress a few elements in that context at this point: when examining this particular kind of suicide and some of its features as experienced in Japan, a social and cultural anthropologist Chikako Ozawa-de Silva locates the official origins of the phenomenon - the first reported case of Internet group suicide - in Korea, despite the prevailing view that tends to turn this epicenter back to Japan of the early 2000s (Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009; Durkee et al., 2011). Beside the precision of this kind of statistics, which could be arguable, I find the specificity of the Japanese context much more significant for another reason: the popular culture representations of Internet group suicide in the recent wave of Japanese movies and television series. These are the main sources that Ozawa-de Silva uses and analyses extensively and critically in comparison to the mainstream culture sources of representation as they are used and analyzed by the scientific public health institutions and their respective policy making bodies. In her own account, it is exactly in the popular movie-representations “*where the moral blame for the suicides*

is targeted more at society itself rather than the individuals who are the victims of suicide; [...] the depictions of the popular culture social commentaries seem closer to the experiences and feelings expressed by the individuals who frequent Internet suicide forums” (Ozawa-de Silva 2010). This is where the direction in interpreting the pathological nature and reasons of the group suicidal phenomenon in Japan (and why not elsewhere) - is being reversed. This reversal (from a “suicide nation” toward a “social murder” through individual/group suicides) occurs in Ozawa-de Silva’s important argument around the inevitable interdependency between the suicidal individuals and the (suicidal) society to which they belong: In contrast to “official” explanations of the rise of suicide in Japan, which center around Japan’s economic stagnation and individual cases of pathology and depression, they [i.e. the popular culture representations] suggest that the Japanese individuals who visit suicide websites [...] are not isolated pathological cases, but victims and signifiers of a deep malaise or “*social pathology*” that is afflicting Japanese society. The individual psychology of such victims, therefore, is seen as inseparable from a social psychology that is in need of change and healing (Ozawa-de Silva, 2010).

What is in need of change and healing is the society itself, not only the individuals (the victims of the social pathology). Turning the arrow of pathology from a singular self toward the social (group) self, and doing so by highlighting the role of cultural (cinematic/visual) representations of suicide, Ozawade Silva gives an important *possible argument to address the main goal of this paper as well. If, by our “safe (European) distance” from the “specificity” of Japanese locality, we would try to understand the universal message her argument has to offer, we could also dare to try and understand the “suicidal specificity” of our own (European) locality precisely by the current pathology of European society. Under the globalization regime there is, however, no place for such a long-distance disconnectedness between the two localities that seem to be geographically very far from each other. Even if they are very different indeed, it is the similarities between them that must be drawn. I would not be surprised if, sooner or later, those similarities turn to be so big that, at some future point, we could relate to Ozawa-de Silva’s argument exactly by recognizing ourselves (as “Europeans”) in what she indicates here: [...] The parallels between popular culture representations and suicidal behavior in Japanese society, with particular attention to the re- cent films Tokyo Sonata and Departures [...] do illustrate very well particular aspects of Internet group suicide that have captured the imagination of Japanese social commentators. This is especially important, because these are aspects that have largely been neglected in the approaches taken by the media and the government, but which, I will argue, are central to an understanding of Internet group suicide in Japan. (Ozawa-de Silva, 2010, my italics) The official approaches taken by the media and the government toward suicide at large need to be put under question, examined and balanced from other, complementary and “unofficial” perspectives. This does not only stem from my personal “myopic” perception and “suspicious” comprehension of the dominant ways of reading and interpreting the suicidal phenomenon (which accordingly leads to the do-*

minant ways of applying such readings into the official proposals and regulation policies for suicide prevention). Although it might sound so, it is not from the position of critique that I believe we must approach the official statements in the (online) context of suicide treatment: it is rather from the position that opposes any unilateral, one-sided approach (be it exclusively medical or exclusively Eurocentric) and pleads for the inclusion of the other - perhaps less relevant, perhaps equally valid – scientific and non-scientific disciplines and methods, such as popular and visual culture in general and the world of images in particular. This could contribute to the official grammar of writing and to the official perspectives of looking at suicide in a more nuanced and hopefully more beneficial way. How could these “unofficial” methods be functional in that sense?

2. “INTERNET-ASSISTED” SUICIDE: A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE (VISUAL) COMMUNICATION

Adding the “unofficial” (popular, cultural, visual) dimension to the official suicide-oriented research may allow us to think about the multiplicity and ambiguity of the ways by which the computer technology actually exerts its powers of assistance in the suicidal practice over the Internet. In the particular context of “Internet-assisted” suicide I would dare to pose the following questions: Firstly, what (or who) is actually controlling the assistance protocol and how does it change over the time period during which a negotiation process about the decision of one’s own life termination is taking place online? This especially concerns the assistance (either constructive or destructive) exerted upon the potential victim by other online users who participate in the same virtual discussion forum/social network on the Internet. Another question would concern the repercussions following the final decision by potential victims to subject themselves to the assisting service facilitated by the group pressure control under examination. Secondly, what is the distinction between the two types of cybersuicide as regards the number of potential victims organized around the Internet, namely the one undertaken by an isolated individual and another by the group consisting of two or more people determined to commit such an act online and together? Thirdly, what is the role that the mutual visual communication with the Other produces? Here I refer to the online communication between a potential victim and other members of the same discussion channel where the information exchange and the decision making are taking place (these can be either anonymous or familiar online interlocutors, whose invisibility or visibility depends on the usage of the visual tools such as the Webcam, accompanied by the audio tools such as microphone). I am here specifically interested in the ways by which the visual language (or the “*mirroring effect*” in the face of the Other over the computer screen) along with the written, spoken or heard language (such as exchange of messages via the usage of words or voice) has the potential to shape the attitudes of the individual either positively or negatively, thus provoking the assistance in suicide prevention but also – in suicide encouragement.

These questions imply an ethical stance that I would like to address. This is an element by which the virtual, online, “real time” participation in the act of looking (at a self-destructive ritual via Webcam, for example) includes the level of responsibility that may or may not lead to drastic and tragic consequences on the other, “invisible” side of the computer screen; the other, “invisible” side of the screen, being the point from which the communication about the actual ritual of self-annihilation is produced (announced, planned, described, organized, staged, performed, made visible) is a decisive element in establishing the communication of an Internet-based ritual while (and this shall be highlighted) it is not limited only to the one-sided channeling of communicative suffering. On the contrary, it is articulated, produced and disseminated via the modes of dependence of a suffering individual upon the reactions coming from the other side of the virtual network of online users logged on to the same virtual public forum or interactive discussion format. Furthermore, it is enhanced by the visual modes of interdependence in the process of looking at each other. This includes all the repercussions, both positive and negative, that such an interdependence among the participants in the experience of opinion exchange (opinion making/fostering) through online networks implies.

The responsibility of virtual community becomes even more significant when it comes to a highly striking and prominent factor of ambivalence among the individuals in making the final decision (whether to commit, or not to commit, or to postpone the act of suicide). The factor of ambivalence can have beneficial effects (in terms of exerting a protective effect until support and treatment can be provided), whereas the responsibility of virtual community could be taken as exerting a positive influence (Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009). However, the factor of ambivalence can subject individuals to massive persuasion by other discussion participants that they are unable to back out or seek help for their problems which, in return, can produce in the suicidal “actor” the feeling of obligation [to other discussion participants] to proceed with the plans an individual had begun discussing and obtained reactions from other participants (Ibid.). The nature of such an encouraging influence of virtual community on the potential victim is further supported by the very principle of exclusion upon which the pro-suicide oriented websites operate, and on the victim’s exposure to this one-sided encouragement to proceed with their suicide plans: The danger of websites of this type is thus what is more or less a chorus of voices in unison, inciting and urging individuals to commit suicidal acts, while voices with other solutions to life’s problems are largely excluded; [...] since no opinions other than pro-suicide ones are tolerated at these websites their effect is to easily tip the ambivalent stance that most individuals with suicidal tendencies have regarding whether to go on living or end all (Becker and Schmidt, 2004, as in Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009).

Why does a suicidal individual need to establish contact with someone else, the channel of communication (online communication indeed) with the Other, in order to commit an act of self-destruction? Why the majority of the scientific analyses and

reports on this issue tackle the problem almost exclusively from the verbal-centered methodology, embedded in the belief that it is only through the information exchange (written, spoken, heard; messages, notes, pieces of advice) that the online state of connectedness could impact one's own state of "disconnectedness" from the society? Is it possible to think beyond the verbal model of human contact as a dominant form of communication, in order to make it complementary with the non-linguistic methods of analysis? Could the visual nature of human communication and the vision-exchange itself become treated as a language to be "learned" if we want to understand the phenomenon of cybersuicide?

The deeper we try to understand the scientific approaches to the phenomenon of cybersuicide based exclusively on the analysis of language (verbal communication as opposed to visual communication), the more it becomes evident that the institutional methods of investigation tend to treat Internet only as a tool (i.e. what is actually being used as a source of information). This is, of course, sanctioned given the fact that the Internet has become part of the broadly accessible repertoire of providers of suicide-oriented data, beside other, more traditional but less accessible sources, such as books, movies, or newsprint media – where the access to the relevant, practical information on suicide methods, for example, is generally less accessible (due to the fact that the public media prohibit such materials in favor of those having the preventive nature). The role of the Internet and computer technology, on the other hand, should also be approached from other perspectives, and especially from those that treat new media not only as a tool but rather as a goal in itself (i.e. how it is used and why – apart from the individual's orientation toward information collection and verbal communication exchange over the Internet). What do I mean by this?

Given its nature of a visual medium, let us approach the Internet as a medium without which the meaning of cybersuicide would not have had the same effect as it planned outside of the virtual social environment. This is all the more significant if we would accept the Internet as a visual medium with a global scope (in terms of its spatial outreach), and with an accelerated, immediate scope (in terms of its temporal outreach). Last but not least, the Internet is the form of communication that, by storing the textual and visual data online, gives an open access to this form of communication as timeless and omnipresent: *"That is, everything can be stored and thus held onto in a lasting fashion. With the accumulation of a large body of information the fantasy of omniscience becomes possible"* (Fiedler and Lindner, 2002). In such a way, it makes one's private suffering not only the matter of a temporary public concern, but also of the permanent public memory of one epoch – by documenting and archiving online the visual symptoms of the historical conditions in which suicide and cybersuicide take an active role.

In the given context of analysis, if I would attempt to define what I mean by "cybersuicide," I would first and foremost re-consider the fundamental shift occurring online by which we are also witnessing a new mode of "representation of suicide" in the virtual/cyber visual regime. This shift addresses the status of suicide

under transformation within the time-space coordinates of the global and accelerated Internet-based visual regime. It could be defined in the manner referring to the transformation from an underexposed status of suicide toward an overexposed status of suicide. The “underexposure” denotes a subject that has always been strongly taboo and therefore ‘belonged’ to only a few voices in public discourse (Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009). The “overexposure” denotes a completely new situation where a taboo-subject is gaining the possibility of turning into a public discourse via the multiplicity of voices shared over the Internet, either with positive or negative reasons and consequences. This is where the radical discursive and visual turn is literally “happening” – by becoming not only a media event (conceived, produced and distributed via the medium of Internet) but also an interactive and visual media event (conceived, produced and distributed via the medium of Internet in order to become and remain hypervisible by mode of interaction with massive participants in the virtual social environment). In that sense, the relatively old presumption that “the Internet has a greater potential than other mass media to influence people in the direction of suicidal acts, mainly because of its interactive nature (Baume et al., 1997) becomes more than relevant once again, but from a radically different perspective. I am willing to understand the significance of interactivity in the media events of (live) cyber suicide spectacles as an essential element determining the reasons of conceiving, producing and distributing such spectacles online, and not uniquely because the public sphere of the Internet (as opposed to the public sphere of traditional media and institutions) allows access to sensitive/forbidden information regarding suicide, as in pro-suicide Web pages.

The *exposure effect* in itself reveals a particular turn - from the level of minimal offline visibility to the level of maximal online visibility. Therefore it testifies about the significance of the visual self-exposure and effectiveness experienced through the interactive media exchange on the Internet as an “iconic event” – an event embedded in the tradition of radical raptures in the history of the visual (and not only verbal, or word-oriented) cultural practices. No matter how cynical it may sound, for an anonymous and invisible multitude of global citizens the Internet provides an ultimate technological and visual possibility for the creation of an exclusive online identity that allows them, through virtual mirroring of the computer screen assisted by a Webcam, both to see themselves looking and to see themselves being looked at, simultaneously. If so far we have been oriented toward the “*portrayal of suicide on the Web*”, it is time to turn toward the “suicidal self-portrayal over the Web” as a means of understanding the complexity of online media appearance and how it participates in the revealing of what is actually portrayed in the act of cybersuicide – the exposure of the suicidal subject itself.

Following the same line of thought, I find of an utmost importance the question posed by Westerlund and Wasserman around the manifestation of suicide event in Internet media (namely: “*how is it presented there?*”). This is a question that informs about the quantity and quality of online material contents about suicide (How

much material about suicide is online and what is it about?). Nevertheless, I would dare to detach from the psychiatric concern with the modes of “presentation” of suicide e-vents and data as understood by experts in the medical scientific field (in terms of its quantitative and textual content-based data) in order to address the “representation” of the self (and consequently, the series of reenactments of a suicidal act through the rituals of multiplied online performances, generally recognized as copycat-suicides outside of the Internet context). My interest in the representation rather than presentation lies precisely in the visual nature of suicide - how it becomes visually communicated, engineered, performed, staged, recorded and documented over the Internet in the context of the live cybersuicide broadcasting, a phenomenon also known as “de-athecasting”. In that sense, instead of exclusively relying upon the provision of a detailed discussion of suicide plans on suicide-oriented Web sites and forums, I would rather favor a definition of cybersuicide that, as *“a slang term used to describe a suicide or suicide attempt that has been influenced by Web sites on the Internet [denotes] a public showing of the suicide or suicide attempt when the victim uses a Webcam to record the suicide attempt”* (Webopedia, 2012). I am here insisting on two particular aspects: on the popular usage of the term as part of a “deviated”, slang version (instead of its mainstream linguistic format as proposed by scientific literature); and also on the usage of the Internet-related devices (such as visual screen and Webcam, for example) as evidence of someone’s serious intentions and also as tools that could bring us closer to the “pictorial” (visual) aspects of the phenomenon of cybersuicide.

To sum up: under the term “*cybersuicide*” I understand the role that the Internet can play as a showcase for the public display of (self-inflicted) death, along with the mediatory assistance performed by the computer-based textual and especially visual tools (such as the screen and the Webcam), the biological visual tools (such as the eyes of a spectator, or the multiplicity of eyes behind the screen), and the social tool (the responsibility of other participants in online communication and their assistance in the potential victim’s final decision-making). By posing a question “What is actually represented/showed/dis-played via the Internet through cybersuicide?” (at the moment when one’s own decision about the self-inflicted death is already made and is being staged for the gaze of the other via the Internet), I am willing to argue that it is the “suicidal subject” itself (the object of our suicidal gaze) that we are witnessing in the live cybersuicide broadcasting as the public display of death: the suicidal gaze being that kind of gaze within the broader consideration of the history and theory of vision that has become inseparable from the new formats of assisted suicide practices at the turn of the millennium and especially in the first decade of the twenty-first century, namely the “Internet-assisted” suicide. The reason why I would insist on framing this term by quotation marks lies exactly in the necessity not to underestimate the responsibility of the humans behind their machines in influencing the decisions of the victims (cyber bullying, for example). As it is not the Internet that assists in the suicidal ideation and execution of the self, but the participants in online communication themselves (the onlookers, beholders, supporters, commentators).

This would prove to be an additional contribution to the prevailing claim (yet always questioned anew) that the Western thought and culture have been dominated by a vision-centered paradigm of knowledge, ethics and power (Levin 1993) that we need to consider and re-consider each time we are supposed to reflect upon the hierarchies of visual regimes and optical machines within which our everyday life, willingly or not, resides. Because what is essentially shared over the Internet in the cybersuicide pacts is not (only) the information and communication about the suicide itself, but exactly the gaze (the suicidal gaze) as the consequence of the practice of looking: and a very special kind of looking, indeed – the one that is highly dependent on the logic of the human responsibility, lost in the mysteries of human relationships.

3. FROM HYPERTEXTUAL SELF TO HYPERVISUAL SELF. A CASE OF MARCUS JANNES (2010)

I would like to evoke a case that has been exemplary for my personal interest in the study of the relationship between the notion of suicide and its implications over the Internet. On October 11, 2010, a twenty-one year old Marcus Jannes killed himself in Stockholm. He hanged himself during a live broadcast on the Internet. Police described this relatively unknown phenomenon in Sweden as rare in that country. Preceding the act, he had described himself to an online community of virtual beholders, in his own words, as an emotionally vulnerable and lonely person who, on the top of it, suffered from a high-functioning autism (Asperger syndrome). A local web-media posted a report the day after. The situation in which the lethal act had occurred was described under the headline “Swedish man dies in live ‘cyber suicide’ broadcast” (The Local, 2010).

This has not been a unique case in the history of suicidal events transmitted live over the Internet. Throughout the last decade there have been more tragic examples of this kind, such as those in India (2004 and 2008), Britain (2007), and Florida (2008). This excludes the numerous online suicide cases without any use of web-cameras, as well as those “offline” cases where the mobile camera devices (as in cell phones) were used without any Internet assistance. The curious case of Marcus Jannes was the first one I got provoked by, however. One of the reasons that triggered my attention the most was the online availability of the visual traces following his death: what was particularly troubling about it to me was not the available information about one’s own self-execution over the Internet, but rather its character of an event that was first broadcast live and then archived online among the YouTube depository of video materials of the most various kinds.

The video of the Swedish live cybersuicide broadcast, no more available over YouTube to my knowledge at the moment of writing (Spring, 2012), confronts us with the image of the space where the “event” took place. The image was recorded by a web-camera positioned in the left corner of the room. What we actually see is the interior of a domestic ambiance (a neatly arranged room in Jannes’ flat). Its back-

ground shows a huge tapestry hanging on the purple-colored wall; a balcony-door is next to the internal passage leading to the rest of the house; the floor, covered by two pieces of white rug, separates the background from the foreground which is defined by green leaves of a plant (to the left) and the backside of a computer monitor or a flatscreen TV on the table (to the right). Two small boxes rest next to the screen. A striking detail is right in front of our eyes: a white rope leaning on the edge of the balcony door. For all the belated spectators of this “scenography” (being a posthumous digital “stage” of the cybersuicidal event), the lower right section of the image makes the impression about the video material even more disturbing. It contains the words *ViralDeath.com. reality as it is*. This is certainly true once the “action” starts taking place: we see a young man in black trousers and a red T-shirt (with a popular fashion company slogan *Just do it!*). He is walking nervously around the space before putting a noose around his neck. The quick set of “actions” leads to a tragic end: he takes some liquid, slides down onto the floor, the rope is pulled and he hangs himself. The second available YouTube video shows the aftermath of the “event”: a couple of police officers enter the room and investigate the body before its final removal. They are themselves recorded by the same web-camera as it was continually running without control once the suicide was committed.

One hundred years ago this would have been an unimaginable event simply because the global communication network has not yet existed, while the phone/radio communication did not function to such an extent; technological and media tools allowing the live communication (simultaneously visual and verbal) across the world were lacking; there was no Internet or Web-camera that could transmit images, sounds and words to innumerable audience scattered around the world at the same time while the central event was taking place in an intimate, private environment of one’s own flat. Nevertheless, one simple optical tool was available indeed. An infamous case that took place in Vienna in 1908 (more than a century before Marcus Jannes decided to leave this world forever) still triggers my attention: not for being yet another self-destructive ritual happening in the general cultural and psychological climate colored by deep, even spiritual introspection in the fin-de-siècle Austro-Hungarian Empire, but precisely due to the logic upon which that self-destructive ritual relied on the available optical tool itself. The facts that the victim was one of the most promising young painters in early twentieth-century Vienna, that he never exhibited, and was barely known in his lifetime, all make little importance for this paper. But the fact that - precisely thanks to his visual mastery and sensitivity toward the laws of vision and the power of looking - he understood the dark side of the logic of the human gaze, makes his case complementary to Jannes’ live cybersuicide broadcast and deserves to be mentioned in the same context. Close to the family circle of famous Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg (and certainly too close to his wife), Richard Gerstl precedes Marcus Jannes in the sense that he committed suicide following the similar logic of the gaze, yet in its “primitive” form, in comparison to the early twenty-first century. What did Gerstl do at the moment of his nervous breakdown? He piled his paintings underneath him in his studio and, in an

act that must have been as acrobatic as it was brutal, simultaneously plunged a knife into his heart and hanged himself over the burning canvases (Jones, 1994). But this is not the most interesting part, no matter how horrifying it may sound. Before tightening a noose around his neck, Gerstl positioned himself in front of his atelier mirror, and plunged a butcher knife into his chest (Harrison, 1996).

Gerstl's suicidal self-portrayal remains executed in the isolating fashion of a solitary and silent act, a personal perceptual narrative divisible between his physical and his "virtual" self. His own image, duplicated on the glass surface of the mirror, remains narcissistic and entirely self-centered inasmuch as it intentionally avoids any exchange with the gaze of the Other and remains "offline" – disconnected from the eye of the society. However, it is not the image but the vision, the way of looking, that becomes a fascinating issue in his case. Gerstl's visual experience of the reflected self in the mirror was one way of establishing a direct contact with the ultimately invisible and subjective realm of death, "*the other side*" of life being the site beyond all things visible, behind the surface of the mirror. By looking at himself dying, by seeing his own death through the act of self-annihilation, he acknowledges - to his own gaze (his own lethal "point of view") - the true power of the nature of human contact with the replica of his/her own image. His own gaze, which acts as his observing ego, becomes therefore the subject (not the object) of looking positioned exactly in the image-field of the mirror. Gerstl himself, being therefore the object (not the subject) of looking, sacrifices himself to his own self-aware image projected in the mirror; this projected image, being self-aware inasmuch as it possesses the power of control (of looking), functions precisely in the way that returns the projected gaze back to the beholder thus making the execution (of the exposed physical self) possible. The "suicidal gaze" of the image destroys the gaze of the image-maker. For Freud, this would be an exemplary case: "*Probably no one finds the mental energy to kill himself unless, in the first place, in doing so he is at the same time killing an object with whom he has identified himself and, in the second place, is turning against himself a death wish which had been directed against someone else*" (Freud, 1974; Anderson and Plaut, 1999, my italics). Who might have been "*someone else*", apart from his own image reflected in the mirror, against whom a twenty-five year old Gerstl directed his death wish in the *Gesellschaftsspiegel* (mirror of society)? Curiously enough, it was exactly in a small German socialist journal *Gesellschaftsspiegel* that Karl Marx's only published discussion of suicide appeared in 1846. Composed during his short living period in Belgium, having been expelled from France for his political activities (Anderson and Plaut 1999), it gives but one yet arbitrary association with the intricate relationship between early modernist suicides and their "mirroring effect".

In his own way of using images (and particularly the image of himself), Gerstl left a statement about himself and his place in the concrete historical situation of the early twentieth century. I would dare to ask questions now that might sound as absurd as arbitrary. This equally holds true if those questions could have been posed

by any of Gerstl's contemporaries – which would be an impossible perspective for the people of 1908. What I am curious about is the following: were Gerstl the man of today, a contemporary of Marcus Jannes, what could he have done instead of looking at himself in the mirror? What would the paradoxical simultaneous operation look like if he had a Webcam instead of a mirror? By the “*paradoxical simultaneous operation*” I mean: the reproduction of the image of oneself (as reflected upon the mirror surface) existing simultaneously with the destruction of the image of oneself (as a consequence of the suicidal act). How to bring together two images, or two types of self-centered vision, that are supposed to emerge and exist together for a very short period of time if for the one, in order to exist, the other must be necessarily and immediately excluded from the sight? How to reconcile the two impossible perspectives situated in the conflict of self-observation: the situation in which the duplication of one's own gaze in the mirror coincides with the annulation of one's own gaze in front of that mirror?

These are the questions to be posed again in the future. It might be that the answers have already been given long ago: but for that part of mankind, whose certainty of being lies only in the privileged domain of the verbal, those answers may never be clear as they might not be easily translatable into the speech system. Would it be enough to look in order to understand? Would it make more sense to look at the series of images that Schoenberg, a composer taught to paint by younger Gerstl, produced in the aftermath of Gerstl's death and simply named them “The Gaze”? The potential parallels have already been drawn: according to his student and friend Victor Hammer, Gerstl “placed great importance on the ‘expression’ of the eyes”, while the relationship of Schoenberg's “eyes” to similar expressive gazes in portraits and particularly self-portraits by Richard Gerstl, whose work predates Schoenberg's paintings, is striking. (Brand and Hailey 1997).

For this moment, let us go back to Gerstl-as-Jannes. What could he have done instead of what he actually did were he the man of our times? He might have connected himself online in order to stage a live broadcasting of his “performance”; he might have tried to set up his Web camera and log himself on a popular Internet forum; accordingly, he might have activated his virtual social network in order to present himself by his full name and his age, to provide a description of his social conditions and living status, to write down his messages (first the warning ones, then his final note later on), to create the atmosphere of an event (no matter how unusual) and to stage his appearance and communication with other online participants (in a so-called suicide pact, or without it); he could have also provided an FTP link (with login information for the others to access the photos of the event that he had meanwhile recorded) where he would reveal his intentions and reasons to die. Finally, instead of killing himself in front of the mirror, he could have performed his act in front of the virtual community of online observers - which is what Marcus Jannes actually all did, one hundred years later. What would have remained after such an event? A digital video-trace: a moving image available online, for the time after,

when the innumerable Internet audience curious to watch his last action would have a possibility to access the spectacle freely for the viewing, at their own pace, whenever they would want, and as many times as they would want.

The suicide in Europe has taken on a new meaning again: it has become an unbridled pursuit of a global visibility, the transnational character of which resides exactly in the possibility offered by the role played by images in the new media system of message-distribution. Here there is an effect that goes in line with (but also beyond) all intentionality of the victim: it is not only being recorded and transmitted in real-time, but also archived online and repeatable over the Internet for a massive consumption at any given moment in time by the multitude of anonymous onlookers. For the man thus exposed, is it assistance (in the process of looking) that becomes a mode of survival, of overcoming death, a “liberation” from it – as opposed to non-assistance which leads to the condemnation of death? We cannot speak on behalf of those who were behind their computer screens that October day, experiencing the live broadcast of Marcus Jannes’ suicide event in real-time (here I am thinking both about the experience of the victim and the experience of his virtual witnesses). Our lack of personal experience, I believe, denies the possibility of having any openly judgmental and critical or, in the worst case, even affirmative stance about what, how, and why (and finally for whom) it happened. However, what we could do is to focus on the textual and visual traces – the fragments of the event - as they were recorded, described or remembered (and eventually interpreted) by the online media such as news portals and YouTube. It is via those mediated (posthumous) traces of information that we can try and ask ourselves: what Marcus Jannes’ case means, if anything, for each and every one of us and for the times we live in? What does a live broadcast of one’s own self-destruction on the Internet actually show us? What kind of “invention” in an adventure of looking? Does it embed itself in the tyranny of images or in the pathology of images, indeed? Or something else? More generally speaking, how does the intentional act of self-destruction equate with the information technology, computer- networks and the Internet? And what are the implications of such a correlation to our everyday life, i.e. not only in relation to the potential or actual victims of self-destruction, but also to the potential or actual witnesses, accomplices, participants or “survivors” in the ritualization of self-destructive events on the Internet?

CONCLUSION

To respond to the question “What should be done?” is not easy. One answer could be given by the recommendations issued by experts in the field of psychiatry that are important and necessary for numerous reasons (and here I will rely on the selection of those proposed by Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009): (1) they testify how globalization and the emergence of new communications technology also create new challenges to global health; (2) they urge the performance of more studies, with

more precise measuring methods, to allow us to see whether Internet-based communication affects the incidence of suicide and, if so, how; (3) they advise Internet companies providing search engines, through optimization strategies, to attempt to maximize the probability of suicidal individuals finding websites that offer help and support instead of the risk of being ushered onto websites that are dangerous to life; (4) they indicate the importance of psychiatric staff asking patients about their use of the Internet, and also helping them find websites with preventive content and supportive functions, so that the Internet user can exert a therapeutic effect instead of constituting a threat. But, beside all the efforts to capture the power of the Internet regime in exerting the modes of social control over suicide-oriented Web users, one thing nonetheless remains: “[...] *although Internet-based communication is extremely widespread today, knowledge of how it affects suicidal behavior is virtually non-existent*” (Westerlund and Wasserman, 2009, my italic).

If we are going to start almost from the scratch (that scratch being present for more than fifteen years now in scientific literature and laboratories at least in the so-called developed world (see Holland, 1995 and Young, 1996), we need to build up our mind with knowledge, and general knowledge indeed, not a narrow-focused perspective on the so-called cybersuicide. This also implies the need to update our understanding of contemporary media events within the analysis of globalized media cultures, and to raise the question of how the visual online communication (“*the images that mobilize conscience*”, in Susan Sontag’s terms, that are “*always linked to a given historical situation*”) affects the suicidal behavior today. I consider this issue to be pressing even more so because the knowledge of how images are affecting our e-everyday life, and how they have been affecting the history of our civilization, has been developed throughout the centuries behind – and is still under development: it could hopefully serve as a useful tool in coping with the atrocities of our own epoch. These might be the atrocities caused by our own hand under control by our own social, economic, political and technological realities in the given historical situation. And our own epoch might be that long techno-capitalist era colored by the mankind whose “*self-alienation,*” as Benjamin wrote in 1936, “*has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order*”.

To my knowledge so far, few of the critical accounts of the direct relationship between suicide and the Internet have touched upon the role that the screen (and the image/digital image/video transmitted via the computer screen) has played in the process. Curiously enough, the criticism focused directly on this relationship has had more to do with the somewhat bizarre cases such as the internet image of a religious cult The Heaven’s Gate mass suicide, or the video image on the television screen of a “real-life” killing executed by the American doctor Jack Kevorkian (“Dr Death”) imprisoned for carrying out an assisted suicide (Brown 2001). In the last few years online content has grown with amateur video materials showing the instances of self-inflicted death for various reasons and from across the world. The eighteenth-century notion that images carry extremely powerful messages and can

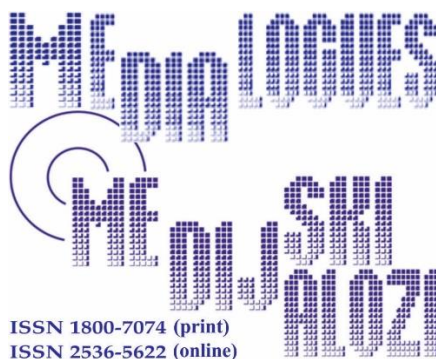
be influential in causing suicide (Knox 1778, Brown 2001) does not prevent us from questioning their influence and meanings they generate in our own times. On the contrary, it urges us to approach them in an as extended methodological way as possible, so that the troubling and all the more increasing relationship between suicide, the Internet, and all the protagonists in the online suicidal rituals, could be approached in a more comprehensive manner for the sake of understanding and, consequently, preventing such a phenomenon to occur more often.

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Ethics in Media: Macedonian Case

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the issue of ethics in the Media. It specifically diverts attention to the three core ethical values in Media, the credibility, integrity and civility. It points to the utmost necessity and sanctity of those values and the lack thereof in the world today. Media is of great importance to the society since it provides several vital functions. As key functions of media we will emphasize the educational, informational, correlation, criticism and control function and the function of increasing social cohesion by promoting good moral values. Of course its functions depend on the political system of the society in question, but here we are discussing in a context of today's democratic societies. The real world ethical issues in Media

are observed through the case of Macedonia and real examples of the violations of the ethical code of journalism and the credibility, integrity and civility of the Media. Among other most common ethical issues and violations in Macedonian Media are the disregard for peoples sorrow and privacy, publishing of false or unconfirmed information, names or age, in pursuit of sensationalistic broadcasting, publishing full names or unconfirmed information relating to minors and adults suspects of the crime involving minors, including photographs and names of the child victims, disregard for the rule of presumption of innocence, hate speech and stereotyping about minority or vulnerable groups, hate speech based on ethnic and political grounds and etc. As final this paper points to the outcome of such politics of the Macedonian Media and drop of the peoples trust in this vital part of the society.

KEYWORDS: *Ethic, the media, Macedonia*

INTRODUCTION

Ethics is of outmost concern for every individual's life, for the life of the collectives, the life of the societies and the world in general. One may ask why that is. There is a simple answer: Ethics and ethical behavior provide guidance for making every day decisions ensuring maximum satisfaction and fairness in the long run. We live in an age where globalization makes most if not all social, economic, environmental and other processes intervened which implies that our actions no matter how simple may have larger consequences. This without doubt goes for the media as well.

Media connects the world in a global society. No longer local news stay local, in a matter of hours a news from Singapore reaches Japan, Australia, USA, Africa, the EU and etc. Today news circles the world faster than before and media eyes are interested in all areas of the world and their affairs. Lead by the appeal of sensationalism and the desire to increase circulation and viewer ratings, journalists and Media seldom stop to consider the moral dilemmas and outcomes of their actions. Media can cause panic, harm or even a war but on the other hand it has a great potential to promote good, social cohesion and influence peace. Media has great power and it's in the hands of the people and their moral values to shape and use it right or to their own selfish interests.

This paper is concerned with the ethical aspect of the Media which will be discussed through four fundamental ethical values in media: credibility, integrity, civility and responsibility. It is so because, *"today the media have an irreplaceable role in the modern democratic and pluralistic society. They are one of the factors that actually allow its functioning. Even after the fact that in these societies has come to the relativising of all values, again the question of ethical values and criteria by which the events in the world of societal communication can be and should be run and valued has been brought up"* (Donev, 2011, s. 154).

1. FUNCTIONS OF THE MEDIA

More than often in Media studies the roles or functions of Media are discussed. From all the theorized roles of the Media we can all agree on several key functions that Media have in our societies. As key functions we will emphasize the educational, informational, correlation, criticism and control and the function of increasing social cohesion by promoting good moral values. Of course its functions depend on the political system of the society in question, but here we are discussing in a context of today's democratic societies.

The Media is responsible for surveying all aspects of human life and relaying the gathered information to the public in a simplified manner in order to provide the necessary information for the society to function normally. It provides information about the economy, ecology, politics, social life, culture and etc. Today people get day to day information mostly through Media no matter if it is social media, print media or broadcast media. It also serves as a means of spreading political agenda to the public in pre election and election time and to promote a policy for which the government or political entity will later seek approval. This can be said to be the informational role.

Media through educational and cultural programs, columns and the like, provides both educational and the role of social glue meaning it increases social cohesion by promoting good values. The Media has great influence on the people since it is a means for the people to get informed and entertained. Young people are easily influenced by it and more often than not it is said that it has a bad influence on the youth by broadcasting movies containing violence and vice and reality shows. But it can also be said that news reports of violent events also have the same influence. No matter the bad influence it can't be denied that through programs about culture, music, science and the etc Media integrates good values in the minds of the youth.

Media serves as a link between the government and the people. Through it the government can express their opinions on an issue or give response on an issue the public is concerned about, promote their policies and rally support. At the same time the public can communicate to the government their concerns and express their support. This is the correlation function. Media's function is not to manipulate the public opinion even though it has that power.

Also one of the fundamental functions of media is the function of criticism and control of the government. The Media is responsible to oversee the work of the government and to react when it's not doing the job right. It oversees the governments work and policies about the economy, social policies, Medicare and the like. Ideally the media with the public opinion can influence the government and help shape their policies to best fit the needs of the people.

2. ETHICAL VALUES IN THE MEDIA

What is morality? What is ethics? Is there a difference?

Before any further discussion can be made we need to observe the two terms ethics and morality and compare them. The term "*morality*" comes from the Latin word *mores* which means a custom, habit or a way of life. It is used to explain what is good, righteous, appropriate, honorable and just. On the other hand the term "*ethics*" comes from the Greek word *ethos* which means a custom, tradition or a way of conduct. Due to their obvious similarity in meaning they are often used as synonyms. But there is a difference between the two terms.

"They represent separate elements of normative analysis: morality refers to values and beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust, and ethics refers to analysis, justification and critical analysis of moral" (Amstuc, 2008, s. 22).

For the purpose of this paper they will be used as synonyms.

It is critical to mention that moral values have 3 dimensions (Ibid., ss. 22-23):

- everyone should obey them;
- they call for impartiality;
- they enforce themselves in great deal.

The notion that everyone should obey them gives morality and moral values its universality. It means that if one moral imperative is compulsory for person A it is also compulsory for person B or their collective. In regards to the call for impartiality it can be said that it provides ground for justice, puts own self interest and selfishness aside and makes morality personally and socially desirable. The third dimension of morality, to enforce themselves, comes from the beliefs and values which are freely chosen by the people, which means they are obeyed not because of existence of laws but by peoples own free will.

Morality implies taking into consideration the interests of others when making our decisions and acting on them. Being moral starts with the individual and from personal moral code it transfers into the professional and public life of the individual. In a world where moral values are slowly forgotten in order to get to the desired goals faster change must happen at an individual level.

There are many ethical values in the ethical codes of individuals, professions, companies, industries and etc. but there are four fundamental values in media and those are credibility, integrity and civility. In the text below they will be discussed in regards to Media and Media issues.

2.1 Credibility

Today we live in a cruel materialistic world where competitiveness makes individuals and collectives ignore moral values to get or do what they want. This situation is the greatest threat to credibility. Without credibility other moral values mean nothing because credibility makes the foundation for their development. To be credible it means to be trustworthy, it can be said that “*credibility is the start point in our actions towards others and towards a full membership to the moral community*” (Dej, 2004, s. 28).

It is becoming more common today for the Media to publish or broadcast partial or out of context information and even false information whether on purpose or by lack of proper research. More than often we have observed titles or announcement of news insinuating scandalous and sensationalistic news and when we read or see the information in full context we find out that the title is misleading. Also some Media showing bias in regards to political parties present partial and out of context information about public statement of the rival party in order to manipulate public opinion. Media must be objective. Objectivity can be defined “*as characterizing the view which would be agreed upon as a result of argument undeflected by irrelevant considerations*”, and as “*representing things as they really are*” (Belsey & Chadwick 2006. pp.83). Objectivity is outmost necessary factor of credibility.

We are more than aware of the Media power on the political opinion but also of the responsibility it has to the public. The Media has to be credible and refrain from doing the previously mentioned violations to the credibility. Striving for sensationalism at all cost will inevitably damage the credibility of the Media outlet in question and make it irrelevant.

2.2 Integrity

Like credibility, integrity is also a fundamental moral marker of the Media. Steven Carter (1996, p. 7) defines integrity as “*distinguishing good from bad; acting on the basis of the observed difference even at a personal harm; and open discussion to act on the basis of distinguishing good from bad*“. Integrity is closely related to responsibility meaning that a person of integrity must be ready to take on the responsibility that comes from their actions. Person of integrity will not only say what is right but will make every effort to accomplish the recognition and application of that which they believe to be good or right.

In Media it is difficult to maintain integrity in this form since publishing or broadcasting information at a mediums’ harm even if it’s the morally right thing to do will inevitably lead to the end of the existence of the medium.

2.3 Civility

We will describe Civility as “the first principle” of morality because it includes the view of self-sacrifice and respect for others (Dej, 2004, s. 30). This same principle is at the very core of all major religions of the world and it is named “Golden rule of humanity” (Küng, 1998, pp. 98-99) by Hans Küng. The “Golden rule of humanity” simply states how to be a better person on an individual level which is where the change needs to happen. With it he represents the common ethical instructions of many great ethical traditions and religions. Here are some of its formulations:

– *Confucius* (c.551-489 BCE): ‘What you yourself do not want, do not do to another person’ (Analects 15.23).

– *Rabbi Hillel* (60 BCE-10 CE): ‘Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you’ (Shabbat 31a).

– *Jesus of Nazareth*: ‘Whatever you want people to do to you, do also to them’ (Matt.7.12.; Luke 6.31).

– *Islam*: ‘None of you is a believer as long as he does not wish his brother what he wishes himself (Forty Hadith of an-Na-wawi, 13).

– *Jainism*: ‘Human beings should be indifferent to worldly things and treat all creatures in the world as they would want to be treated themselves’ (Sutrakritanga 1,11,33).

– *Buddhism*: ‘A state which is not pleasant or enjoyable for me will also not be so for him; and how can I impose on another a state which is not pleasant or enjoyable for me?’ (Samyutta Nikaya V, 3 53,3 5- 341,2.).

– *Hinduism*: ‘One should not behave towards others in a way which is unpleasant for oneself: that is the essence of morality’ (Mahabharata XIII, 114,8). (Ibid.).

Every journalist, newsperson and all other people that work in Media are just that – people. By accepting the simple Golden rule of humanity and letting it lead our decisions a change for the better can be made. Striving for success and recognition is not a bad thing, we all want it but going for it at all costs is not the right thing. And everyone but an egoist will eventually realize this.

Civility is what makes possibly for us to live as a functional and cohesive society and what makes societal ethical codes mutually acceptable since it lies in their core. Putting it in Media context we can see that civility as respect for others is represented in the media towards their readers and viewers since media depends on them. It is rare however to see civility in the full sense in the Media since as it was previously mentioned Media and journalist strive for sensationalism in order to be more competitive and increase viewer ratings and circulation and for this they sacrifice their civility. It is not wrong to strive to be competitive and successful but it should not be done at all costs, the interest of others should be put into the equation when making our choices.

2.4 Responsibility

It is commonly argued that we as people are reasonable beings and as such we understand the reasons for our actions and their consequences. As such it can be argued that we bare responsibility for our actions. But what does it mean to be responsible? *"To be responsible for something is to be answerable for it. What kind of responsibilities do we have? We have prospective responsibilities, the duty to do something, deal with something or take care of something that is in the scope of our particular role for example as a doctor, pilot, soldier or parent or the responsibilities we have as moral agents, or as human beings. We have retrospective responsibilities that cover our past actions or failure or refusal to act and the effect of those actions or omissions. Simply said we have causal responsibility, we are responsible for the outcomes of our actions. Such responsibilities are often (but not always) moral or legal responsibilities"* (Routledge Encyclopedia of philosophy, 1998, p. 7436).

And what is the extent of our retrospective responsibility? As reasonable and logical beings we understand the direct consequences of our actions, which means that we are responsible for the directed intentions of our actions but are we also responsible for the foreseeable outcomes of such actions even though they were not specifically intended? For example if a person shoots a gun at a building not knowing there a people inside is he responsible for the death of those people even though he did not intended to kill someone? Since shooting a gun can possibly harm or kill someone the person shooting is responsible for the outcomes of his actions, such as the death of the people caught in the firing since he could have prevented it but not firing the gun in the first place.

It can be said that the same goes for media. In a case where a person is a victim of a violent crime and the media lead by the pursuit for sensationalism, increase in viewer ratings and circulation, broadcasts or publishes sensitive and personal information about the victim and specific details of the crime it is likely that that public broadcast will cause harm to the individual in question adding to the previously lived trauma of the crime itself. Should the media be held responsible for the outcome of their actions? The answer is YES. Media industry is run by people and people in general are reasonable so it should be very easy to foresee the outcomes in this case.

What about a situation where we are not directly the cause of an action but we have the power to prevent such action? Does our omission to prevent that action make us responsible for its outcome? For example if a Media outlet comes upon information of vital interest to the public and omitting to publish it will cause harm to group of people, industry or even a society like discovering evidence of embezzling where a board member of the media outlet is involved. Publishing the information is a conflict of interest, will cause a scandal and possible harm to the outlet since the person involved is a board member. However omitting to act on the information will cause serious harm to the people, companies and etc from which the

board member embezzled money. When the crime and information of the media omission is eventually discovered by the authorities should the media outlet be considered responsible as well? Omitting to prevent harm to others should be considered wrong and if there is a possibility to prevent harm such possibility should be considered a moral obligation. Even though there will be unwanted effects on the media outlet in the long run the media will preserve its integrity and credibility.

It can be concluded that we are responsible for the outcomes of the actions that are in our control which means that, *“our retrospective responsibilities are partly determined by our prospective responsibilities. ... Such responsibilities, prospective and retrospective, flow from a conception of our moral duties and relationships, or are ascribed by a legal system”* (Ibid.).

From the discussion above we can observe that as individuals we have responsibilities for our actions, for our omissions and for the outcomes that directly or indirectly result from them. We have responsibilities to ourselves, our friends, family and coworkers, our community, country and the environment. Also as a collective we have the same responsibilities.

3. MOST COMMON ETHICAL ISSUES IN MACEDONIAN MEDIA

Publishing of false or unconfirmed information, names or age in pursuit of sensationalistic broadcasting

Sadly, the Macedonian media has a habit of publishing and broadcasting unverified information in order to beat their competitors and be the first to publish the news. In many cases these information have been false and a result of hearsay. There have been many examples of such violations of the credibility and integrity of the media and as such we will present few. These examples will show that in pursuit for competitiveness and sensationalism some media are willing to sacrifice their integrity, credibility and civility.

Example: *“In one text, a company is being accused of getting a set tender, including cited statements of representatives of the companies that have not won the tender. Two days later, the same paper published a retraction of the information showing that the mentioned company neither participated in the tender, neither won it. Despite the retraction, other media accepted the false information as a fact on which they built other stories“* (Cusidis & Bojarkovski, 2012, p. 25).

Not respecting the privacy and sorrow of others

There have been many violations of the civility in the Macedonian media. Journalists have been ignoring the rights of the people involved in their reporting. In many cases the full names of victims and suspects of crimes have been reported, speculation and information about the health and privacy as well as vivid photographs

of accident sites and victims involved have been published and broadcasted without regard for the privacy and sorrow of others.

Example 1 :*“When 19 year old D.S. from Kumanovo decided to take her own life, all of Macedonia through television and the day after in the papers, had the opportunity to learn her full name and surname, to see her photograph, and even hear about the possible motives for her early passing away.”*(Ibid., p. 26)

Example 2: *“Video recordings of the bodies of the drowned tourists from Bulgaria that died in the sinking of the ship “Ilinden” in Ohrid, were labeled as “exclusives” and the TV stations competed with broadcasting more detailed sights of the deceased.”* (Ibid., pps. 25-26).

Publishing full names or unconfirmed information relating to minors and adults suspects of the crime involving minor, including photographs and names of the child victims.

Example 1: *“One TV station with national concession, reporting about a new case of violence and negligence of a child in the village Labunishta near Struga, did not resist the sensationalistic drive – to interview the mother of the victim, to video record the house where the victim resides, the outside and inside of the home, also the little girl itself from the back, which it practically revealed its identity to everyone that lives in that place.”* (Ibid., p. 26).

Example 2: A passage from a report concerning child abuse explaining in detail the act in question and disclosing the name of the suspected offender and the victims. *“Yesterday around 16h in the village Morodvis near Kochani, the 37 year old (full name and surname provided) attacked two girls, minors, and ... intended to with intention to commit fornication. The 11 year I... and her friend D... played in one of the rooms of Ivanas’ unfinished house, when B... entered through the window and with a rope tied them to a chair in the kitchen, inflicting minor injuries on their arms. (...) – Ibid., pp. 26-27.*

Disregard for the rule of presumption of innocence.

There have been many instances journalists and media forget about the presumption of innocence and announce information clearly stating the blame of the person arrested without mentioning the fact that that person is just a suspect in an investigation, assuming the role of judge and jury. After news like this the integrity and privacy of the person is totally ruined and any chance of normal life if proven innocent is ruined. It is very rare for journalist to seek confirmation through multiple sources to verify their findings.

Example:

Almost all the media published the information that *“the police in Bitola arrested the 32 years old (full name and surname) for dealing drugs”*. At the same time, many media without criticism transmitted the information obtained from the

police and announced that “*the head dealer is arrested*”, with which the fact that the person in question is only a suspect is forgotten. Often just the charges of the police are not enough so along with the full identity of the person they add qualifications such as “king of the underworld”, “monstrous pedophile”, “local maniac” and etc. (Ibid., p. 27).

Hate speech and stereotyping about minority or vulnerable groups.

It is also very often for the media to add ethnic and sexual stereotypes to their reporting adding such labels to everyday events to create more sensationalistic news and increase ratings and circulation. Here we will give few examples of hate speech titles in media which clearly points out to the disregard for use of ethics in Macedonian journalism.

Example 1: “*Macedonians don’t like junkies, drunks and faggots!*”; “*Faggots ‘adopt- ed’ a little boy*”, “*We are asking the Roma not to do gypsy things!*” and etc. (Ibid., p. 27).

Example 2: “*Children beggars brought back to Albania*” – a text in a newspaper that includes the detail about the nationality of the children, also adding the statement that “*most commonly children like that, not only beg, but are potential doer of criminal acts*” (Ibid., p. 28).

It is very common for Macedonian talk shows to ask callers to comment on current problems discussed in the show and allowing in the process for the callers to “*express radical views for the members of the other communities, for the political adversaries or anyone else that doesn’t share their opinion*” (Ibid.). No matter the party in power we have also been witnesses to the contrary, callers expressing their negative opinion about the party in power and the tv station ending their call.

Hate speech based on ethnic and political grounds.

Among other a common practice is for the media to create news with partisan stereotyping based on their allegiance to the party in power at that given time. In fact, sad as it is, this is everyday occurrence in Macedonia and is tolerated to a great extent. Let’s observe some examples:

Example: The division and labeling of “patriots” and “traitors with lists for “executing” with frazezes like: “*every Macedonian would be embarrassed by that action*”, the claim that “*he put his capacities to the disposal of the Greek ambassador*” and etc. (Ibid.).

4. RESULT: DECLINE IN THE TRUST IN THE MACEDONIAN MEDIA

We have been witnesses to many ethical violations in the Macedonian media ranging from disregard of peoples sorrow and privacy, to hate speech, stereotyping

and disregard for the presumption of innocence as shown in the above discussed examples. The result of such practices has led to a steady drop in the trust in the Macedonia media. Leading from 2006 when the trust was at a record high – 56,7% to an all time low this year, 2013 – 37,4%.

Let's see a comparison through the years: – In 2006 the trust in the media was measured to be at

- 56,7% (Klekovski et al., 2006, p. 19),
- In 2007 – 52,6% (Klekovski & Krzalovski, 2007, p. 20),
- In 2008 - 53,6% (Klekovski et al., 2008, p. 11)
- In 2010 – 40,4% (Klekovski et al., 201, p. 10), and
- In 2013 – 37,4 % (Krzalovski, 2013, p. 8).

It can be said that the pursuit for sensationalism will increase viewer ratings and circulation since people are more interested in shocking and attention grabbing news than every day real world events, but in the long run at least in the Macedonian case it is obvious that it is not a wise policy. Macedonian media are brought down to the level of tabloids becoming more and more a way of entertainment for the simple minds than a trustworthy and reliable news source.

CONCLUSION

In an ideal world ethics in media will not be a sore subject. It will be easy to observe a situation and provide truthful information to the public in a least harmful manner. In such world journalists', editor's and owner's own personal moral values will make sure that credibility and integrity of the medium is well preserved and own selfish interest will be put aside and other peoples interest will be valued in the decision making. The media will stick to doing their job in the most ethical manner and maintain objectivity at all cost. But we live in a world that is far from perfect.

It is very difficult to speak of ethics in the media. No matter how desirable and crucial it is for the media to be ethical in the end we can't really say that it is possible to fulfill that desire in whole. Media depends on advertisements to make profit and survive and today it's mostly privately owned. This situation makes it difficult for the media to be objective without at least once in a while to run into conflict of interest.

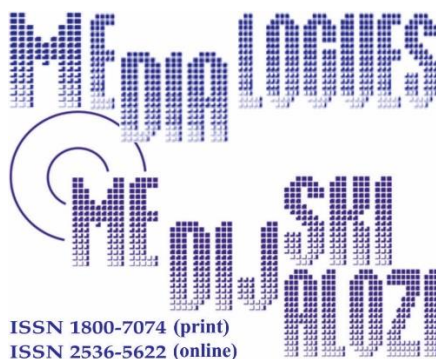
This difficult situation however does not give excuse for Media to be sloppy and publish or broadcast half verified news. Journalists must do their research and make sure their information is verified and credible. Even though manipulation of the public opinion is not approved of, sadly in today's world media has a habit of using it.

In Macedonia, shown by the previous examples ethics is not a common practice. It's wrong to say that all media and journalists sub come to unethical practices but sadly ethical media is a rare thing. More and more as time goes the people in Macedonia seem to steadily loose trust in the Macedonia media due to the previously mentioned breaches of the most sacred ethical values the credibility, the integrity and the civility of media. Sadly, the Macedonian media has dropped to a tabloid level becoming unreliable source of information.

Making ethical decisions is difficult as it is at an individual level and that much more difficult at an industry level like the Media where people running it are lead by different interest and are of different personalities. Some may value integrity others may sacrifice it in order to advance their medium or career. In every situation where an ethical dilemma is involved some compromise must be made and decisions may not always be correct or incorrect, but they always must be "*well thought out*" (Dej, 2004, p. 1).

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Linguistic Specificities of Media Headline Discourse – in the Case of Montenegrin Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the author is dealing with the characteristics of Montenegrin media headline discourse, actually exploring the extent to which the headline discourse is sensationalist and negative. The analysis has included larger and more influential daily newspapers in Montenegro („Pobjeda“ - pro-government, „Vijesti“ and „Dan“ - pro-opposition) over a period of one month. The paper is based on the assumption that mass media are a factor influencing the culture of a society, but they

are also the product of the same culture and society. Given the number of sensationalist headlines published in the monitored newspapers, we recognize a confirmation of the hypotheses that the headline communication culture is at a lower level than expected, that most of these headlines occur in sections on interior politics and society, and that there are differences in preference for certain contents between headlines in Montenegrin daily newspapers.

KEYWORDS: *Media Language, Montenegrin Newspapers, Headlines*

„Same message, communicated through different types of technical means for transmitting messages, causes unequal effects, meaning that the power of the message does not depend only on the content of the message but also on the shape and structure of the technical transmitter”.

Susnjic, 1984, p. 89.

INTRODUCTION

Media discourse is a rich repository for diverse research, taking into account its specific lexicon, genre diversity, impact on other discourses, specific syntactic structures, media connection to social, socio-cultural and economic relations. The language used in the media discourse utilizes a wide range of rhetorical means on phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic and textual level. The media represent a general reference to information, knowledge and public opinion. Thus, it does depend on the quality of democracy which kind of media system is established, which standards of quality the media generally realize, and at which level of media literacy the audience is. Of course, all these factors of media and communication culture reflect the democratic quality of life in a society. In various ways, media shape our aspirations and attitudes, and give us a deeper insight into the quality of life, so in the interpretation of social and cultural influence of the media great importance is given to media responsibility, control and self-control. In his latest study on media literacy, James Potter (2011, p. 7) argues that people get their meaning of life determined by the gradual influence of the media, meaning that the behavior, attitudes and emotions of the people will gradually be aligned with such determination.

When it comes to the relationship between the media and language, we notice that these constantly influence one another and that language is a significant factor in the differentiation of media. Language is not only a static factor of the media, but also their dynamic element. Language is where various aspects of power come to

life, determining the interaction between people, and the media are seen as a game for power or a power game, which is why language is inextricably linked to the media and to power. Media language reflects the society in which it is created and the relationships in this society, but it also creates these relationships. The media have a certain social impact and receive a portion of public power. The power of the media raises the question of how to fight against media manipulation and bias.

It is a known fact that newspaper articles in the press, and to an even greater extent in the electronic media and multimedia, usually last for only a few seconds, one minute, an hour, a day, a week... depending on the news flow rate, on the freshness of the information, on the willingness of the "gate guardians" to let them through, on the time of appearance (issue publication) or the magazine/program in which they are published (Todorovic, 2013, p. 17). Therefore, the setting for manipulation is easily created if constant repetition of inaccurate and unverified information makes them sound like an official statement. There is a fine line between persuasion and manipulation, and it is necessary to set a limit so that the audience would not be forced to accept an opinion or adopt a behavior (Breton, 2000, p. 37). Informative function of the media thus grows into a function of social action, substantially shaping everyday life of human beings and their opinions (Udovicic, 2007, p. 41). The goal of manipulation is getting a profit, a part of the social power, or pandering to the authorities. Information disclosed by the media can be an integral part of manipulative techniques to which an individual is exposed, from distorting the portrayal of an event to hiding the real facts and truth.

Media discourse incorporates a number of language mechanisms that implicitly or explicitly convey political content, shape public politics, lay down the roles of the stakeholders and target groups, carry messages of identity, gather political support, and define objectives. Language is an instrument through which, unconsciously or strategically, given concepts are stressed, concealed, distorted or evaluated, making it a discourse tool of public politics with the function of persuasion and political legitimization. No matter which genre they belong to, the media are designed on the principle of monologue, with a strategy of persuasion, imposing views and suggestions to the addressees, which places the latter ones in a subordinate role. The words of the media are never randomly selected, are never "collected" in communication just like that, without a goal.

The words of the media always try to verbalize the idea that they carry, whatever the idea may be. In fact, "*the medium is the message*" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 15).

In this paper, we are going to deal with the characteristics of headline discourse in Montenegrin daily newspapers, actually exploring the extent to which the headline discourse is sensationalist and negative. The analysis included larger and more influential daily newspapers in Montenegro („Pobjeda“ – pro-government, „Vijesti“ and „Dan“ – pro-opposition) over a period of one month (May 1 to June 1, 2015). The study was initiated with the aim of determining how the media editorial boards relate

to language in the headlines selected for the front pages. The starting assumption was that headlines, even those that would not be on the cover, and in particular those on the front page, are designed with special stylistic care, in order to attract but also to keep the readers who see them.

As each medium has a specific editorial policy and ways to portray events and occurrences, a research of themes and rhetoric in headline contents has been carried out. As part of the research, the following hypotheses were made:

- Texts in Montenegrin daily newspapers Pobjeda, Vijesti and Dan contain a proportionally large number of headlines bearing sensationalist and negative character, and the communication culture of the headlines is lower because of the sales and commercial reasons.

- There are significant differences in headlines of negative character in the texts of the Montenegrin dailies.

- Headlines of negative and inappropriate content mostly refer to interior politics and society.

1. MEDIA PICTURE IN MONTENEGRO

Media scene in Montenegro is pluralistic, which is to say that there are a number of media companies active in this small market. According to the official data of the Agency for Electronic Media from 2015, there are 21 TV channels, 55 radio stations, five daily newspapers and one weekly 1 in Montenegro. The only Montenegrin news agency is MINA, which is privately owned. Despite their growing popularity, there is no official comprehensive list of websites or electronic magazines. However, even with such a wide range of media, the challenges related to the financial sustainability and deep polarization limit the economic and political independence of the media sector from the state.

The legislative and institutional framework is inclusive and, for the most part, in line with international recommendations. It guarantees the right to free expression, media freedom and independence. Journalism is permeated by two systems of rules: legal and ethical. Multiplicity of media, no doubt, has consequences on their professionalism, on the status of journalism in Montenegro. The print media in Montenegro are generally "*pro-government*" and "*pro-opposition*". With the majority of its texts, the daily "Pobjeda" supports government politics with no critical distance towards the given themes. The so-called "opposition" media function on several variables, of which the basic two are – pro-Serbian viewpoint represented in the newspaper "Dan", aimed at citizens of Montenegro who still see Serbia and Montenegro as one nation and one country, and the so-called "anti-government" viewpoint, embodied in the daily newspaper "Vijesti", whose reporting is aimed at providing political support to the opposition parties, which can be seen by analyzing the discourse used, as well as the treatment and evaluation of participants and events (Tasic, 2014) .

The constant growth of print media in Montenegro, on the one hand, and media efforts to acquire or retain the favor of readers, on the other, cause a competitive rivalry of the media. In this competition to win the favor of the audience, media companies are forced to follow the expectations of the target group and choose those events that they believe will attract the interest of the target audience. When it comes to the media in Montenegro, given the market circumstances, it is difficult to talk about economic independence of any media whatsoever. No media can survive only by mere commercial revenue from its audience. Montenegrin media usually are a mirror of the society, but often with a hidden reflection due to the socio-economic situation and complex political relations. Journalists constantly strive to subordinate the newsrooms to their own goals or to turn them into their public address stations. This is much more difficult to achieve if the media are economically independent. Journalism in Montenegrin society is often marked by political relations (and divisions). Based on this, a large part of the media, and some of them even quite clearly, are individually profiled.

2. HEADLINE LANGUAGE

Journalistic style differs from other functional styles in headlines, as well. Sometimes, it depends on these whether the text will be read. Thus, headlines are always in the prime place in the newspaper, with key words of expressive *meaning*. Also significant is the role of *typeset graphics* – size, design, color – serving to differentiate certain segments, such as section title, article heading, text headline, sub-heading within the text etc. (Tosovic, 2002, p. 249).

Textual linguistics considers that headlines constitute one of the strong positions of the text, regardless of their functional-stylistic affinities. The function of a newspaper headline is to attract the attention of the addressees, but also to direct them – concisely, interestingly – to the main content of the article that is before them. It needs to include basic information about the content of the text, as well as to be in an effective, striking language. Therefore, a headline should fulfill the requirements of informativeness, expressiveness and economy. Headlines have conative, referential and expressive functions (Katnic-Bakarsic, 1999, p. 98), and which of these functions is dominant depends on the type of media, the text itself, or whether it is an informative, literary-journalistic or analytical text. It is often in the headlines that a change of the language function occurs, from referential and conative to poetic and expressive (Katnic-Bakarsic, 1999, p. 60). A headline – as an obligatory structural element of a newspaper article – with a communicative function to make distinctive a specific message in relation to a multitude of others, and then an epistemological function – to facilitate the understanding of the message, also has a metacommunicative function – to discover the intentions of communicators and clarify the position of a recipient in a communication situation, which is to say the extent to which it corresponds to the expectations of the communicators (Malovic, 2007, p. 141).

Headline functions are achieved through a different sentential or syntagmatic structure. They can be explicated by making comprehensive observations in the form of sentences, or emphasizing a single part. Newspaper headlines, as the most prominent element and an essential part of the text, actually the key place of the text in its central position, mediate between the author of the text and the reader. With its syntactic structure, discursive unity and polysemy, headlines of unusual contents are intended to attract attention and specify text information while highlighting relevance and attractiveness of the topic. If journalists want to emphasize some aspects or participants of the events, in the news these aspects will be in a prominent place in the headline or the subheading (Katnic-Bakarsic, 2012, p. 103). A headline in factual writing, both as a point and a bait, has to meet certain criteria, and above all, be informative, as well as attractive and interesting. Headlines of all kinds operate more strongly than texts and, in general, a reader will read more headlines than texts.

Schneider and Eslinger have set up five requirements that determine a good headline, which according to them: must contain a clear statement, must be a central expression of the text, must not falsify the text, must be fair, easy to understand and unambiguous, must excite curiosity of the readers (Rus-Mol and Zagorac-Kerser, 2005, p. 152). In the opinion of Slavica Perovic, a headline's value is reflected in the statement condensity and originality, elegance and wit of language, and avoidance to simultaneously slip into the language background, which is the ambiguity, except when one wants to. In addition, it is important not to abuse the language (Perovic, 2009, p. 61). Since a headline has the most difficult function, to communicate as much as possible as briefly as possible, while at the same time being attractive and drawing readers' attention, it first of all has to be exact, although only a summary.

3. ANALYSIS

In the period from May 1 to June 1, 2015, we have been analyzing important Montenegrin daily newspapers Pobjeda, Vijesti and Dan, which have a different editorial policy and ownership structure, and are therefore a distinctive indicator of political diversity in Montenegro. In the given period, out of the analyzed sample – 1,250 titles – these daily newspapers have published 178 headlines with sensational and negative content. When it comes to sections, the majority of these headlines were in interior politics and society 99 („Dan“ - 12/14, „Vijesti“ - 31/32, „Pobjeda“ - 7/3), while 15 headlines were related to the world („Dan“ - 8, „Vijesti“ - 1, „Pobjeda“ - 6), and 11 to the crime & accidents section („Dan“ - 4, „Vijesti“ - 6, „Pobjeda“ - 1). In the economics section of Montenegrin daily newspapers, there was a significant number of headlines (16) of inappropriate content („Dan“ - 4, „Vijesti“ - 9, „Pobjeda“ - 3).

A curious feature is that the culture section also includes such headlines, although to a lesser extent, only 8 („Dan“ - 1, „Vijesti“ - 4, „Pobjeda“ - 3). The rest refers to the following sections („Dan“ - news of the day (3), occasions (2), attitude

(3), regions (1), the Balkans (3); Vijesti - columns (6); „Pobjeda“ - current (5), comment (2), chronicle of Podgorica (1), others write (3).

Headlines reveal the attitude, position and message that the author directs to the audience. A critical attitude is sometimes a one-way thing, as a result of the division on us and them, and such a relationship is largely present in many headlines. Bombastic and tendentious headlines and subheadings appear with punctuation interventions, such as quotation marks, which radically changes the meaning of the content (Protest walk on the occasion of May 25, "*Milo, does your family know what you're doing to us*" (V, May 25); "*Walking*" *officeholders from one ministry to another a threat to the system*" (V, May 7); Unacceptable for us to "languish" at position 114 in press freedom (V, May 2); Messages from the Assembly of Trade Union: "*Something stinks in the state of Montenegro*" (V, May 15).

Another common feature of Montenegrin newspapers are headlines with manipulative punctuation marks – this headline type contains punctuation that can be aimed at boosting the emotional charge and bear deliberate references to "relevant" news (as is the case with an exclamation mark), may indicate the unconfirmed information or disbelief of the author of the text (question mark), or the unfinished thought (ellipsis), leaving room for diverse interpretations and speculation of the readers. (Minister calls us to Podgorica to attach the wire, and what when the season is over? (V, May 16); Do you want electricity or healthy air? (V, May 10); Who was smoking at the expense of the state? (V, May 28); Hey, fatso! (V, May 9); Milo, morals... (V, May 26); Adieu to sanity... (P, May 25); How come Montenegrin women can do it, and Croatian women can not! (P, May 14)).

Deliberate exaggeration and sometimes also inappropriate reporting are a direct product of sensationalism in the media, whose main role thus becomes the attention of readers. The newspapers show an increasing tendency of deliberate "vilification" or ridicule of people, mostly public figures, but also of social occurrences. In Montenegrin media this is evident in the pro-opposition newspapers Vijesti and Dan, and to a lesser extent in the pro-government Pobjeda (Dan - The mafia runs the country (May 11); Milo is panicking (May 13); Prime Minister manipulator (May 13); No one wants to face Milo (May 21); Đukanović family not large in numbers, but in positions (May 11); Linguistic changes, language raped (May 20); 60 thousand wreck cars in Podgorica (May 23); The plant became a concentration camp (May 16); Losers, happy Victory Day (May 12); Discontinue Ustasha pensions (May 20); Vijesti - Danilović: 500 flags for the 500 affairs and profiteers (May 24) HURRAY: DPS painting again (May 24); DPS: Medojevic sounds farcical (May 15); More dynasties in Montenegrin public service than in the history of Europe (May 4); Who of the ministry staff was smoking at the expense of the state? (May 21); „Pobjeda“ – Misc-hief makers scared investors away from the Queen's beach (May 28); The role of the Montenegrin Academy of Science and Art: Tradition of destruction. Daydreams. Specialists and Special Forces. Poker or Russian roulette (May 3)).

It is obvious that these newspaper headlines violate ethical codes, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the editorial policy of the dailies.

It is noted that almost all of the analyzed newspapers have headlines of short or medium length (word, phrase, sentence).

Word - Bellowing (P, May 3);

Syntagm - Disgrace for the country (D, May 2); A game of cat and mouse (D, May 13); Gays and fags (V, May 25);

Sentence - Đuranović shoveling also (D, May 13); One and all against the misunderstood youth (V, May 16); Hoping it won't be a girl (P, May 12);

Sentence sequence - Unclear business of Minister Ivanovic's wife: Instalment exceeds salary (V, May 11); The role of the Montenegrin Academy of Science and Art: Tradition of destruction. Daydreams. Specialists and Special Forces. Poker or Russian roulette (P, May 3).

Authors often begin their headlines with the names of individual politicians or parties followed by their statements, and even with whole sentences („Vijesti“, „Pobjeda“). This parceled nominal unit is structurally followed by a punctuation break (colon) and then by a complement sentence. The nominative form of the noun is not structurally dependent on the second part of the headline that bears the informative brunt of the sentence. Using such a headline, a reporter can very effectively express an opinion, attitude, statement of the parceled unit, emphasizing the informatively more important content of the information in the second part of the headline. In these cases, we at times note the occurrence of longer comments that are unsuitable for headline function due to their length.

„**Vijesti**“ - Calovic: I am not afraid of the underworld which Djukanović belongs to (May 12); Ivanovic is still quiet: Who was smoking at the expense of the state? (May 28); Vucinic: The ironworks people were killed and injured, just like on a battlefield (May 8); Misolic: I could have cut her hair a little bit, but you wouldn't let me (May 8);

„**Pobjeda**“ - Djukanović: We are enduring the coalition with SDP solely because of NATO (May 12); North Korea: Minister executed? (May 14). While comparing (in percentage) only the editorial policies of the dailies and their conceptions, we can largely rely on the headline type which an individual newspaper prefers. During this brief period, we note that most of sensationalist headlines appear in the *Vijesti* (25%), followed by those in the *„Dan“* (17%), and the least of these were recorded in the *„Pobjeda“* (12%). On the other hand, informative headlines were mostly recorded in the *„Pobjeda“* (40%), followed by the *Dan* (34%), and the least in the *„Vijesti“* (27%). As for combined headlines, the numbers are approximately the same in all three dailies (D - 38%, P - 36%, V - 35%), and it is similar with metaphorical headlines (D - 11%, V - 13%, P - 12%). We can see that there are different approac-

hes to headlines, which is understandable because one of these newspapers is printed for the purposes of the government, while the other two dailies are pro-opposition.

Another parameter indicating the headline culture of individual newspapers and their reporting orientation is, of course, the motive for a certain text. Thus, in our analysis we have noticed a large number of headlines referring to an actual event, while fewer headlines dealt with pseudo-events. As is well known in the daily newspapers, in addition to the texts written on the basis of press statements, we often see texts containing the statements of one or the other party – position, opposition, and sometimes both. Such statements are often found on the front pages also. Most of these headlines come from Vijesti - 12, and much less from „Pobjeda“, only 2 headlines.

In the case of Montenegrin daily newspapers, according to the number of press releases and statements of political actors in the headlines, we notice that there is no party that is predominantly present. However, in the opposition newspapers Dan and Vijesti, but also in the pro-government Pobjeda, more attention is given to the state authorities and the ruling coalition, with fewer headlines addressed to the opposition parties and NGOs.

We note that in one Montenegrin daily newspaper („Vijesti“), headlines of inappropriate content appear: It is a sad country in which prime minister engages in sex scandals (May 12); Porno Negro (May 16); ZIKS: A convict cut off his sex organ in the bathroom (May 14); Paupers, f*ck you (May 20).

A headline is an important segment of the media, but it is unethical to present facts in this manner. It is obvious that the lack of journalistic ethics for the readers and a tendency for provocation induces editors to walk the line of good and appropriate taste.

4. SENSATIONALISM IN THE HEADLINES

Headlines in Montenegrin daily newspapers are marked with sensationalism and political colors, so that basic principles of professionalism and impartiality are sometimes called into question. They may be the result of commercial objectives, political ambitions. Nowadays, Montenegrin readers want interactive, interesting forms that do not take much time for consuming.

Sensationalism attracts audiences, opens the door for new advertisers, and affects the profit growth of the media that offers it. If we bear in mind that in today's consumer society only the best survive, it is somewhat more understandable why media shift towards favorizing offers of commercial content and tabloid journalism that the global market is increasingly demanding (Vlahovic and Olujic, 2010, p. 149).

Focusing the attention of readers to a specific text is an extremely important segment of journalistic work. It becomes crucial at the moment when a reader is deciding whether to continue reading a certain text. This principle of „playing“ with a reader’s glance can be a walk on the edge of journalistic professionalism, as a journalist will consciously strive to place in a headline as attractive information as possible, sometimes without regard either for context or accuracy. Playing with the attention of the readership is often an introduction to various types of journalistic manipulation. Headlines make stronger impression on the readers than texts do, and sometimes they are the only information and orientation for the readers. The type of a newspaper (serious, half-tabloid and tabloid) determines the „strength“ of a headline, and in the „race“ for sales, ethical principles are forgotten not only in tabloids, but also in other newspapers. The so-called quality newspapers will put the information before the attraction in their headlines, though even responsible journalists try to find a way to combine these two requirements. Such combinations go to prove the talent of such journalists, but also their awareness of the fact that headlines „sell newspapers“ (Rus-Mol and Zagorac-Kerser, 2005, p. 150).

The goal of every sensational reporting is to increase the reading of a newspaper, resulting in the shift of focus from objective journalism toward those "striking" aspects of stories that attract a larger share of a wider audience (Campbell, 2009, p. 9). As is known, the primary task is to inform readers, to sell as many copies, but also to attract as many advertisers as possible. The larger the number of readers of Montenegrin headlines, the greater the interest of advertisers, inevitably resulting in higher profits for the publishers. Headline sensation thus becomes a journalistic style rooted in the nature of news. They are intended, in part, to wake up, excite, and regardless of „*the topic being a political scandal or a double murder – to shock the public*“ (Stephens, 1998, p. 2).

Changes in the headlines of Montenegrin newspapers will depend on various factors, primarily on editorial policy, selection of topics, and these will reflect the main focus and the message sent to the readers from the newsrooms. Headlines are the most common place for editorial interventions. In this aspect, the question arises of headline ethics, namely, the effects that such messages can cause. For the selection of a topic in Montenegrin media, it is not only the informational value that is crucial, but also the political significance of its publication (or non-publication), and such selection criteria are used to achieve a particular propaganda objective.

Selecting a headline in Montenegrin daily newspapers is under the influence of two hidden, but extremely crucial features – value and significance. The value of news is essential for the relationship between the information source and the journalist who used it and stands for it, while significance is crucial for the relation between journalists and the media audience with which they communicate directly (Jergović and Raguz, 2014, p. 38). While reporting, media workers „*consciously or subconsciously participate in the selection, highlight certain events and news, while ignoring*

others. In this process, media help in determining the prevailing beliefs, assumptions and values in a society“ (Kanizaj, 2004, p. 32).

"Sensationalist headlines also relate to the measurement of two values – one that a message actually carries in its content and the value that is offered to the reader in the headline" (Bobic, 1987, p. 59). According to this author, if the two values are balanced, sensationalism should not be present. However, if a headline clearly suggests a biased content of the text, sensationalism is indicated (ibid, 59). Sensationalism is actually „event inflation“, and in cases where it is present, it strives to attract the attention of readers (ibid, 44). In Montenegrin headlines, this attention is achieved specifically by using sensational headlines, trivialization, unusual examples.

Headlines in the analyzed corpus often balance on the edge of comfort, privacy, but are also susceptible, inviting, ticklish and basically competent. They go beyond the threshold of public morality, and sometimes even into the abyss of sensationalism and mediocrity. The increase of sensationalism in the headlines of some daily newspapers in the test corpus is the result of intensified commercial activities of the newspapers in which information becomes a commodity to be sold as soon and as well as possible. Due to the conditions dictated by the market, and in order to survive, the owners and editors of newspapers devote more and more space to headlines of sensational character.

CONCLUSION

If, as the rules for marketing-based news production, we take searching for images rather than ideas, avoiding complexity, exaggeration if necessary to gain attraction, avoiding extensive production of the news, then the media coverage of headlines in Montenegrin daily papers during the month of May, 2015, can be described as news production for sale.

Montenegrin newspapers do not have same editorial policies, but must respect the same basic principles of journalistic profession: truthfulness, honesty, accuracy, balance and fairness. Sometimes it takes only a glance at the front pages of Montenegrin daily newspapers and you already have a picture of the media in Montenegro. The headline of each text represents its mirror, or at least that is how it should be. A certain degree of that which is sensationalist and tabloid can be noticed in headlines of the analyzed daily newspapers. When treatment of an event is based on emotion rather than facts, this goes in favor of market logic and attitude towards what the audience is reading. Headlines are motivated by circulation reasons, rating, but also by recognition that the media create the reality in the interests of particular politics. It is evident that in almost all the newspapers negative titles are highlighted and considered "better" than the positive and good ones. We also note that the consi-

derably shortened texts, which should not be demanding for the reader, are published under striking headlines.

After taking into account the number of sensationalist headlines published in the analyzed newspapers, which are mainly related to the government, we find a confirmation of the hypothesis that communication culture is at a lower level than expected. The hypotheses that the majority of these headlines occur in sections on interior politics and society, and that there are certain differences in preference of content in the headlines of Montenegrin daily newspaper, have also been confirmed. The fact that politics take the main place in Montenegrin newspapers indicates the understanding of the politics, its importance for everyday life, but is also one of the signs of politicization of these dailies.

In the analyzed sample, it has been noted that headlines often emphasize attractiveness rather than informativeness, that newspapers have different editorial policies (increasing tabloidization), different designs (with long or short headlines).

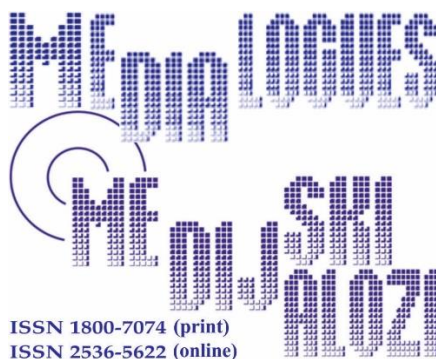
A headline, being the strong position of the text, is the bearer of meaning. As an independent part, it primarily has the function to interest and attract the attention of the readers, who will get basic information as soon as they read the headline, and thus will continue reading the text or give up on it. Editors are aware that provocative and eye-catching headlines are the best for attracting readers. It should be noted that each sensationalist headline has a greater impact on us than a positive one, the simple reason being that we remember bad events more easily than good ones. In newspapers, we can often read headlines that are at their core characteristic informational – impartial, but carry negative connotations or invite the reader to read between the lines.

Media culture, as a part of general culture, is the introduction of order in social life, that is, in a public field. It consists of values, convictions, beliefs, attitudes, symbols, styles and patterns of action and behavior of individuals and society. Although the study included only a small sample of headlines in Montenegrin daily papers, the results are certainly indicative of thinking about media headline culture, since the media are mediators in social and cultural system of each country.

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Reality Show and Rhetoric

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ABSTRACT

The world's mass media system has changed, along with its quality and respectability. Through literary research and experimentation, it has been proven that people's perception of reality has been altered by the information they receive from television programmes. Television influences society in many ways. In the whole galaxy of media, reality shows are still the most intriguing ones. Theorists and researchers have tried to determine the issue of predictability that speaks about culture moving. Every norm is there to be respected or broken. The genre of reality television which has existed in some form or another since the early years of television programming, exploded as a phenomenon around 2000 with the success of such television

series as Big Brother and Survivor. Nowadays, in our region, it is the Couples on Happy Kosava Television.

KEYWORDS: *Reality show, experimentation, genre, motive, influence, audience, rhetoric.*

INTRODUCTION

Time we live in is the information technology age. People are easily swayed to accept a belief that they would not normally have unless it is expressed on television, since many people think that everything they hear on television is true. It has been observed that over the past twenty to thirty years, normal social behaviour, even the actual life roles of men and women, media and regulatory policies have all been altered (Browne, 1998).

Reality television is a genre of television programming that presents purportedly unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events and usually features ordinary people instead of professional actors, sometimes in a contest or other situation where a prize is awarded. The genre, which has existed in some form or another since the early years of television programming, exploded as a phenomenon around 2000 with the success of such television series as Big Brother and Survivor. Programmes in the reality television genre are commonly called reality shows and often are produced in a television series. Documentaries, television news and sports television are usually not classified as reality shows.

Reality television frequently portrays a modified and highly influenced form of reality, at times utilizing sensationalism to attract audience viewers and increase advertising revenue. The participants are often placed in exotic locations or abnormal situations, and are often persuaded to act in specific scripted ways by off-screen story editors or segment television producers with the portrayal of events and speech manipulated and contrived to create an illusion of reality through direction and post-production techniques. A well-known example of a reality competition show is the globally syndicated Big Brother, in which cast members live together in the same house, with participants removed at regular intervals by either the viewing audience or in the American version by the participants themselves.

1. TYPES OF REALITIES

There are various hybrid reality-competition shows, like the worldwide-syndicated Star Academy which combines the Big Brother and Idol formats. The Biggest Loser and The Pick-up Artist combine competition with the self-improvement format, and American Inventor uses the Idol format for products instead of people. Some shows such as Making the Band and Project Greenlight, devote the first part of

the season to selecting a winner, and the second part to showing that person or group of people working on a project.

Many magazines and journal reviews have periodically discussed the muck-raking that many tabloid shows rely on to draw in their viewers. This involves sensationalizing a story to make it more interesting, therefore increasing the interest of the audience. Along the way, all sorts of scandalous content and goofy tricks appear, but there is not much mystery in the logic. People often know that these shows aim to deceive them, but still accept the information as truth.

Though conforming is not necessarily bad, it can confuse people and therefore allow them to believe false ideas. When someone is under an informational social influence and is willing to change their views, the fine line between truth and fiction is clouded.

Television is in the convenient position of being able to influence people when they are most vulnerable. Open-mindedness can often be treated as gullibility and therefore used as a tool to manipulate people's beliefs. Daschmann stated a reason for this gullibility. He claims that a certain amount of gullibility or understanding of certain news shows comes with social factors. Some people are raised with a different education and status in society than others, which hinges on the perception of the different news shows and material. But the individual differences and character traits do not have a bearing on the subject matter (Daschmann & Kepplinger, 1997).

The genre of reality television consists of various subgenres:

- a documentary style and within documentary style reality television are several subcategories or variants:
- special living environment,
- celebrities and
- professional activities.

Another sub-genre of reality TV is the reality competition or so-called reality game shows which follow the format of non-tournament elimination contests. A well-known example is Big Brother, where all cast members live in the same house. Popular variants of the competition-based format include:

- dating-based competitions,
- search for jobs, and
- sports.

Some reality television shows cover a person or group of people improving their lives. Sometimes the same group of people are covered over an entire season (as in *The Swan* and *Celebrity Fit Club*), but usually there is a new target for improvement in each episode. Despite differences in the content, the format is usually the same:

- first, the show introduces the subjects in their current, less-than-ideal environment;
- then the subjects meet with a group of experts, who give the subjects instructions on how to improve things; they offer aid and encouragement along the way.

The subjects are placed back in their environment and they, along with their friends and family and the experts, appraise the changes that have occurred. Other self-improvement or makeover shows include: *How Do I Look?* (fashion makeover); *The Biggest Loser* and *Fat March*, (which covers weight loss); *Extreme Makeover* (entire physical appearance); *Queer Eye* and *What not to wear* (style and grooming); *Supernanny* (child-rearing); *Made* (attaining difficult goals); *Trinny and Susannah Undress* (fashion makeover and marriage); *Tool Academy* (relationship building); and, *Charm School* and *From G's to Gents* (self-improvement and manners - Wikipedia, 2012)

Some shows make over part or all of a person's living space, work space or vehicle. The American show *This Old House* was the first such show, debuting in 1979. The British show *Changing Rooms*, beginning in 1996 (later remade in the US as *Trading Spaces*) was the first such renovation show that added a gameshow feel with different weekly contestants. Other shows in this category include *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, *Debbie Travis' Facelift*, *Designed to Sell*, *While You Were Out*, *Holmes on Homes*, *Pimp my ride* and *Overhauling Show Vehicles Being Rebuilt*. Some shows, such as *Restaurant Makeover* and *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares*, show both the décor and the menu of a failing restaurant being remade. The issue of "*making over*" was taken to its social extreme with the British show *Life Laundry*, in which people who had become hoard-ers, even living in squalor, were given professional assistance.

Another type of reality programme is the social experiment that produces drama, conflict and sometimes transformation. *Wife Swap*, which began in 2003 on Channel 4 and has aired for four seasons on ABC, is a notable example. People with different values agreed to live by each other's social rules for a brief period of time and sometimes learn from the experience. Other shows in this category include ITV's *Holiday Showdown*, Oxygen's *The Bad Girls Club* (lifestyles and actions), and Channel 4's *Secret Millionaire*. *Faking It* was a series where people had to learn a new skill and pass themselves off as experts in that skill. *Shattered* was a controversial 2004 UK series where contestants competed for how long they could go without sleep.

Another reality programme features hidden cameras when random passers-by encounter a staged situation. *Candid Camera*, which first aired on television in 1948, pioneered the format. Modern variants of this type of production include for example *The Jamie Kennedy Experiment* and *Just for Laughs: Gags*.

2. ANALYSIS FOR AND AGAINST REALITY SHOWS

Reality television's global success has been, in the eyes of some analysts, an important political phenomenon. In some authoritarian countries, reality television voting has been the first time many citizens have voted in any free and fair wide-scale elections. The frankness of the settings on some reality shows present situations that are often taboo in certain orthodox cultures, like *Star Academy Arab World*, which began airing in 2003, and which shows male and female contestants living together. In 2004, journalist Matt Labash, noting both of these issues, wrote that "*the best hope of little Americas developing in the Middle East could be Arab-produced reality TV*". In China, after the finale of the 2005 season of *Super Girl* (the local version of *Pop Idol*) drew an audience of around 400 million people, and 8 million text message votes, the state-run English-language newspaper *Beijing Today* ran the front-page headline "*Is Super Girl a Force for Democracy?*" The Chinese government criticized the show, citing both its democratic nature and its excessive vulgarity, or "worldliness", and in 2006 banned it outright. Other attempts at introducing reality television have proved to be similarly controversial. A Pan-Arab version of *Big Brother* was cancelled in 2004 after less than two weeks on the air after a public outcry and street protests.

In 2007, Abu Dhabi TV began airing *Million's Poet*, a show featuring *Pop Idol*-style voting and elimination, but for the writing and oration of Arabic poetry. The show became popular in Arab countries, with around 18 million viewers, partly because, according to analysts such as the University of Pennsylvania's Professor Marwan Kraidy, it was able to combine the excitement of reality television with a traditional, culturally relevant topic. In April 2010, however, the show also became a subject of political controversy, when Hilal, a 43-year-old female Saudi competitor, read out a poem criticizing her country's Muslim clerics. Hilal received the highest scores from the judges throughout the competition, and came in third place overall.

Can any form of entertainment, however, be truly good or bad in the general sense, identifying some of the six theses which overlap in the general topic of for and against reality shows:

<i>FOR watching reality shows</i>	<i>AGAINST watching reality shows</i>
a) teenagers get good enjoyment out of it	a) it has a bad influence on the audience
b) they give a chance to everyone (public forum)	b) extreme profit motive
c) a major boost in self-confidence	c) emotional drawbacks
d) something new, not the same old prepared monotonous programme	d) audience and participants tend to forget that it is a media show at the end of the day

e) provide an escape from everyday life	e) the most criticized sub-genre of television programming
f) totally ridiculous	

Some reality television participants think that it is pure entertainment, but delving a little deeper will reveal that many of its criticisms are well-warranted. The genre has made a name for itself by featuring dangerous stunts, deranged participants and outrageous displays of conduct, but are reality programmes bad for society?

In the end, as long as these programmes do not break any laws, why not have them? After all, the number of available TV channels is already tremendous and there is no sign of that number doing anything in the future but increasing. So if you only like one or two reality shows, it is not like the others are taking up valuable channel space or anything. I guess it all comes down to the fact that not everyone likes every type of entertainment. It is important to remember, however, that the main purpose of entertainment is to provide an escape from the demands of our everyday lives; something to take the “edge off” once in a while. If watching a reality show does that for you, then it has achieved its purpose. If not, watch something that does do that or find a completely different way to relax.

3. RHETORIC CODE

Rhetoric is the art of discourse, an art that aims to improve the facility of speakers or writers who attempt to inform, persuade, or motivate particular audiences in specific situations. The best known definition comes from Aristotle, who considers it a counterpart of both logic and politics, and calls it *"the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."* Rhetoric typically provide heuristics for understanding, discovering and developing arguments for particular situations, such as Aristotle's three persuasive audience appeals: logos; pathos; and ethos.

The five canons of rhetoric, which trace the traditional tasks in designing a persuasive speech, were first codified in classical Rome: invention; arrangement; style; memory; and delivery. Along with grammar and logic, rhetoric is one of the three ancient arts of discourse. From Ancient Greece to the late 19th century, it was a central part of Western education, fulfilling the need to train public speakers and writers to move audiences to action with arguments.

Because of its associations with democratic institutions, rhetoric is commonly said to flourish in open and democratic societies with rights of free speech, free assembly and political enfranchisement for some portion of the population. Those who classify rhetoric as a civic art believe that rhetoric has the power to shape communities, from the character of citizens and greatly impact civic life.

More trusting in the power of rhetoric to support a republic, the Roman orator Cicero argued that art required something more than eloquence. A good orator also needed to be a good man, a person enlightened on a variety of civic topics. He describes the proper training of the orator in his major text on rhetoric, *De Oratore*, modelled on Plato's dialogues.

4. FEEDBACK IS IMMEDIATE, WHETHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE

In interpersonal situations, feedback is sent immediately or almost simultaneously with your receiving a response. Feedback varies from the spontaneous and honest, to the carefully constructed response. Also, it can be positive or negative, meaning you pay a compliment to someone and support what the speaker says or you criticize someone and evaluate someone's acting and then the feedback is judgmental. Sometimes feedback is easy to identify, but sometimes it is not (Skinner, 2002). Part of the art of effective communication is to discern feedback and adjust your messages on the basis of that feedback.

Feedback is examined in terms of five important dimensions (Devito, 2007):

- positive/negative;
- person-focused/message-focused;
- immediate/delayed;
- low monitoring/high monitoring; and
- supportive/critical.

CONCLUSION

People change in interpersonal communication for a variety of purposes. They change in order to learn about others and yourselves, to relate, to play, to influence, to help and to better understand the external world, i.e. other people. Sociolinguistically viewed, reality is a field of direct interdisciplinary examination of the language relations, with the basis of anthropology, discourse analysis, geolinguistics and languages in contact. (Wardhaugh, 2010). The structure of talking and politeness and way of speaking exist in interpersonal interaction. There are to be noticed various styles, genres and social classes as well as social multilingualism with communicators (Avramovic, 2006).

This is a good place to start practicing critical thinking skills in interpersonal communication. It has been shown that the better you communicate, the better communicator you become. The people inside the reality show are in some way connected because life takes place among them. The effectiveness of such communication and relation depends largely on interpersonal skills. Since skills are crucial for pro-

fessional success in modern society, you are supposed to be a responsible citizen of the world, both socially and culturally as well as to be as open, empathic and supportive as you can be. When there is a conflict you should master the situation. That does not mean that you are never involved in conflict. Conflict is a very natural phenomenon in most human relationships. Conflict management ability is an extremely valuable possession when it comes to having great interpersonal skills.

Reality shows revolve around a specific issue or event that everybody can relate to, and out of that is built a game. They are in essence, game shows but also often dramatic social experiments. Another thing to remember is that some things are fun to play, and some things are fun to watch. To truly connect with an audience and have entertainment value in a show, you need both. The quality of a reality show can span from awful to inspiring. With the explosion of cable channels, many television genres are competing for market audience. Interpersonal communication and mass communication do not exist in isolation from one another, but they are complementary. The aim of this paper was to understand the relationship between viewer motives for watching reality shows and interpersonal relationship perceptions.

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