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PROFESSIONAL PAPER

The Invisible Entrepreneurs - the Neglect of Women Business in Serbian Mass Media



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ABSTRACT

Rapid development of technology and communication science enable high mobility of people, goods, capital, managers, workers in globalized market. Entrepreneurship became synonymous for corporate communications including Public Relations, marketing, advertising, corporate social responsibility and similar disciplines. In such communication system it is almost impossible to isolate women's from man's communication activities. Or it isn't so hard? Among communication channels necessary for market promotion, branding and advertising of women entrepreneurship mass media are often the weakest link. Topic of this paper are mass media in Serbia, and their influence on transition economic processes, public opinion, based on ownership concentration and inappropriate media laws, self censure, stereotypes, prejudice, etc. Analysis of media content in several daily newspapers from Serbia during one week in February 2014, qualitatively and quantitatively show ways mass media engage emotions instead of information to influence public in case of economy.

KEY WORDS: *communications, economy, emotions, information, mass media, women entrepreneurship*

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Introduction

Politics, religion and media in last decades of Balkan history often were desirable allies in creating and maintaining of media contents, even in case of economy. Democratization and civil commitment require from post conflict societies clear differentiation from nationalism, gender prejudices, religious influence and rapid changing of individual and collective way of thinking. As more adaptable to democratic criteria, media were first to cross from conservative allies to fervid democrats, adopting patterns of behavior from social science. Religious institutions stay consistent in resistance to everything that comes from the West, including free market, gender equality in business and capitalist economic model, along with small number of nationalist political parties and mostly quasi-patriotic movements. Also, media try to fulfill expectations of dominant public opinion makers and public itself about question of economic development and preferable economic partners in this process, especially investors. In Serbian society this is often not economic but emotional category.

From the dialectical mediation point of view in social life public and media can function on surprisingly intimate ways and make very potent forms of social practice, if they find mutual interests. In case of conflict, discourses of these pillars of society dramatically depart in some sort of a role playing – public rather deals with politics than economy and media offers public sensational isolated economics scandals without context, mostly related to corruption. So, both are potential allies or enemies of economic development. Government must therefore give priority to reducing the risk of conflict. "The two objectives of economic recovery and risk reduction are likely to be complementary: economic recovery may reduce risks, and risk reduction may speed recovery. However, this complementary between objectives does not imply coincidence of instruments: the instruments that are effective for risk reduction may be quite distinct from those for economic recovery." (Collier, Hoeffler, Soderbom, 2006).

Media are active participants of this process and, if agree that we live (media) mediated lives, we can call them leaders of outlined changing. While trying to achieve self re-creation media are willing to challenge social authority of religious and political institutions, considering them as individual right (religion) and social obligation (politics). Economic questions are somewhere in between, depending on actual government policy. Main goal of the process is western model of social and personal autonomy in choosing an ultimate authority over everyday life. Main consequence is extreme

mobility given to political and economical messages and, simultaneously, origin point of conflict between economy self-perception and media perception of economy and free market. In extreme cases this relation developed into open conflict or travesty of economic ideas into quasi-patriotic questions about neo-colonialism and national surviving.

Origin of Manipulation

McLuhan's aphorism media is the message can define essence of conflict between economy, women entrepreneurship and media – every media is predestined for certain types of messages and resistant on others. Also, media can easily recreate message to fit their communication power. Nature of economy message is in collision with communicative powers of media and here are some reasons:

- Economy message is ultimate, media are skeptical.
- For economy, continuity is essential, media prefer ad hoc news.
- Economy promotes joined venture, media are specialized for conflict.
- For economy doctrine is essential, for media - visible phenomenon.
- Economy aim internal communication, media communicate with wide public.

Differences are natural and necessary, and key for reduction of conflict lies in capability of both sides to give up exclusive right to truth. According to this, economy and media we can consider separately, competitively and inclusively. In Serbian society situation is far more complicated because of complex relations and truths that confuses average media consumer. Negative media influence on public in Serbia is still ongoing, primary through manipulation with stereotypes, prejudice, selectiveness and sensationalism. Economy is sometimes just generator of rage and violence, semantically manipulated to provoke emotional reaction maintain tensions of conflict with regularly updated diary of insults, forced fear from others and encouraged masses to "fight" against what they usually called economy neo-colonialism (capitalism). That sort of media content we can name as "emotional hooks" instead of information.

Paradoxically, simultaneously we witnessed inclusion of Western economical ideas in Balkan transition process mediated by the same media, according to main political interest (mostly EU integration). Vocabulary of

media political correctness related to economy is based on sterile phrases about dialog, understanding, tolerance, help, friendship, gender equality in business and improvement. It is generic, abstract and socially desirable but – extort, avoiding everything that can provoke national passion and, potentially, violence.

In our media desirable transmission of communication symbols is slow, confused and pervasive, while present period puts media above society and redirect transmission into channels created by political and social structures, but not economy. When an economic symbol goes through media filters social memory is forming backwards. As they circulate through new system, economic symbols being socially re-produced and re-make.

Current media attitude toward economic questions is balance between sensationalism about corruption scandals and conspiracy theories, linking individual pathology with economic system and organizations, and respect for political will to make changes. Misunderstanding generates in some weaknesses of both sides:

- Media suffers from constant lack of journalists qualified for economic questions, which can't be tolerate because vital questions like unemployment and poverty can encroach affective mind of individuals and provoke violence.
- Economy institutions in transition countries often are unsuccessful in media relations. Sometimes it is question of bureaucracy incompetent to present its own position, sometimes in slow reactions, sometimes in seductive rhetoric of politicians playing roles of economic experts.
- Media create social leaders or events influencing that way economic system itself. Media are, by their nature, offensive, orientated to visible, new, impressive, instant, expendable, and transparent; while economy tend to stability, continuousness, scientific and expertise.

That's why looks like economy is in defensive position against mass media spectacle, forced to reactive response and adaptability which disturb her habitat and principles.

Political Discourse of Economy

There is nothing new in claim that crucial aspect in media agenda in Balkan countries must be security, and that main threats are often related to

economy and media public discourse. Till recent, whenever media use term security it implicate existence of conflict and need to address certain social conflicts on domestic or international level. These interrelations and ways to talk about them publicly are not neutral and separated from ideological premises. In the same time, media are main communication channel of politician and social elites. Scientists are actively engaged in debates about questions of conflicts, but they mostly separate three of its pylons (religion, politics and media) from the fourth, the newest – economy. We can't understand link between economy and society without media role and reference to wider political context of those processes. In other words, in political and media use of economy we can notice flagrant hypocrisy obvious in starting differentiation between economy as origin of conflict (Arab Spring, Ukraine conflict and similar public movements around the world) and economy as normative good in post conflict countries in transition (Iraq, Balkan, etc.). Post conflict Balkan is under strong influence of Western liberal-democratic capitalism, namely pluralism proclaimed with tolerance and competition. But, behind every of those conflicts hides political questions related to government change and wider interests.

As answer to latest empirical tendencies this paper will clarify some ways media use to interlink public perception of security threats/economy and escalate conflict scenarios by semantic manipulation (linking of notions and making complicated systems of associations).

It's a Man's World - The Entrepreneur as Male Gendered

From 1989, in basis of new order is conflict of political power and struggle for power inherently linked to discourse of so called "otherness". Discourse of "otherness" today is base of mediatized political discourse around the world. These discourses linking economy and conflict, summarize the political and media narrative and encouraging view of the world as divided into economy divisions that are in conflict at national and cross-national level. The role of media in this process is crucial, especially in emotionally strained post conflict societies. But, sometimes "others" are women!

Media are intermediaries through which we learn about political attitudes and public policy (news) or covertly (entertainment, movies and other forms of popular culture). Thus, the media cannot be neutral participants in the communication. For some theorists (Meyer and Hinchman, 2002) media colonize politics, and politics now needs to adopt media values or risk ex-

clusion from the public arena, suggesting that the key of political relationships now is in media/politics relations, and not politics/citizens. Yet, according to liberal theory of the media, they are autonomous and independent from the state and their function is to supervise the elite – to be *gate keepers*. Public space they create should be a place of debate and discussion so that citizens can make informed judgments about their leaders. However, in a democratic accord appear dissonant tones that claim we receive only selected information and being manipulated the media. At the micro level, every conflict on the planet has its own "others", depending on the participants, but from the macro perspective religion and nationality are overcome, so today there is almost no war without economy base (real or attached). Previously reserved for specialists, economy becomes a topic for journalists, broadcasters and scientists of various disciplines. It is important to note that certain disdain among economy, scientists and journalists has deep roots.

Economy, however, has the capacity to serve forces of good and forces of evil. Indeed, in many conflict situations, economy is used to justify the objectives, homogenized troops and reinforce a sense of identities, but the public is aware of capacity of economy to work on mediation and conflict resolution, through the preaching of progress and collaboration. This is an ultimate demand of western circles for Serbia, especially among requirements for admission to the EU.

Several authors point out that entrepreneur and entrepreneurship are male gendered concepts, i.e., they have masculine connotations. It is not only the frequent use of the male pronoun (this was standard in science decades ago), but also the way the entrepreneur is described. It could be argued that this is because entrepreneurs have traditionally been men, but several scholars maintain that women entrepreneurs were made invisible, in research as well as in the media. Is femininity then constructed as the opposite of entrepreneurship? Roots of this question can be found in polarized Serbian media.

Serbian Media between Politics and Economy

Several concepts and their correlation determined this topic. Mass media, as intermediaries in the process of mass communication, become the economic organizations and their corporate character growth stronger as well as market position and invested capital. At the same time, the media are structural element of public sphere and an institutional framework for the promotion of opinions, attitudes - ideas, the scene of political influence, of-

ten coupled with interest of capital. In such circumstances, the public interest and responsibility to society become increasingly blurred, and the basic role of the media is often distorted to such an extent require redefinition.

Question: are the media before all means instruments to the open society, its democratization and participation of citizens in the social process that precedes or no business organization, in whose activities the profit is a basic motive and not wellbeing of public. Especially, as it is evident that both aims can hardly be equally successfully exercise. The basic motive of existence and work in media should be based on, essentially, the utopian vision of humanity, equality, loyalty and truth, where all clearly knows what is good and what is not and where everyone, including media professionals, stick strictly to the basic legal and moral principles. On the other hand, if mass media became media industry, than basic human action must be - interest.

Modern media are primarily individual and then social. Current interest, therefore, can affect the understanding of the concept of accountability and obligation that results from it. When the media every day discover content, messages, attitudes that cause our suspicion, that, if we are previously well-informed, we can conclude that false, incorrect, unprofessional journalists have no sufficient knowledge and that there are obvious malice. Also, we are not allowed to disregard possibility that such a way of writing follows a particular interest, which is opposite to general, public interest, and which has the power to express and be publicly mediated.

Money and power are terms whose meaning is clear to everyone. In practice and in theory, mass media are the most prominent centers of power. Essence of media power is penetration in the public sphere, which means survival for political and economy ideas and organizations, and that is why it is necessary to constantly seen economy in relation to the media and their impact to society. There is no free democratic society without a free public sphere, and such sphere cannot exist without a free media, although there is always some form of monopoly over them. Such considerations, especially when it comes to political communication, as a key formula for the free flow of information and trust them see the autonomy of media in relation to the environment and support of civil society. "Medium of political communication in the public sphere can facilitate deliberative process legitimizing in complex societies only if self-regulated media system to preserve the independence of their social environment and if the anonymous audience pro-

vide feedback link between informed, elite discourse and active civil society.” (Habermas, 2004:6).

Words as Weapons

Emotions in mass media content can be used contrary to communication logic, so it don't need to be based on objective events or state of mind. Instincts provoked by emotional media messages influenced authenticity of communication and communicators use different stimulus to provoke emotions. Stimulus can be words, sounds and pictures (both real and imaginary). Explicit message leads to desirable behavior. Emotions in post conflict societies can be provoked by hope and fear as basic emotions, along with compassion, responsibility, love, etc.

Different messages have different levels of fear usage, from association to eventual treats to explicit warning. In socially and economically stable countries fear appeal is often used in advertising, but in post conflict countries it is mostly used in average media content, from politics to economy and sport. Research conducted from February 03 to 09, 2014 show attitude toward women's economy engagement in Serbia (*Blic*, daily newspaper, circulation around 120.000, *Kurir*, daily newspaper, circulation around 116.000 and *Politika*, circulation around 125.000).

*Table 1: Economy questions (general)**

Date Feb. 2014.	Newsp.	% of ec. related topics
03.	Politika	23.41
	Blic	21.1
	Kurir	14.38
04.	Politika	19.25
	Blic	37.32
	Kurir	18.2
05.	Politika	30.56
	Blic	27.51
	Kurir	13.92
06.	Politika	74.82
	Blic	25.3
	Kurir	15.65
07.	Politika	81.34↑
	Blic	17.31
	Kurir	33.75

Date Feb. 2014.	Newsp.	% of ec. related topics
08.	Politika	78.21
	Blic	26.99
	Kurir	29.81
09.	Politika	75.45
	Blic	32.1
	Kurir	23.7
	Total	34.24

Source: Authors

*Table shows % of economy related topics through daily editions, including those incorporated in articles about politics, foreign affairs, society, culture, entertainment and sport.

Table 2: Comparative review of the texts' representation in terms of subject areas in analyzed printed media during 7 days

	Politika	Blic	Kurir	Total
Economy through quality of life	184 30.77%	76 12.71%	7 1.17%	267 44.65%
Economy	87 14.55%	31 5.18%	7 1.17%	125 20.90%
Sport	2 0.33%	5 0.84%	1 0.17%	8 1.34%
Culture	14 2.34%	0 0%	4 0.67%	18 3.01%

Table 3: Texts that belong to the first thematic category in analyzed printed media

Subgroups	Politika	Blic	Kurir	Total
Poverty, health healthcare	115 72.78%	41 25.95%	2 1.27%	158 100%
healthcare social ser.				
Security	49 62.03%	28 35.44%	2 2.53%	79 100%
criminal				
Everyday	20 66.67%	7 23.33%	3 10%	30 100%
life				

During selected time most of the texts with economy in *Blic* were related to quality of life (44.65%), culture (20.23%), economy (20.%), politics (9.87%) and sport (1.34%). We must underline that Serbia was, when this

paper was wrote, in the beginning of election campaign (general elections took place on March 16, 2014) so it is reasonable for journalists to pay special attention to economy question. Average daily rate of economy subjects in *Blic* during 2013 were 9.17%. Same tendencies we can see in case of *Politika* and *Kurir*. During these 7 days there were only 5 contents about women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

This article is a review of the core of dealing with economy and entrepreneurship issues in Serbian media in general, with special view on women`s entrepreneurship.

Findings show that research interest of media in entrepreneurship is increasing, particularly during recent years. In media sectors, the combination of industry deregulation and privatization coupled with technological advancements in information and communication have brought many taught issues. Entrepreneurial activities play increasingly important roles in building market business success. We think that the research interest in media and entrepreneurship will keep moving up and also, more issues and research questions will come forth in the coming years, but political influence in media and economy is still too strong, so we do not expect radical changes soon.

From the media perspective, male entrepreneurship attracted more attentions, whereas women`s is less addressed and investigated. From the entrepreneurship coverage perspective, some entrepreneurship subtopics are studied much often than the others, especially social component of economy. This uneven distribution might be caused by the nature of media industry and entrepreneurship (e.g. family business is a recurrent topic in newspapers, while financing entrepreneurs is common in some other industries). It is found that the entrepreneurship subtopics such as innovation and creativity are more frequently, as they are the joint characteristics of both media and entrepreneurship. Also, family business is another focus for research because in Serbia companies are mostly small and medium-sized.

Related to theory, very few efforts have been made to investigate how media affect the woman`s entrepreneurship phenomena. Among 5 articles found, journalists were mainly focused two issues: women`s role on entrepreneurship, and the description of well-known women entrepreneurs.

So, media's impact on women's entrepreneurship can't be helpful to encouraging the female entrepreneurial spirit. In the same time there is lot of evidences for the role of media in influencing political decision-making, the public and individual conception and attitude. From the social and psychological perspective, woman's entrepreneurship — as an innovative and creative way of conducting business — can be educated, enhanced and affected by the discourse carried by media forms. The message and knowledge conveyed by media are crucial in building the role model, the social-attitudes to the entrepreneurial activity and even the systems to foster or to hinder the entrepreneurship. Therefore, using media to encourage entrepreneurship can be very instructive.

Nowadays, many issues confronted with media industries in a dynamic and changing environment can be discussed and handled through studies and research in the entrepreneurship domain. Also, entrepreneurship activities can be encouraged and enhanced by the means of media. Therefore, a future research agenda needs to be made to investigate the way by which media and woman's entrepreneurship can promote the development of each other reciprocally and successfully.

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Nevidljivo preduzetništvo - zanemarivanje ženskog poslovanja u srpskim masovnim medijima

APSTRAKT

Brz razvoj tehnologije i komunikacione nauke omogućavaju visoku mobilnosti ljudi, robe, kapitala, menadžera, radnika na globalizovanom tržištu. Preduzetništvo je postalo sinonim za korporativne komunikacije, uključujući odnose sa javnošću, marketing, oglašavanje, korporativnu društvenu odgovornost i srodne discipline. U takvom komunikacionom sistemu gotovo nemoguće je da se izoluju iz ženske od muških komunikacionih aktivnosti. Ili nije tako teško? Među komunikacionim kanalima neophodnim za unapređenje tržišta, brendiranje i reklamiranje ženskog preduzetništva je za masovne medije često najslabija karika. Tema ovog rada su mediji u Srbiji, njihov uticaj na ekonomske procese u tranziciji, javno mnjenje, bazirano na koncentraciji vlasništva i neodgovarajućim medijskim zakonima, samocenzuri, stereotipima, predrasudama i slično. Analiza sadržaja medija u nekoliko dnevnih novina iz Srbije tokom jedne nedelje u februaru 2014, kvalitativno i kvantitativno pokazuje da mediji plasiraju emocije umesto informacija, kada informišu javnost u oblasti ekonomije.

KLJUČNE REČI: *komunikacije, ekonomija, emocije, informacije, masovni mediji, žensko preduzetništvo*

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