Accenting of the negative journalism in economic crisis periods

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ABSTRACT

The study joins the law and deontological axis of the journalistic communication and it theorizes the phenomenology of grimness's direct and indirect impact on the journalistic discourse. The assumptions of the starting hypothesis are the following: because of austerity, a lot of changes have occurred in terms of opinions, behavior and attitude; consequently, these changes occur in the journalistic field, as well as in the media's relationship with the audience. This thesis proves that under economic crisis, under the pressure of lack of money, media operators' negative-persuasive behavior increases. In order to prove this, we appeal to psychological, logical, comparative and argumentative methods. Thus, it is obvious that austerity decreases the audience's availability for media's rational argumentation (persuasion) and increases its sensitivity to journalistic negative emotional, persuasive arguments. Under these conditions, in journalistic communication the media exploits this excess of emotional sensitivity by providing even more persuasive motivations and arguments.

Keywords: journalistic communication, persuasion, insertion places, speech vulnerabilities, victims

1. INTRODUCTION

Opposed to positive journalism where conviction is predominant, negative journalism emerges as a form of persuasion. It is emphasized in this direction that negative journalism is an informational intervention driven by an interest outside the direct, correct, honest and balanced information. In its ex-information configuration, negative journalism imposes itself as a way of satisfying some economical, political or any other commandments, in any case not above all informational. With negative journalism, the mass-media surrenders to persuasion. There is no fully negative journalism. Not to make an ideal of this, journalism cannot be sufficient and remains purely and completely negative journalism.

The mass-media is the place where two journalistic consciousnesses act: one of positive journalism and another of negative journalism that aims to be positive journalism and is presented as such. Therefore, the mass-media is done by information and ex-information (para-information, pseudo-information and over-information). Only in a dissuasive reading one may detect, decode, decipher and decrypt the negative journalism in action. The

fundamental interventions of persuasion and negative journalism are: influence, intoxication, disinformation, propaganda and manipulation.

If one may say that persuasion is the short path of influence, then negative journalism is the short path of persuasion: an influence achieved with emotional means for ex-informational purposes and interestedly non-convictive.

In our opinion, conviction and persuasion intend to be at least programmatically and externally convictive and convincing. The positive journalism decisively rely on convincing, on transferring an internal conviction, on inducing a conviction. In return, the negative journalist and journalism decisively rely on persuading, on inducing an external conviction, which is known to be illegitimate and one interestedly promotes it. Journalism that denies is not negative journalism, but a journalism that denies itself, thus becoming the tool of certain interests foreign to journalistic ethics of conviction (belief).

The journalistic endeavor revolves round the audience's opinion, attitude and behavior. The journalistic speech addresses an audience in whose universe and behavior it wants to interfere. If positive journalism interferes by convincing means (logical agitation and clear speech), negative journalism interferes prevailingly by "persuasive means" just like both J.-N. Kapferer, 2002 and D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1997 state: by seduction, fiction, myth, propaganda, misinformation, influence, intoxication and manipulation.

Information can be direct or indirect. Direct journalistic information includes journalists' work and practice. It extends up to the limit of working in the press agency, to the news' issue. It appears that here we talk about the investigation journalism, not about the opinion one (Popa, 2010; Popa, 2011; Borowski, 2013; Borowski, 2014).

The ordinary man has some indirect informational knowledge. The audience learns indirectly about the events and the personalities. He stands at the courtesy of journalism. The journalist stands between the audience and the subject. If he could, the journalist would do to the audience whatever he wanted. He, who manages information, also manages pseudo-information. The audience learning indirectly the facts allows persuasion and negative journalism.

2. DISCOURSIVE VULNERABILITIES

The media speech has two vulnerabilities when persuading. The speech is subject to persuasion of its both constituents: language and reasoning. Professor Raluca Radu speaks about two levels: a "stylistic level (the way the information is transmitted)" and an "ideological level (the way people speak about it)" (Radu, 2006, p. 75). First of all, language has semantic ambiguities, morphological twisting and syntactic splits which are used in order to mislead the audience. Secondly, reasoning (or ideology) has lightnesses which allow sophistic fallacies and natural arguments to interpose. The more insinuation gateways for persuasion the two speech devices (language and reasoning) offer, the more vulnerable journalism is.

Persuasive journalism is noxious, and noxious journalism is negative. By its harmfulness, by overbidding its own speech, journalism its own speech, journalism "may become a threat even to the structural constituents of the democratic order", like Gheorghe Teodorescu says (Teodorescu, 1995, p. 273).

In crisis and austerity times, the negative journalism affects the social system constituents. The system may collapse if the democratic structures are not fortified and if they do not have enough experience or the ability to face the destructive pressures. Negativism, as

harmfulness, may be a source of disarray, of instability and of social anarchy. The negativism's main resort is the financial concern, which inducts the journalistic persuasion's means and pulls up its energies (Colhon, 2013).

Reflection becomes reflex and reasoning becomes aberration because of the affluence of negative messages. Negativity makes the individual feel confusion, derived from the indecision of his opinions, beliefs, attitudes and values. The negative journalism reveals them through persuasion deliberately. Processed in a misleading, whispering, intoxicating way, deeds, real, true facts, opinions and values are cunningly modified (Arsith,2005; Roşca, 2004). Negative journalism seems to marginalize authenticity: the means and methods are the same, but reality distorted or its noxious parts are excessively emphasized.

The audience cannot reject the form of address, but they can observe the journalistic communication articulacy. Except persuasion vulnerabilities, the audience is also unable to react to resurrection persuasion procedures. Basically, in austerity times, negative journalism works hand in glove with two operations: confusing the audience, its attitude and behavior and exciting it, by a financial concern.

In the field of negativism, the purposes are pushed aside in a noxious way. An example is that "newsreels have informational finalities only on the surface, but in fact, the aim is to gain the maximum audience by presenting the news in a spectacular way," says Gheorghe Teodorescu (Teodorescu, 1995, p. 274). In austerity times, the audience is pushed aside in a persuasive way. Patrick Charaudeau (in "Le Discours d'information mediatique. La construction du miroir social") says that, by challenging the event too much, the media "exceeds the limits of the contract, makes the informative finality disappear in favor of holding the attention and it makes promotion speeches" (Charaudeau, 1997, p. 53). Another negative facts stands in pushing aside the media entertainment media function. In order not to expand the informational section, thus, to avoid political decisions, a large entertainment section is introduced. Entertainment is used to find a perfidious way to place the normal proportion between information and entertainment, in order to sabotage the information side of the media. In other words, media shows entertainment instead of presenting some uncomfortable information.

Another way of inserting negativism is changing the significance of an event by moving the emphasis from the social to the individual. In order to dissimulate the importance of a fact, media diminishes its scope. If some news has to be presented to the audience, but that mustn't be noticed, it will be presented briefly and fast. Another ugly part of misinformation: there are so many facts which are presented at the limit of honesty that this leads to disinformation. Non information is a form of misinformation. The order in which the news is presented is within reach of newsreels' editors. The media channel decides the importance of events (Arsith & Draganescu, 2011; Roşca, 2013). Behind the order restraint there is a certain concern. Restraint is a way to implement media harmfulness. The news media has its dishonest and noxious ways to promote its own interests. The front page of a newspaper reveals the major interests and it depicts the strategies of information and misinformation. Journalism can damage the information, sometimes deliberately, by creating a disparity between what it presents and the real facts. Furthermore, an operation having a persuasive substratum, represents delaying willfully the transmission of the information to the audience.

Journalism is, mostly, positive and the negative part hits the ethics' and the justice's spirits. This is why we can say that "In a reality built and decisively predetermined by the media - from the axiological point of view - the recipients will consume, almost exclusively, its precasts" (Teodorescu, 1995, p. 276).

3. INSERTION PLACES AND VULNERABILITIES

The first vulnerability and an insertion place of negative journalism's persuasion is the conformism to the social group (Cerban, 2009; Cerban, 2010). The main requirement for conformation to the group standards becomes a tendency for conformation and submission. They ensure the power's basis.

The second vulnerability and an insertion place of persuasion stands in the fact that the human being is not totally rational, that is why he can be persuaded. As he has a great affective dimension, which is very powerful in relation to his usual behavior, he is vulnerable to negative persuasive journalism. In hard financial times he is weaker and more vulnerable to persuasive arguments: he is more vulnerable to persuasion and to negative journalism.

The third vulnerability is related to intellect, to thirst of knowledge (Traistaru & Avram, 2014). The desire for knowledge is fundamentally human. The individual is vulnerable if he can be persuaded. The persuasion specialists take into consideration the fact that sometimes it is difficult to explain the audience's consent to some conclusions suggested by sophisms which spread dogmas, false and frail ideas (Dillard, 2010; Perloff, 2012). It seems difficult to explain how these 'persuasions' are taken for granted without any doubt when they contradict the reality. Hence we notice the tendency for persuasion, the availability for negative journalism. Here is the first sentence of Aristotle's "Metaphysics": "All men desire to know". Every man has the desire to know, for different reasons - for interest, aspiration, complaint, or for being up to date. People can learn reality through media. Information is honest knowledge.

Misinformation is involuntary-ignorant knowledge. The particularity of this type of knowledge is that the desire which underlies regards especially the events and personalities and only subsidiarily the ideas. The desire to know also involves a second desire - to control, to dominate and to lead, an irrepressible desire to master. Negative journalism appears as a negative power. The fourth power is undeniably a negative power. Media owes a part of its power to negative journalism.

All these synchronize with the desire for information, which appears to be the fourth vulnerability to persuasion. The desire to be informed is the availability for persuasion itself. The individual wants to be updated and to express the most people's opinion or the elitist opinion (Smeureanu & Drula, 1997; Drula, 2013). The decision to be informed exhibits a deep connection between the received message and the source of information. This source, called media today, becomes the centre of persuasion. Thus, it is not the producer of the message or the writer who accounts for the insertion of the message; it is the message which is important.

4. MEDIA VULNERABILITIES

Vulnerabilities to persuasion focus on media. Thus, media becomes a vulnerable place to persuasion. Each vulnerability acknowledges and represents at least one possibility of persuasion insertion. Inserting persuasion in journalism makes it negative. Media itself is the fifth place where persuasion enters. Here is where the other four insertion possibilities gather. By comparison with the nervous impulse, the grafts have as a consequence misinformation syndromes, similar to dysfunctions like anesthesia or paralysis. Misinformation infects our information networks. The confusion between them makes the information unusable. A

wrong assessment of the data in processing the gross news makes the conviction - which calls the authentic information - a natural persuasion.

The blind conformity is an internal vulnerability of media. The blind conformity conveys vulnerabilities. When the information is taken from newspapers, from, people who are up to date with the news, even though work is less difficult, the journalist faces the risk of gathering pseudo-information. Newspapers and televisions get information from the media agencies and some agencies get it from others. The phenomenon is called blind conformity. We know that the news' source is rarely quoted. The journalist should always verify the information's accuracy is difficult and the journalist is tempted to work as little as he can, which makes him trust the source. When the information doesn't need to be verified, the assertions are ascribed to an "authorized source". There is a way of inserting misinformation in ignoring the verification principle Insertion of information and misinformation. The universe of media allows misinformation. Media operators often appeal to pseudo-information. Media in democratic countries tricks into misinformation. The relationship between the news and its effects on the audience is limited to information. The audience has the inertia of information. Thus, they have the same gateway, so misinformation will act freely.

Gathering information and verifying it require time and effort. The audience shouldn't wait: that is why the journalist releases news that is not well verified. Verifying the news makes the news objective (Roşca, 2011; Narita, 2013a; Narita, 2013b). According to specialists, there are two types of objectivity: an authentic and a seeming one. If the purpose is to communicate information, the objectivity is authentic, followed by the information's assessment and commentary. On the other hand, as far as the seeming objectivity is concerned, a preset judgment is inserted into a news in order to validate it (Cojocaru, Sandu & Cojocaru, 2011). The media, stated an instrument of democracy's security, cannot avoid persuasion, especially in crisis or austerity times.

5. VICTIMS OF THE NEGATIVE JOURNALISM

There are four general victims: the society, the man in public, the responsible citizen, the informed man.

a) The first victim: the society. We can say that, for a long term, persuasion, seen as pseudo-information, can induce the society's set-back. The social organization system, in which there are placid financial laws and different positions can become accessible to influence, outside major concerns. Society has a specific dynamics. Pseudo-informative interventions are dangerous for it and its exercise for a long term affects the dynamics of the social system and of the social automatism. The intention of pseudo-information, when it is long-lasting and it regards a great part of the population, will look like a major threat. The idea of cheating, on which persuasion is built, affects the fundamental function of the social system: the self-reflection and feedback function. Ultimately, society is the victim (Lesutan, 2007; Siminică & Traistaru, 2013).

b) The man in public. In crisis and austerity times the audience tends to lose trust in reality's and truth's marks. People get used to living in error and lie. They begin to give up in front of the financial exigencies of reality and truth, as cannot beat misinformation. At that point they become victims of the absurdity and of the basic instincts. Most of the audience remains, though, logical. Nevertheless, negative journalism becomes unavoidable (Popescu,

2002; Motei, 2008; Powell, 2014). Invaded by sophisms and by specious contradictions, repeatedly drawn into arguments whose premises remain vague, surprised by ambiguous language, called to focus his attention on insignificant things, the man in public, who tries to remain realistic, logical and critical, tends to become persuaded. His attempt to remain honest is doomed to failure. He finds himself unable to tell his opinion, to assess or to think. Abusive persuasion defeats the doubt and shakes the public's senses.

c) The responsible citizen. The next category of victim of the negative journalism is the responsible citizen who is able to exploit his latitude (Erich & Tîrziman, 2007; Seceleanu, 2008). He is a gregarious spirit, enslaved by desires and fancies.

d) The informed man. Very few people remain logical under the negative journalism pressure. These people are those who know the arsenal used in the pseudo-information operations and actions. That is why negative journalism is seen as an authentic assault on the audience's psychic temper (Cojocaru, 2010; Cojocaru & Cojocaru, 2011; Hinea, 2014). The basic intention of this kind of journalism is to exhaust the audience's autonomy, latitude and freedom of thought. This intention is destructive or at least deteriorative. When it is put into practice, neither the persuasion specialists nor the well informed people can resist it. Paradoxically, the well informed people are significantly more deceived than the less informed people. They are the main category of victims of persuasion. They think they are too wise to be cheated.

6. CONCLUSION

Austerity amplifies vulnerabilities to negative persuasive journalism, it multiplies the places where negative journalism may occur and it increases the number of victims of this type of journalism. In other words, under austerity, journalism tends to lose its financial balance by stressing its negative persuasive component and by inhibiting its persuasive component (using rational arguments).

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