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LOCAL AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN THE REGIONAL PRESS

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Abstract

The study assesses the way the mission of Europeanization is assumed by the press. From this perspective, it is shown that the media has an educational role, even one of emancipation, transgressing the absolute expectation of informing. The study proposes a re-interpretation of the social involvement of journalism, recognizing a pertinent role in setting up the civic and mentality values at local and regional levels. The speech of the online written press was monitored with precise reference to the most important publications in two regions: Oltenia (Romania) and Valencia (Spain).

We understood the journalistic texts as interpretation actions that generate meaning for a community. The thematic fields circumscribing the key terminology were analyzed, texts were evaluated in terms of perspective and of socio-emotional proximity graphics and we have demonstrated the need of subsuming of so-called 'European journalism' with the more complex 'social journalism'.

Keywords: journalistic roles; proximity; social journalism; European Union; identity.

Introduction

In our study, we aimed to follow the way in which the proximity press takes over and communicates to the public the fundamental ideas of integration of the society in the frame of the European structures. We relied on and tried to nuance the theory formulated by Clifford G. Christian, Theodore L. Glasser, Denis McQuail, Kaaerle Nordenstreng and Robert A. White (2009). They continued and updated the theory created by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press* (1956), the only paper (up to 2009) which systemize the media's role in society.

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Beyond the witticism that journalism is a central actant in society, in general, and in democracy, in particular, both the study of 1956 and the one of 2009 attempted (and succeeded) to systematize de facto the assumed role of the media in society.

The 1956 study started from the premise that the press takes the features of the society and of political structures in which context it operates. Therefore, Siebert, Peterson and Schramm were detected as main models of the media: the authoritarian, liberal, social responsibility and the communist model. From 1956 to 2009 there were several attempts to update the description of the role of the media in society, but there were no fundamental changes.

The 2009 study no longer refers to totalitarian societies, but focuses instead on professional consciousness assumed or required by journalists and describes patterns of the media in a democratic society exclusively. The four roles identified by the Clifford G. Christian group are: monitoring, facilitating, the role of radicalization and the role of collaboration.

Monitoring covers the exploratory character of the press and selects its information depending on newsworthiness. Facilitating assumes that the media reflects the political order in which it exists and provides the transfer of information from the State to the people by encouraging the public debate. The role of radicalization implies an oppositive status of the journalists in front of the Establishment, the latter being seen as an obstacle to the smooth flow of information. The attitude of the journalists is inflexible, repetitive, monothematic, in support of minorities, marginalized people. The collaborative role requires a partnership between the state and the press in the name of public interest.

Researchers establish two types of agreement: pragmatic and normative. The pragmatic agreement is set according to what is already known, and the normative agreement is given by what should (need) be known. In both cases, the journalist assesses the situation as being right and fair. Clifford G. Christian & all. consider that this type of press - establishment relations appears in the systems living in transition. From this perspective, the media will have an active role in society, in the implementation of new forms of organization and development.

We identify the journalism that has a collaborative role as an example of what is called 'development journalism' (Banda, 2007). Covering the 'independent journalism containing constructive criticism of the government and its agencies', this concept appeared in the 60s informs readers about how they are affected by the process and support (highlighted) projects' (Christian & all, 2009; Shah, 1996). Emancipatory journalism, as this kind of journalism is called (Shiraz, 2010), assumes that there is 'a link between the access of the citizen to the media and social changes'. In terms of scripted reporting of the journalist to reality, we believe this kind of journalism corresponds to

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what Fisher (1984) calls 'the paradigm of rational world'. It is built on logic and reasoning and excludes the average man. Saying what must be said, the journalist assumes a role that is not only informational, but also one paideic, similar to a didactical one. This civic movement of journalism involves the idea of participation of the community members, but also of the readers (Perry, 2003; Salcudean, 2015).

In the digital age, the professional in information has become the professional of the sense, of the comprehension, while the public means citizens that should not only learn, but must understand and action towards a way validated by the journalist. Assuming the role of collaboration, of emancipation, the civic journalist not only delivers public messages, messages from the citizens to politicians, but also acts in reverse. The journalist will coordinate institutional information they consider useful to the citizen-public. Positioned between the public institutions and the citizens, the journalist is not only actively involved in disseminating messages, but also in their implementation in both directions. This involvement supposes an explanatory, argumentative, and indignation speech, (Wolton, 1997), so it means reaction. Through this kind of involvement (active, not as mere receivers) readers / recipients / citizens appropriates the essential message of the publication. From this perspective, the re-building community, the civism and emancipation can be an answer even to the tabloidization.

Also, we relied on Brown and Yule's theory (1983) of the difference between the transactional view and the interactional view, because we understand the journalistic text as a perpetual tension between information and interpretation. We found useful Angela Phillips' theory (2007) of the archetypes, considering it a step forward from the Greimasian model. In her study, Phillips considers the mediatic contemporary coreferences and describes five archetypes that are active in the press. We found also very interesting Barbara Johnstone and Justin Mando's (2015: 95) theory, according to which the geographical proximity can be a local limit.

CASE STUDY: TWO PUBLICATIONS – GAZETA DE SUD (SOUTHERN ROMANIA) AND LEVANTE-EMV (VALENCIA, SPAIN)

We have chosen these two publications for many reasons. First of all, they are very important regional newspapers, with a very high level of credibility. Then, Valencia is a very important place for the Romanian immigrations – in 2015 there were 130,000 Romanians in Valencia. Related to this, the Spanish press is an example for the Romanian journalists (according to their statements). The historical moment, as part of discursive context, is the year of 2011. At that time, Romania was redefining itself after the economic crisis (the end of the recession was announced), and Spain was questioning

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its own administrative identity. Because of the social turbulences, as a surprise, during the research to find the corpus, we also kept for comparison the articles from 2009. In the Romanian newspaper, the pro-European attitude was unchanged, but we have found some changes in the Spanish one.

Gazeta de Sud has a daily readership of over 200,000 and an average circulation of 18,441 copies (brat.ro). The publication is distributed in Oltenia (southern Romania), covers all areas of daily generalist specific editorial quality and takes a radical role in the declaration of principles.

We have chosen as a comparison with the leftist publication, Levante-EMV, the most important Valencia daily newspaper, which displays a pro-European option. In 2011, the publication announced a readership of 285,100, with 143,300 readers more than Las Provincias, its most important rival.

We manually selected 75 articles from May, 2011, and precisely those materials containing not only a formal, official reference to the Europe/European Union, but also consistent and pertinent ones, with a clear link between Europe and region. We found only two opinion articles, one interview, and 73 short news.

However, concerning the European information flow, Gazeta de Sud plays an unreported collaborative and acceptance role, by regulatory agreement, and practices a journalism of emancipation. Quantitatively, we see that t5here is at least one item on the European Union in every edition. All this information is treated in the stylistic matrix news, as a univocal communication.

As general characteristics of the journalistic discourse, in the present case we are discerning two invariables: the words 'European Union' operates as an absolute rating scale, and the materials, in their overwhelming majority, are not signed. The information is only the flow processing received from news agency. The journalist takes the information and distributes it to the reader. Trademarks of transformation archetype (Phillips, 2007) emerge in the journalistic discourse: assimilation is the reward that citizens will receive if they comply with the European training regime.

The topic poles are: the European Union (sometimes denominated by the more expressive metonymy 'Europe') and Romania. Local references appear either as an illustration of macropolitics or inside of some specific economic events. In the segment monitored by us the idea of Euroregion does not appear, and the issue of local identity is absent. Integration occurs as a one-way process, built on the tenets and practices of inclusion and not on dialogue or negotiation. According to this logic, local actions, for example, (irrespective of the initiator) are evaluated exclusively by the European grid.

An important aspect is the (implied) reinterpretation of the journalistic law of proximity. Thus, in terms of material selection, the proximity law is changing, so that the news on the European Union is not valued and presented as 'foreign news' and thus

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operated in the exotic key, originality, logic solidarity, etc., but it is included in categories also containing 'internal' news (national, regional, local): 'news', 'economy', 'Short news', etc.

Two main behavioural discursive directions can be detected in terms of reporting Romania (Dolj) to the European Union, with unequivocal antithetical structures as a result: the absolutization of the Europeanized idea and the exclusively negative evaluation of the local management's structures. There is a kind of comparative ritual reference within which localism swings widely between blocs of superlative superiority and inferiority (see Tabel 1). Only through such (evaluative) blocs can some identity implied marks be detected.

Superiority	Inferiority
→ It is the most important unit of the petrochemical industry in Romania, the leader in Central Europe (GDS, 2011)	→ Among Member States the highest decline was recorded in Romania (minus 43.7%) (GDS, 2011)
→ Polovragi Monastery and Olteț Keys, some of the most spectacular in Europe (Flororiu, 2011)	→ Romania has an absorption rate of European funds only 7% in 2007-2010, which ranks her last in Central and Eastern Europe (GDS, 2011)
→ Twenty Romanian invention that could be revolutionary (GDS, 2011)	→ income of population is much lower than in the EU (Olaru, 2011)
→ imported gas to mix with the internal and the result is a unit price, state regulated by ANRE, much cheaper than in Europe (Olaru, 2011)	→ Romania is ranked last in European Union (EU) in terms of investment in research and development of new drugs (GDS, 2011)
	→ among Member States the largest decline was recorded in Romania (minus 43.7%) (GDS, 2011)
	→ Romania maintained the first position in the EU judging by inflation (GDS, 2011)
	→ Romania's champion submitting projects, but actual laggard attract European money (GDS, 2011)

[Tabel 1]

Economically and administratively, the two terms of the relationship we investigated describe the same unequivocal report: Europe is the financial source and absolute model

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of organization and Romania (and, implicitly, the region to which we refer) is the material to be moulded by structure default. From this perspective, lending and absorption of European funds is an eliminatory test which must support any of the main political and economic actors. Amid compared predefined ratio - higher - lower - Romanian side (local / national) is shown also by the attitude of disciples.

Politicians are invariably described as subjects who must systematically report how they access and manage the magical helper (European financial aid). The composite-sketch which journalists outline for politicians finds its legitimacy in the decisions made in Brussels. The inferiority report determined strictly on economic and financial principles transforms the European model in a prerequisite assessment of a standard of living.

The European model is not working as a landmark, but as the measure of all things. In terms of cultural identity, the newspaper presents events that betray regional complexes. Integration is taken in the paradoxical. In the same area of non-critical assimilation lies also the news / stories covering events occasioned by Europe Day. The only published materials cover teaching activities organized by the county library. All articles are subsumed to news discourse, except one explanatory feature (Metzler, 1986).

Concerning the foundation and continuity of the model, young people can apply to get scholarships to thwe European Parliament (Bătrînca, 2011). Incidentally, in the period under review there is only one material in which the citizen is present. It is a interview conducted by Anca Ungurenuş (2011), 'What does Europe offer?': the material shows what a couple of young people know about integration in the European Union. Opinions, mostly favourable, are formulated around the freedom of movement.

From **Levante-EMV** we manually selected 89 articles, 40 from 2009, and 49 from 2011. All the articles are ample, in an argumentative and explanatory frame. Following the media archetypes theory created by Angela Phillips, romance is the archetypal image that the publication builds to deliver to the public about the Europe idea, in other words the happy solutions archetype (Phillips, 2007). In this publication Europe is built as ubiquitous, saviour, protective authority, the key to a happy end of the crisis.

When it comes to the status of Spain in the European Union, journalists seek to consolidate a balanced position. Unlike the Romanian press, which is prisoner of national inferiority complexes, Spanish journalists meticulously build the image of Spain seen as partner and not a problem for the other European countries, as the Romanians do for Romania. We find a globalizing integration, not an isolationist vision (see Tabel 2).

2009	2011

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Europe is a central theme	Europe is the background theme
Articles that fights for the Valencian traditions	Subjects with serious social implications (education, health, social security, unemployment)
Europe demands / oblige / disallow	Europe fears

[Tabel 2]

Everything that is important benefits of a history, of a guide to understanding. In 2009, for example, the publication offered a brief history of the EU to understand why this construction - which is at the moment in crisis - was achieved (L-EMV). A context is created on which a solid viable reason can be build. Though Francesc Romeu's signature the European theme enters in political disputes and anti-European political leaders are evaluated negatively by their choice. The tone is very harsh, vehement and the editor goes even further and suggests a causal relationship between the ideology of the Spanish right, anti-European, and economic and financial crisis.

Pro- and anti-European guidelines are evaluated as right / wrong according to the militant rhetoric and propaganda requirements. European values are overrated and related to the Spanish left. Freedom, tolerance, respect, pluralism, etc. can be implemented only by the left. Moreover, the publication develops a column entitled 'Juntos' (Together) echoing the assertion of omnipresence EU.

An evident balance appears in 2011, the year of restoration, as we call it. The articles are mostly rhetorical interrogative, and as structural-discursive schemas we remark the insistence of quoting and massive lending figures. In the content there is a clear shift towards social stake articles (education, health etc.) - almost non-existent in 2009. Now, the journalist is de facto the citizens' spokesman. This orientation to social topics is assumed in the news announcing that Levante-EMV journalist Ramon Ferrando's efforts were rewarded with a prize for freedom of expression. Commenting on the award, columnist Julio Monreal (2011) links freedom of expression and citizens' freedom and opposes them to the establishment's propaganda.

In Spain, now there are large street demonstrations, and the publication strikes a didactic exhibition accent. The reports published have wide features - but without pathos, and, above all, the newspaper develop a new guide, this time to explain events as done in downgrading the crisis. Also, if in 2009 we detected emotional, even noticeable emotive nuances, in 2011 the publication takes more visible mission to calm the population. The major themes are unemployment and social security. These are contextualized positively, constructively. Wider news or materials contains solutions (creating jobs, new policies in the area of social security), proposals or even open horizons of expectation. Almost every edition records economic successes (involving the status of European country). Moreover, in the same frame of Europeanist references, there is now

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fear of contagion from Greece and an irrepressible need of comparison between Spain and Portugal. Europe still appears as a protector, auditor, and supreme authority.

DISCUSSIONS

The media creates European proximity, with its discursive tools. In Gazeta de Sud, all the European references are positive, if not superlative, with not a single pejorative reference.. Romanian journalists use appreciative, weighted and axiological signs in a descriptive frame. The Spanish publication also refers positively to the European Union, with more affective and opinion items, but using an argumentative frame. Both publications use an intrinsic subjectivity.

In the Romanian press the journalist is a severe and conformist teacher, concerned about the apparent discipline. The Spanish journalist is seeking a balance at least at the rhetorical level, prioritising the economic and the social fields. Furthermore, if the Romanian press is equal to itself in the kind of attitude described, in the Spanish one change has been noticed in the sense of moderating at a praxemic level.

The Romanian journalist filters everything through the lens of politics, while the Spanish journalist does it through the economic one. 90% of the Spanish materials on the European Union topic are positive: it will solve or should solve a community problem. In the case of the Romanian materials, the similar percentage include political interference and negative isolationist self evaluation. In Romania, identity is a source of insecurity and media should guide communities through integration. In Spain, the sources of insecurity are the social policies of the Government, a similar status among the European countries, as it is shown by journalists. They understand to advocate for change together with the public, not only regionally but also at national and European levels (S1).

Identity issues have a peripheral presence in the context of the materials on the theme / supra-theme 'Europe'. Valuing local specificity exclusively through the marks of inferiority, or, conversely, by growing similarities, all these media topics describe the mechanism of acceptance of a supra-identity communicated unequivocally and the regional (social) journalist becomes a guide and a partner for his audience, by establishing a European media teaching, and thus building a behavioural and informational community (S2). Using Barbara Johnstone and Justin Mando's (2015: 90) findings, we can say the Romanian newspaper has the behaviour of a local publication because of its describing articles, while for its analytical perspective the Spanish newspaper is a regional publication. We find that the geographical proximity is indeed a limit, not for the outside, but for the inside. The outside is the solutions; the inside is the problem, in both cases.

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Regional problems call for European solutions. Theses European solutions call for a European community. The anaphoric presence /Europe/ and the coreference /saviour/ produce the meaning for this intentional discursive universe.

CONCLUSIONS

Sociological research shows that significant social changes have automatically generated extensive debate around themes of identity (Rusu, 2008), amid the new introduced ways at the social level. We discover, however, the local media engaged in the emancipation journalism, assuming the role of importer of new meanings that legitimize on the cognitive map of the recipient the administrative and economic mechanisms that change (reforming) society / community.

Numerous interventions and scientific studies on the process of integration convey a tension between the need for affirmation of identity (individual, local, national) and the need to respond to the imperative of integration. In the cases we have chosen, it appeared that this tension does not exist and that, at present, at least in economic-administrative and hence low mass communication, the official meaning leads exclusively and smoothly to the insertion of the community into the European matrix. We saw that the press gives a transactional view (Brown, Yule, 1983), through its concern for meaning. Speaking on the topic (Brown, Yule, 1983), the press creates the frame for the insertion of the dramatic strategies to catching the public's attention. Using presuppositions and the tensions from antithetical and argumentative structures, the press builds a true discursive community. Through its role to set the agora's agenda and to draw the main speech orientations, the press writes and directs the topic of public interest which is invested with the attribute of timeliness or of anachronism. Through its explanatory valences, the press monitors the assimilation flow of the social changes produced (in our case) by the enlargement of the EU.

ABBREVIATIONS:

BRAT = Romanian Audit Bureau Transmedia

GDS = www.gds.ro (Gazeta de Sud [Southern Gazette])

L-EMV = www.levante-EMV.com

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Appendix. Newspaper articles analyzed

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