Idealism and Partisanship in Today Romanian Press

Xenia Negrea
University of Craiova

Abstract

At the international level, the journalism is confronting an economic crisis, but also an identity crisis coming from the growth of the communication medium in the online area. A particularly estate is confronting the journalism from the countries that already experienced and overcame (at least, as they say) a dictatorship, and we are speaking about the East-European countries, about the communist regime, also about the Ceausescu's regime, in the Romanian case. We believe this implication mustn't be neglected. We believe that understanding journalism can't be accomplished outside this stage. At European level, this status of post communist journalism can bring into question the relationship between press organization and the political-economical system.

Keywords: Idealism, objectivity, militants, journalism, credibility

Introduction

The Romanian press, experienced during these 25 years after Revolution a kind of freedom close to the absolute form (during the first years after the Revolution), than, a sort of self-regulation by an insistent involvement of the Romanian Press Club, and now we can speak about an age of the dependency of the employers and/or politicians.

The idealism, through its absolute definition, is explained through the theory of the real formed by conscience, by a supraindividual conscience, by the spirit. This theory requires a valuing polarity, in which center there is the idea of freedom. In other words, the idealism, in classical meaning, let's say, means the primacy of spirit over the matter. But, postmodernity abolished the notion of absolute. George Edward Moore proposed the substitution of the word "ideal" with the phrase "common sense", phrase explained by truism. Truism means the views accepted by the majority of people. The idealism was assumed for a long time by the journalists (and in many cases it still is), but the ideals were replaced by missions, term that can signify apostolate.

The New and Unique Code of the Romanian journalists is centered on the idea of good faith, recommendation impossible to quantify.

Idealism *in actu*

However, through the FreeEx report, for example, there are some recommendations for the journalists impractical in today's newsrooms.

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The only recommendation that can and seems to work is related to solidarity: "make a common cause with the journalists in difficulty in the name of the professional principles and values, even when they are the competition. The guild will become stronger and more powerful when you fight together for your principles and rights, and not when you are caught in sterile political disputes".

Secondly, journalists are encouraged to assume others ethical codes, and, remember, we are after New Unique Code from 2009, and to create associative organizations. Journalists also must defend "their professional dignity by penalizing ethical slippages, including those found in their newsroom". Given the fact that most journalists are employed on fixed-term and copyrights, it is impossible to penalize any slippage of the employing institution without the danger of being fired".

The next recommendation refers to the relationship of journalists with the policy, recommending a distance from the politicians, because the reverse would be "compromised the credibility". Regarding this principle, Romanian press recently suffered a pretty significant blow when the Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta said in front of several reporters that he doesn't believe what appears in the press. His words never appeared in any media institution.

In Romania, the press is not only close to the political area, but often there are reasonable grounds for regarding financial relations between the two areas. In the past few years, justice has revealed a series of economic relations between those two areas, and many media owners were arrested, in that context not lacking political interference.

List of media owners behind bars[1]

Adrian Sarbu, owner of the Mediafax Agency, Gandul and founder of Pro TV, was arrested on February 5 on charges of tax evasion, money laundering and embezzlement. He confessed that he was visited by Prime Minister Victor Ponta who asks Sirbu to promote him. So, the prime-minister was invited to perform on a dancing show with his wife.

Dan Adamescu, Romania Libera newspaper owner, was in custody nearly three months (June-August 2014), in a case that has already received a first instance sentence of 4 years and 4 months with execution being accused of bribing judges to achieve favorable solutions to its insolvent firms.

1 http://www.romaniacurata.ro/presa-romana-condusa-din-puscarie-lista-neagra-a-patronilor-care-au-ajuns-dupa-gratii/

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Dan Voiculescu, businessman, politician, founder of Intact (Antena 1, Antena 3, Jurnalul National, Sports Gazette, Radio ZU, Romantic FM) expiates, from August 2014 a 10-year prison sentence received for fraudulent privatization of the Institute for Food Research. Dan Voiculescu's influence in Intact is exercised by his two daughters having the status of major shareholders.

Maricel Păcuraru, businessman, politician, one of the indirect shareholders at Realitatea TV, is incarcerated in prison, after being sentenced in November 2014 to four years in prison in the case Romanian Post for illegalities in concluding insurance policies for employees Post. Since he is in prison, Realitatea TV has launched a massive campaign against the heads of prisons.

Sorin Ovidiu Vîntu, former owner of Realitatea TV, which has spent more than a year behind bars in two criminal cases. He was paroled in November 2014, but has received two recent convictions in cases FNI and Petromservice, but they are not definitive.

Sorin Roşca Stănescu, creator of several publications (now disappeared) and politician. SRS was sentenced in October 2014 to two years and four months in prison in the Rompetrol case. He writes blog regularly, he is very present on some sites.

Dan Diaconescu, OTV owner and leader of the PP-DD. In 2010, he was in custody for several days in a case of blackmail and now he is arrested.

Aristotel Căncescu, the suspended president of the Brasov County Council, he is in custody since October 2014. He was indicted for corruption in connection with the arrangement of public money auctions. Căncescu Aristotle holds with his brother, Antonin Viorel Căncescu, two televisions in Brasov - Mix and Mix TV 2 TV Brasov plus TVF (Fagaras) and Super FM radio (Brasov and Predeal), Radio Super FM (Fagaras), Radio Brasov, Brasov Mountain Radio, Radio Special Brasov, Brasov thy Mix 3.

Neptun TV, television already issuing national, has as founders the mayor of Constanta, Radu Mazare and President CJ Constanta, Nicuşor Constantinescu. The two were detained during all of 2014 for committing corruption offenses and later released. Moreover, the current shareholder of television, Sorin Strutinsky considered the right hand of Mazare – Constantinescu couple, is behind bars, being preventively arrested on February 5, in a case of influence peddling and money laundering.

Nicolae Dumitru or NIRO, his name was floated as one of the founders B1 TV station, but officially he has only the journal Balkans and Europe. He was in custody during the period October 2014-January 2015 being investigated in the Microsoft folder.

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Adrian Duicu, President of Mehedinti County Council, controls two local television Karisma TV and TV2, through which he was blackmailing various people, as advocated by DNA. Duicu was in custody during the period April to October 2014, he was indicted by DNA for several corruption offenses.

TV channel 1 TV Bacau is owned by businessman Liviu Goian (Vice-President of PNL Bacau). He spent two months in custody during 2014, along with the Mayor of Bacau Romeo Stavarache, both being trialed in a corruption case. Television is used to advertise mayor Romeo Stavatache.

Litoral TV (LTV) of Năvodari, is owned by SC TV Vision Media East Ltd., the sole shareholder Geanina Ramona County, stewardesses and degree III relative of Năvodari Mayor Nicholas Matthew (PSD). For the same media group also includes FM radio and Gazette Năvodari Coast. Job Manager is the unofficial mayor Nicolae Matei, which supplies television with public money. The mayor is in custody in September 2014 DNA being investigated for abuse of office.

The next recommendation is not to confuse partisanship with individual ideological options. Journalists should, according to the same report, to define "firmly" the editorial interference and pressures and expose them to the public, and in case of conflict with the newsroom, the journalist is free to invoke "conscience clause". Journalists should protect their credibility by refusing any compromise, not to tolerate employers abuse and inform the media organizations when the journalist is the victim of employers. We believe these recommendations as purely idealistic extraction.

In recent years the press was propaganda technique for politicians. For example, Mircea Diaconu politician (former Minister of Culture and former parliamentarian PNL) candidate in elections to the European Parliament as an independent received the support of Antena 3 news channel who has strongly promoted the candidacy, including pre-election period when he had to gather the 100,000 signatures necessary to register in the electoral race.

The politician Dan Diaconescu, founder of the People's Party - Dan Diaconescu, former owner of OTV and former star of this channel has restarted its activity on TV news channel Romania, where she received a space for broadcasting his show. Diaconescu used insistent editorial space to promote his candidacy in the presidential elections in November. Among other things, he organized a competition to collect signatures for his candidacy, offering to exchange positions in intelligence, judiciary, embassies, consulates, when won the election.

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The press is the tool in the fight between the candidates

Manipulation practiced by Antena 3 channel at University Square protests of 2012 was confirmed in 2014 inside the TV. A former cameraman, Vlad Ilaş, reported in an article on his own blog personal42 as was asked by the editorial makers not to film a banner reading "USL PDL & same misery" because "we cannot give something post". Protests from January 2012 where presented by news channels Antena 3 and Romania TV as against the President Traian Basescu and PD-L, although their message was directed against the entire political class. "Short, without explanation, the protest against the political class was presented elegant as a protest against Traian Basescu" as cameraman Vlad Ilaş says 43

PNL president Crin Antonescu said he fears "lynching Antena 3" if his party would leave the USL alliance, made up of PSD, PNL and PC. The politician has hinted that television is controlled as a tool of manipulation. "I'm afraid of lynching trust Antena 3, but I was lynched in 2009 and of your post, the major newspapers and Evenimentul Zilei... Not to change a decision if it upsets Antena 3... "

In many cases, local televisions are weapons of political struggle, often sponsored by public money, according to the study "Political Map of Local Televisions" that ActiveWatch launched in January 2014. Research is accompanied by an interactive map and based on documentation which included 56 local television stations in 15 counties and approximately 200 interviews and discussions with journalists, editors, managers, producers, local television owners, politicians, representatives of political parties and local authorities and experts media.

As the research revealed almost half of the 56 stations included in the survey are directly or indirectly influenced by politicians. Moreover, almost half of these televisions could be documented as direct beneficiaries of sponsorships from public money, but, most likely, their number is much higher.

As Alina Mungiu-Pipidi shows, the press in Romania and the Western Balkans is "captive", built on the business model of trading in influence and not profit from sales and media sources of funding that should be known. Also, the journalist cannot count on any organization to support him in the event of termination under pressure. If there is such an organization it is quite timid, lacking enough power so that more of a declarative solidarity cannot be long term.

> As Sandrine Boudana (2011) considered, objectivity is "doomed to failure and dismissed as an unattainable standard". Although its reason signifies facts, the journalism is controlled by abstract, idealistic terms: truth, objectivity, freedom and good faith (in Romania). Beyond that, there is the patronage, there is the political interest materialized in controlling state institutions. The financial resources of media came from employers engaged in politics and business area. In fact, it isn't known the exact sources of finance in the Romanian press.

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Respect for facts and objectivity have long been rules, requirements, even ideals of journalism. (Van Dijk, 1988; White, 1998). Postmodernism has overturned these professional imperatives and showed that it is impossible to know the reality and presenting it objectively. Truth claim of journalism was replaced by acceptance of relativity, subjectivity, construction (Zelizer, 2004).

Seduction. The New Professional Requirement

In Romania, journalism as a profession is far from being established by a job description. In newsrooms journalists aren't conditioned to have specialized studies and, especially, only a small proportion are legally employed.

The audience remains the currency of the press, and maintaining and enhancing it are the main objectives of most media organizations. The techniques for seducing the public are entertainment and conflict.

The Liberal deputy Mihaita Calimente, was kicked out of the studio Antena 3 where he participated as a guest at an election debate broadcast live. The topic of discussion was the refusal of the Liberal candidate, Klaus Iohanis, to take part in some debates. Calimente explained that the moderators aren`t very qualified. For this reason, the politician was invited to leave the studio by the journalist Razvan Dumitrescu. We present the last part of the dialogue between them.

Calimente: If you show me any moderator in the West that mocks a guest ...

Dumitrescu: Please immediately leave the plateau!

Calimente ... and pours buckets of sides in the head.

Dumitrescu: Now, at this moment, please leave the plateau! You bring accusations unfounded

A few months earlier, the deputy had been fired at TV studio Romania too. The host Andreea Cretulescu reproached that he did not respect the role of moderator and spoke when nobody asked him a question. "I learned from my grandmother when I walk in someone else's house to respect the house rules", said Creţulescu. "Yes, but when the host does not respect you, you do not like it," replied Liberal MP, after which journalist threw him out.

Online media carries a real fighter hits. Readers are lured with rhetorical interrogations, with false promises of information with titles that do not reflect material information in itself.

Contemporary press diseases were more visible in 2014, as it was also election year, dedicated to the presidential election. The new objectives and, consequently, new procedures have made the trust in the media to fall very much, so often, credibility lost relevance in favour of seduction.

FreeEx the 2014-2015 report shows that 52% of Romanian press is "rather dependent or dependent". A Romanian in five believes in a free press ("completely independent" or "rather independent"), and 24% believe that the media "is neither independent nor dependent".

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In 2014, Romania ranked 52 in the annual international ranking on press freedom by the organization Reporters without Borders, declining seven places from the previous year (when ranked 45).

Since January 2014, no less than 400 journalists have signed an open letter that spoke about "degrading practices" in the press. The signatories said they were "united in our desire to practice their profession with maximum responsibility to truth and public interest, in good faith and with respect for ethics. Beyond the political and ideological beliefs, we believe that journalistic standard, correct information and the public good to be defended and around these values we must live in solidarity". In the following paragraphs, however, one trust is exposed, although sociological studies have shown a clear bias of the media in recent years: "We say bluntly that are responsible for the most serious shortfalls are few journalists from Intact, especially in Antena 3". All the more surprising is the choice ActiveWatch to consider them responsible journalists not to open discussion about the relationship between employers and employees, respectively journalist.

Conclusions

An interesting and unique perspective was launched by Harald Hornmoen & Steen Steensen (2014). The two researchers have noticed that by introducing the interview as a type of journalistic discourse, there has been a profound shift "Significant move from one perspective journalism made to a dialogical communication". A similar mutation occurs today, by developing participatory journalism, communication through the transition from one-to-many communication type many-to-many. Consumers and producers of information-are actors with interchangeable positions. The new media landscape is called "news ecosystem" (Anderson 2010), "networked journalism" (Beckett and Mansell 2008) and "ambient journalism" (Hermida 2010), which is built on dialogue, that is "a journalistic ideal not only more important, but Also more complex". Having multiple voices with equal functionality, there is a ritual for objectifying the text but should define the very existence of journalistic text.

Although journalism signifies the concrete, e.g. facts, it is officially self-regulating through abstract, idealistic words: truth, objectivity, freedom and good faith (in Romania). Beyond that there is the patronage, political interest materialized in controlling state institutions. And the financial resources of media came from an employer engaged in politics and business. In fact, we do not know the exact sources of finance in the Romanian press.

Respect for facts and objectivity have long been rules, requirements, even ideals of journalism. (Van Dijk, 1988). Postmodernism has overturned these professional imperatives and showed that it is impossible to know and present the reality it detached mainly objective. Truth claimed by journalism was replaced by acceptance of relativity, of subjectivity, construction (Zelizer,

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2004). The media was removed from the notion of truth and accepted a meaning need (Patterson and Wilkins, 2005).

The Romanian journalist of the XXI century hasn't to face only the challenges of technology. The main problem was the identity crisis that comes after the revolution in 1989. Facing an employer free to dismiss any way he wants, being invited, in case of conflict, to address to the professional organizations, bounded by a contract with limited period, the journalist will not be able to support a battle in which only he will loss. Maintaining the idealism of self-regulation and of credibility, amid dilution of the hard concept of "journalism", it will not generate a space of information, but only a show.

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