

MEDIA „INSTALLATION“ OF REFUGES IN PUBLIC SPACE (PRACTICES AND POLICIES)

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Abstract

The paper deals with a serious and contemporary problem that refers to three significant sociological phenomena: the media „installation“ in contemporary society, the refugees as a marginalized group, who were part of the reality of our spaces and the public „discourse“. The paper starts from the view that the media in the global society are one of the most influential factors that create the public opinion and from the content aspect shape the media space and set the appropriate media „installation“. On the other hand, refugees as marginalized sections of the population are a kind of challenge facing modern democratic societies, as well as societies in transition. In this context, the media were put before a „test“ for the proper and proper treatment of „one“ category of marginalized refugee groups. The media „installation“ of refugees in the public space was a kind of attempt to break down the myth of „refugee’s media invisibility“ as a marginalized group and disprove their media establishment in the public space.

Key words: media, „media installation“, refugees, marginalized groups, public space.

Introduction

In the contemporary global society, the role and influence of the mass media, especially in the public space, completely shifts the boundaries and, from a narrow mechanistic approach to the media (isolated from society), goes towards a broad, humanistic approach, which includes criticism of the media an overall ideological „machinery“ in society. In this context, it can be said that the media place a system of information that people accept without comment, although often they do not correspond to their true values and concepts.

In this context are the views of contemporary sociologists, who link the role of the media in the public space with the process of „massification“. Namely, most of them, including the famous Kokovich, Peter Burke, Briggs, Boyd, emphasize that we are living in the era of „massification“, including mass society, mass relations, mass production, mass culture, mass media. The emphasis is placed on the fact that the changes themselves that carry the „massification“ involve the tearing of primary connections, the destruction of primary relationships and their replacement with anonymous, social mobility, stratification of society, concentration and centralization of power. In such a social habitus and the mass media, they lose the primary role of real informers, from which one can make a humane discourse, especially when it comes to information to specific categories, and they are converted into, cruelly said „gladiatorial arena“ whose main goal is to gather the mass audience with the help of an intriguing and certain segment „Machiavellian information“ that characterize the absence of any empathy towards any category of citizens.

Analyzing the role of mass media from this point of view, as informers about refugees, it can rightly be said that they largely embraced the discourse of populism and „massification“, which involves dosed information, information provided by the form, but not essence and content, information that is more focused on the negativistic habitus the refugee crisis, with an apparent absence of empathy, compassion and compassion for the disease through which they pass. The real picture for them was presented through the perspective of the reporter and journalist, who was focused on topics and dilemmas about the attitude of refugees in the public space, their actions in refugee camps, the danger of religious radicalism and fundamentalism, the danger of staying on our territory and the possible diseases, as well as certain pathologies they have been facing. Much less could be seen or heard about the underlying reasons for leaving the home, the discriminatory attitude towards them, for certain conditions in the public space that were not even at the level of general human desirable conditions. All this gives us the right to conclude that the „media installation“ of refugees in the public space is correlated with the process of „massification“.

The role of the media and the creation of „media installations“ in contemporary societies

The media are one of the most significant phenomena in contemporary society, present in all areas of human life, with a key role in the formation and creation of public opinion. In this context, for the role of the media in the contemporary global society, Kokovič emphasizes their essential role in the process of mass communication. According to him, the process of mass communication produces: 1. Content that is predominantly provided for short-term use (news and entertainment). 2. It all happens in formal organizations with the help of highly developed technology. 3. The content is transmitted with the help of various types of media. 4. Content is potentially offered to a large number of people (anonymous and heterogeneous audiences). 5.

Communicating is public, which means unlimited access. 6. Communication is one-way and one-sided. 7. It takes place in a direct and indirect manner. 8. Processes take place periodically or continuously. (Kokovič, 2007: 30).

Speaking about the media and their installations in the public space in contemporary society, we must emphasize the several theories, which are precisely emphasized by their cult function. As Tomić emphasizes, especially under the influence of McLuhan's works, certain theories are presented that explain the essence of the medium today, and according to it they are:

- The theory of catharsis, which starts from the Aristotelian concept of catharsis, believing that people under stress, aggression, dissatisfaction, release all this indirectly through violence in the media. The emphasis of this theory is that the cathartic function of the medium lies in the fact that the violence shown therein reduces the possibility of real violence or aggression;
- The theory of aggressive signs and stimulating influences, it is quite the contrary, claims that the exposure of violent and aggressive content increases the tension and the possibility of transforming the same into reality;
- The theory of learning with observation points to the fact that the media displayed violence in some way, educates the audience to behave violently, especially when displaying content whose main actors practice violence, but are positive characters.
- Gerber's theory of cultivation, which considers that the contents of the mass media should be and are in function of upbringing and educating the widest audience (Tomić, 2003: 86).

Regardless of the duality that emphasizes the theories about the role of the media in the day, the reality shows that when it comes to the information provided to particular groups, especially the marginalized, besides the information, the presence of misinformation should not be forgotten.

Disinformation is used as a technique of informing, especially informing the masses of the masses in order to conceal or „distort“ the facts, or, in particular, it is a technique that allows people to acquire general and untrue information, and therefore, they suggest performing inaccurate collective conclusions, which is a target for misinformers. As Volkov stresses, „misinformation“ does not mean disabling information, but to give wrong, false and „distorted“ or falsified information (Volkov, 1998; from Kokovič, 2007: 23).

It is precisely in this context that the above mentioned information or misinformation for refugees who were portrayed and transmitted in mass media during the crisis. Each information must be received with a reserve, especially when it comes to the category of refugees, because on the subjective position of the person who provides the information largely depends how objective and relevant it will be, or will it be treated as a disinformation.

The authors Beznec and Speer in the „Governing the Balkan Route Macedonia, Serbia and the European Border Regime“ quoted that „the Balkan route is not a new phenomenon“(Beznec and Speer, 2016:4). It has a long history, marked by successive transformations in scope and visibility. However, the unique development of a formalized corridor, established in early summer 2015, constituted an unprecedented and significant rupture in its long existence. The formalized

corridor enabled refugees to cross the Balkans from northern Greece to Western Europe within two or three days, in special trains and buses (often even free of charge).

In the research paper it is noted that media reports showed exhausted migrants walking down railway tracks through Macedonia and migrant families waiting in Belgrade parks or at the Keleti train station in Budapest. Later in the year, widely disseminated images showed migrants walking in long lines through fields or traveling on crowded trains in Croatia and Slovenia (Beznez and Speer, 2016:4).

Media „installation of refugees in the public space”

The marginalization of parts of the population, as a multidimensional phenomenon today, is a major challenge faced by developed democratic societies, and especially those that are in the transition process. Although the notion of „marginalization” occurs in sociological and psychological literature within various theoretical doctrines, the term is a predominantly sociological that usually describes a situation in which a group of people is excluded from the dominant culture and from the distribution of the power that exists in the society” (Zuković, Milutinović, 2014: 416).

This notion is most often understood as a feature of individual social groups or parts of the population whose value systems, norms, behavior patterns, lifestyles and social status deviate from some commonly accepted social values, which make integration in the wider society more difficult or in the social environment (Jugović, 2007: 33). According to Zuković and Milutinović, marginalization does not refer only to the differentiation of the values of individual social groups that have generally accepted values and rules of behavior, nor to the shortening of the material basis, but rather the much wider shortening of the possibilities for full participation in social life, and thus the frustration of some individuals or groups of people in the life and human possibilities (Zuković and Milutinović, 2014: 416).

Not deepening in the problem of the types and causes of marginalization, the aim of this paper is from a media point of view to consider the issue of the need and importance of giving support to marginalized groups, with particular reference to refugees.

Part of the attitudes toward individual social groups are a product of tradition and culture in a particular environment, which are formed under the influence of socialization agents, as well as on the basis of knowledge of a certain social group and direct contact with their representatives.

Because of the negative consequences for those who are targeted (disrespect, condemnation, endangerment, discrimination), attention is primarily attracted by negative attitudes and prejudices, whose outburst is related to intolerance” (Joksimović, 2003). Getting acquainted with the attitudes allows you to anticipate further actions, and thus opens up opportunities for possible prevention of unwanted forms of behavior. In fact, although attitudes as a category are relatively

resistant to change and are rather durable, they can still change under the influence of changed circumstances and new experiences.

Starting from the fundamental connection between attitudes and behaviors, the support of refugees, as a separate marginalized group, can be considered from the aspect of the critical media „installation“ in the public space.

A particular indicator of the democratic nature of a society is, in fact, the degree of involvement of all its members in all its segments of community life. Accordingly, the process of creating an appropriate system for integrating refugees as a separate marginalized group begins with the process of preparation for entry into the „European Space“.

There are wide variations in how the press in different countries report on asylum and immigration. Sweden was the country whose press system was the most positive towards refugees and migrants. Despite significant representation for the far-right Swedish Democrats and a low proportion of NGO sources, it featured a preponderance of humanitarian themes, few examples where refugees and migrants were framed as a threat, and strong advocacy of a more liberal and humane EU asylum and immigration policy. In contrast, coverage in the United Kingdom was the most negative. Despite the presence of newspapers such as the Guardian and Daily Mirror, both of which were sympathetic to refugees, the right-wing press in the United Kingdom expressed a hostility towards refugees and migrants which was unique. (Berry and Garcia-Blanco, 2015:10).

In the Tuneva's report „Media Coverage of the Refugee Crisis in Macedonia“ it is emphasized that the refugee crisis in Macedonia during 2015 and its aftermath in 2016 significantly affected the country. It is noted that was a turbulent time for Macedonian society as the country simultaneously plunged into a deep political crisis.

This research focuses on a specific critical situation: the local aspect of the European refugee crisis, more precisely, on coverage of the crisis by the Macedonian media. Starting in June 2015, Macedonia became a key transit link for over 700,000 refugees and migrants who used the “Balkan route” in hopes of reaching countries in Western and Northern Europe (Tuneva, 2016:5). The 2015 refugee crisis posed an additional challenge to the media, and coverage of this issue revealed significant differences in approach. In recent years, journalism in the Republic of Macedonia has suffered an unprecedented credibility crisis (Tuneva, 2016:2).

Also many international reports have criticized the media situation in the country, pointing out the low level of media integrity and political influences over the media (Freedom in the World, 2016). For example, the Reporters without Borders 2016 ranking highlights a worrying situation by placing Macedonia in 118th place on the World Press Freedom Index (Reporters without borders, 2016).

Discrimination

In the broadest sense, the word discrimination means „making differences“. There are many definitions of discrimination, but the essence is that any unjustified and different treatment of a person or group that is in the same or similar situation constitutes discrimination. It can happen to anyone, everywhere and anytime.

According to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia enacted in 2010, „discrimination is any unjustified legal or factual, direct or indirect discrimination or unequal treatment, i.e. omission (exclusion, restriction marginalized group, ethnicity, language, citizenship, social origin, religion or religious belief, education, political affiliation, personal or social status, mental and physical disability, age, family or marital status, property status, health status or any other basis. „According to this Law“, discriminatory behavior and treatment is any active or passive behavior of any person by public authorities, as well as by public and private individuals and individuals in the public life, which creates grounds for privilege or deprivation of a person in an unjustified way, or which exposes it to an unjust and degrading relationship in comparison with others persons in a similar situation, based on any of the discriminatory grounds“.

In the Western Balkans region discrimination is similarly defined in the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which entered into force in August 2009. For the purpose of comparison we are presenting its full definition in the following lines. Under the mentioned Law, discrimination means „any different treatment, including any exclusion, limitation or privilege based on real or assumed grounds towards any person or group, based on their race, color, language, religion, ethnicity, national or social origin, connections with a national minority, political or other belief, wealth, union membership or other associations, education, social status and sex, gender expression or orientation, as well as any other circumstance whose purpose or effect is to prevent or threaten the recognition, possession or exercise of an equal basis, rights and freedoms in all areas of public life by any person“.

According to Dardić and Milojević, the basis of discrimination is made up of prejudices that reflect the belief that some people are less worthwhile and should be treated differently. Prejudice is a personal attitude or opinion about a person or for the group that is formed before getting to know the facts, without sufficient information and often based on stereotypes. The stereotype, in turn, is a carved and simplified belief for the individual or for the group, based on the idea that all individuals belonging to that group behave the same way (Dardić and Milojević, 2010: 11). It can be concluded that prejudice and stereotypes tend to be generalized and simplified and are not based on facts and logical reasoning.

The media can play an important role in publicizing the human-rights concerns of vulnerable groups, including refugees and migrants. During the Macedonian refugee crisis, the media had the capacity to publish and broadcast relevant, topical news while also reflecting on the actions of the government in the course of the crisis (Centre for Independent Journalism and Macedonian Institute for Media, Employment and Working Conditions for The Journalists in the Republic of

Macedonia, 2015: 13). This small study indicates that they fulfilled that role poorly. Media covered and interpreted the events in ways that revealed deep political divides within their ranks. Reports by outlets on one side of the divide could be seen as legitimising government policies and helping spread the message that refugees did not belong in the country.

According to Georgiou and Zaborowski refugees and migrants were given limited opportunities to speak directly of their experiences and suffering. Most often they were spoken about and represented in images as silent actors and victims. There were some significant exceptions, but these were time and place specific.

Marginalization

Recent experiences indicate that terminologically „marginalized groups“ are replaced by the term „socially excluded groups“ and as such are primarily found in the countries of the European Union. In fact, „for the first time, the European Commission mentions the term „exclusion“ in its 1988 document. The following year, the concept of social exclusion becomes an integral part of the Preamble of the European Social Charter and it was amended and revised in the Social Charter in 1996, when a new law - the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion - is introduced (Dardić and Milojević, 2010: 12).

In general terms, „to be excluded“ is considered to be left out of the mainstream and be excluded from the social, economic and political rights that are available to others, which enable a dignified and fulfilled life. There will be no detailed analysis of the concept of social exclusion in the paper, since theoreticians from different profiles are not aligned with the concept of social exclusion.

According to some authors, who believe that the dualistic concept is reduced to excluded and included, it does not allow to be somewhere „outside“ of the main streams and to build alternative subcultures in which people can also find their place, while according to other authors believe that the concept of social exclusion is too vague, ambiguous and vague and basically coincides with the usual notions of poverty, marginalism and discrimination.

According to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia enacted in 2010, „a marginalized group is a group of individuals that unites a specific position in the society, which is an object of prejudice that has special characteristics that make them suitable for certain types of violence, have less opportunity to exercise and protect their own rights or are exposed to an increased possibility of further victimization“.

„Marginalized groups“ are groups that are on the periphery, inviolable and shortened access to social, economic, political and cultural rights that are available to others. The marginalized groups include: elderly people, long-term unemployed, single-parent families, people with disabilities, foreigners, racial and ethnic minorities, poor women, children and youth, war veterans, refugees and returnees, people with severe diseases, homeless religious groups“ (Dardić and Milojević, 2010:13).

Of course, these groups do not make up the full list, because each of us at some point can be found on the margins of a society without the opportunity to fulfill its legally guaranteed rights, but still can serve as a „benchmark“ and how to we are focusing on the challenges posed to journalists, as the embodiment of the media „installation“ and of this issue.

Notably, one of the most common mistakes in the media coverage was to conflate the terms “migrant” and “refugee”, with little effort paid to distinguishing between them. One interviewee put it this way: „We say ‘refugees’ when we mean people fleeing war or persecution across an international border. And we say ‘migrants’ when we mean people moving for reasons not included in the legal definition of a refugee. We hope that others will give thought to doing the same (Tuneva, 2016:13)“.

Press coverage that promoted hate speech and hostility towards migrants and refugees was systematic and persistent in a proportion of the press. This was especially the case in some parts of Eastern Europe (esp. Hungary), throughout “the crisis” and in a significant section of some countries’ right-leaning press in the East and West Europe alike (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017:3).

Social responsibility of journalists when reporting on marginalized social groups

In Socialist Yugoslavia, a journalist was understood to be a „social-political worker“. Of course, from today’s point of view this conclusion for the profession of journalist is completely unjustifiably stigmatized, as a relic of the totalitarian past, because unfortunately we have a tendency to judge everything unilaterally, simplified and stereotypically. The next dimension to the former definition is actually the emphasis on the „social responsibility“ of journalistic engagement.

Journalism is a profession, but there is also a social-public engagement that itself entails great responsibility for which, unfortunately, sometimes many journalists are not aware. Socially responsible journalism can be compared to the socially responsible operation of a company. It is logical that a company is struggling for profit, but it does not have the right to increase its profits to endanger the environment. If someone wants to profit and earn extra money, if he poisons the river or pollutes the air, he must be punished.

Also, the media have no right to increase the circulation through „public space pollution“: the spread of hatred, intolerance, stigmatization or embarrassment of individuals or social groups. Journalists and the media have no right to violate human rights of their interlocutors or journalistic stories, expose them or embarrass them.

It is impossible to ignore the role of the mass media in influencing public and elite political attitudes towards asylum and migration. The mass media can set agendas and frame debates. They provide the information which citizens use to make sense of the world and their place within it. Research in many countries has found that refugees and migrants have tended to be

framed negatively as a problem, rather than a benefit to host societies. However it also true that, on occasion, media can have positive impacts on public attitudes and policy. The front pages of newspapers across the world have been dominated by images of a drowned three year-old Syrian boy, washed up on a beach in Turkey after his family's attempt to reach Greece ended in tragedy (Berry and Garcia-Blanco, 2015:5).

Myria Georgiou and Rafal Zaborowski in the report *Media coverage of the "refugee crisis"* (Georgiou, 2017:10) emphasize that the most notably, refugees were predominantly described in the press as nationals of a certain country (62% of articles in the sample). Only 35% of articles distinguished between men and women among the refugees and less than a third of articles referred to the refugees as people of a specific age group. Strikingly, only 16% of articles included the names of refugees and as little as 7% included their professions. This report represents an entry-point to European media coverage of the "crisis", especially as this was formed during the peak of the events, in 2015 (Summer – Winter 2015). The report offers a cross-European perspective and insight.

Overall, it is emphasized that women were rarely quoted and in descriptions of refugees in the articles, and men and children dominated the narrative. This all leads to a problematic narrative emerging from the media. There was much talk in the articles about the refugees and their reasons for seeking asylum in Europe. There was an emphasis on the consequences this has for European citizens (Georgiou, 2017:11).

„Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU“ report provides important insights into each country's press culture during a crucial period of agenda-setting for today's refugee and migrant crisis. It also offers invaluable insights into historical trends. The authors Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore stand out that media also differed widely in terms of the predominant themes to their coverage. For instance, humanitarian themes were more common in Italian coverage than in British, German or Spanish press. Threat themes (such as to the welfare system, or cultural threats) were the most prevalent in Italy, Spain and Britain. The Swedish press was the most positive towards refugees and migrants, while coverage in the United Kingdom was the most negative, and the most polarized. Amongst those countries surveyed, Britain's right-wing media was uniquely aggressively in its campaigns against refugees and migrants (Berry and Garcia-Blanco, 2015:2).

Conclusion

Analyzing the above mentioned, we can conclude that the role of the media, especially the journalist and the informant, is key to its objectivity, accuracy, or it will be at the level of speculation or misinformation. In this context, it can be concluded that when talking about the so-called marginalized groups, according to Dardić and Milojević, the media often additionally marginalize them in two ways. First, marginalized groups are invisible. If we watch a TV diary or a

prestigious political TV store or a well-established daily newspaper, it can be concluded that there are only healthy, elegant, vocal men aged 40 or 50 who live in black cars and who are presumed to be well-off.

From this it can be concluded that media and not only the media (because the media mirror the society, that is, the mirror of the distribution of power in the public space), many other individuals are marginalized: elderly, women, people with disabilities, refugees, returnees, poor, victims of crime, sick people, etc. So, besides them, the political elite and the elite of capital are less or less marginalized. Media in frequent situations is unfair to most of its viewers / listeners / readers.

The second type of marginalization is even more dangerous from the aspect of social sensitivity and solidarity towards marginalized groups, and this is a stereotypical and sensationalistic presentation of marginalized groups in the media. In fact, if they do not ignore them, the media often portrays the members of such groups as: meals, losers, unimportant characters, excluded from society, closed in predetermined roles (Dardić and Milojević, 2010: 19). For example, refugees are not talked enough or are shown as poor people.

The question arises as to which challenges the media creators face when they write or speak about marginalized groups. Of course, one should take into account the indicators that should be given serious attention in the future, such as: inattention, tabloidization, ignorance, lack of empathy and courage and unwillingness to cope with the challenges. Surely, it's much simpler and easier to set off from the perverse stereotypes than to try to „change“ in public opinion and thus encourage the audience to think.

Furthermore, starting from the „line of lower resistance“, it is easier to make a pathetic story about a fugitive than to read laws and conventions, to call the competent ones, to further gain knowledge of how the same problem is treated in other countries. In many situations, refugees as a marginalized group are being „installed“ medially through sensational and superficial texts or television stories that will attract the attention of the audience and sell a greater number of newspapers or increase visibility.

Also, very often incompetence of journalists, insufficient sensitivity, and ultimately their lack of interest may be the reasons for the refugee's problems not to be explored to the end or for them to take an attitude based on stereotypes.

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