

Media in a globalizing world: adjusting to a new communication paradigm

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The XX century was the time of great technological modernization. Nowadays the change has taken an incredible turnaround. Not only have new technologies influenced the speed and value of communication, but also our way of thinking was changed. We live in a globalizing world in an informational society, within a rapidly changing communication paradigm, where information and knowledge gain a great value and literally become a new form of commodity. A globalized world seems to be a place, where information and communication face no barriers.

The term “globalization” is widely used and very popular in the scientific discourse. Despite that the one and only definition does not seem to exist. The reason for that may be in the fact, that the process of globalization includes changes in various spheres of our life, so the experts view and define it on the grounds of different aspects and specializations [1].

A distinguished British sociologist Anthony Giddens defines globalization as “the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” [2].

The summary of the most popular definitions of globalization would contain the prevailing role of the communication and new technologies and the emergence of the new virtual reality, in which distance means nothing.

At the same time it should be pointed out, that globalization has not reached all the parts of our world. There are still some blank spots on the map of the technological progress. For example, in relation to that idea Anabelle Sreberny mentions Doreen Massey who paid attention to the fact, that “the white businessman in a jumbo jet experiences globalization differently from the old West Indian woman waiting for the bus on a South London high street whom he overflies” [3].

Whereas the main features of globalization are open markets promising economic and financial benefits to the states and companies, the media also plays a crucial role in the distribution of globalization, especially in the times of transnational media corporations spreading all over the world and creating sort of a virtual borderless space.

The concept of the globalization causing the changes in the media was also supported by Andrew Chadwick in his book “The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power”, in which he states, that the process of global change in politics and media has created the “hybrid media systems” [4].

Currently there are two approaches to determine the globalization of media. Proponents of the first approach argue that globalization is not a new process, which has started with the emergence of computers and the Internet. According to this approach, globalization has existed through the history of mankind. Another position is based on the opinion, that globalization can be defined as an urge of the world to establish and maintain a common and open system of financial, economic, social, political and cultural relations. That ideal system is meant to be based on communication and information technologies.

Socio-political discourse in the XXI century has moved to an alternative media space of a network structure. This structure allows involving a mass audience in the discussion of the political problems, free commenting and setting the agenda.

Social and political topics have greatly contributed to the expansion of media space, which involved an unprecedented merge of communication practices of journalism, public relations and advertising. In the new era of relations between media and politics the Internet seems to be the perfect platform for the citizens of states with different regimes to express opinions and call to action. It becomes the alternative public sphere. The scholarly point of view is that “social media lower the threshold for political participation and social change in developing regions” [5].

The blogosphere and social networking have evolved into new actors of political and informational process. The influence of these actors is recognized both by practitioners of journalism and theorists and also by the representatives of the key actors of international law - NGOs. In 2012 the cooperation of World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC) and the UNESCO Communication & Information Sector resulted into the conference «The Media World after WikiLeaks and News of the World».

In the end of the XX century the new concept of media was created. In 1980 the first global news channel CNN was established. It started broadcasting news 24/7. For the first 15 years of its existence the global news agenda was set by the western media companies. In 1996 Al Jazeera weighed in the informational flows demonstrating the “eastern” point of view starting the gradual process of de-westernizing the media, which is now embraced also by BRICS countries.

New global media started to influence international politics. This phenomenon received the name of “CNN effect”, and its main idea is that “real-time communication” can cause “major responses” to the events both from the audiences and political elites [6]. It was referred to as a source of “global media influence in post-Cold-War conflicts in the 1990s” and also regarding the call to action of the Western states in the times of humanitarian crisis such as ones in Somalia and Bosnia [7].

That led to the drastic change in the foreign policy making. Politicians started to alter their decisions in response to the media coverage of the events and the reaction of mass audiences to the covered events.

Later the concept of “Al Jazeera Effect” was established in the reference to the influence of the new media on the traditional, old ones, in the reporting of global conflicts [7].

The rise of the new media and development of technology are causing the so-called “post-CNN” effect. That is “an unprecedented degree of global transparency in public affairs, enabling individuals and groups to acquire information directly, making the quest for diplomatic confidentiality during negotiations ever harder to maintain”. (Melissen 2005: 31). As far as public diplomacy goes, it looks like the political actors benefit from new media more than suffer from the mentioned transparency.

Источники и литература

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