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Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu & EPIA
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn
University of the Peloponnese
University of Educational Management, NAES of Ukraine &
Institute for Social and Political Psychology, NAES of Ukraine
Center for Social Representations Studies in Indonesia
Institute of Social Sciences of Serbia
Mykolas Romeris University
Institute of Psychology, University of Pécs
Moldova State University

Political and Economic Self-Constitution: Media, Citizenship Activity and Political Polarization

Proceedings of the VII international scientific and practical seminar
June 10th, 2019
Padua, Italy

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Edited by
Irina Bondarevskaya, Alessandro De Carlo



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theories) reduces prejudice, different ideas become the relevant traits for self-definition and for identifying the “others”. The race toward the extremes ran by leaders eager to convince voters more and more lost, frightened, confused, is a potentially dangerous game: history showed us many occasions in which it began, and – in a way or another – it never ended up well unless it stopped somewhat in the beginning.

And so, in a turbulent time, we find each other once again discussing psychology, sociology, anthropology, politics and economics. We do it in Padova, one of the cradles of modern science and thinking. Padova is the city of one of the most ancient universities in the world, where Galileus thought and Copernicus studied, where the scientific method was perfected and where Elena Cornaro Piscopia received her degree, the first in history for a woman, where medicine made great progresses and where the first faculty of psychology in Italy was founded. And yet, a location with such an history doesn't feel like a protected crib, a place in which every discussion is easy and has an immediate impact outside, a place where the turmoil is left outside: it feels more like a memento of what used to be and today is at stake.

We find each other discussing, for the first time, the role of media. They have always been a powerful tool for influencing thoughts and identity, and they have been always recognized as such. But their role was mostly associated with the possibility of elites to influence the masses, of creating shared thinking and identity. Now it is much more complex: the sources of information are virtually endless, the feeling of protagonism of every player – no matter how small – tends to unprecedented heights, the subtlety of influence mechanisms and actions makes them almost impossible to spot. We are in a period of revolution, in which it is difficult to know who to trust, in which national identities go beyond nations and in which migrations are a

MEDIA CREATIVITY AS A WAY TO DEVELOP SOCIAL OPTIMISM IN THE CONTEXT OF DESTRUCTIVE INFORMATIONAL INFLUENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Constant flow of negative information is the basis for building informational messages both on television and on the Internet. This affects spiritual and moral state of society. The latest social media contributes to dissemination of negative information. What can prevent this? Social optimism as positive expectations of a person, group, society, which extends to social life (faith in progress, development of society). These expectations are based on active civic stance and readiness to act for the benefit of the society, realizing oneself as socially significant force. Social optimism is associated with adaptation, socialization, social dialogue. Among social factors in formation of optimistic potential of the group we can distinguish media-psychological, namely, media activity.

Theoretical exploration allowed developing an author's model of counteraction and overcoming the consequences of destructive information influences. The model contains two factors – personality resistance to stress

and self-regulatory skills. Personality resistance to stress' influences depends on temperament-specific features, personal resources, life experience, and, in part, due to personal qualities – Locus-control and social optimism. The second factor is self-regulation, which is determined through media activity (Voznesenska, 2011) and tolerance to uncertainty. Optimism has internal emotional and motivational components (Carver, 2001), so the ability to emotional self-regulation determines the level of optimism.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study was to determine the role of media psychological factors in shaping social optimism as a factor in preventing and overcoming effects of media traumatization and destructive information influences.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The method of mass survey was used. The research used the author's test of mediatized social optimism (MSO), the scale of media literacy. The test is based on the LOT-R (Life Orientation Test Revised) test proposed by I.K. Chang. The test consists of 12 assertions (4 scales of mediatized optimism, mediatized pessimism and neutral settings), which are offered on the Likert scale from 1 to 5 points. Issues of the author's test include links to media interaction as a means or source of information impacts.

Approval and validation of the MSO test was conducted within the framework of an all-Ukrainian mass survey, in which 1487 senior pupils from

all regions of Ukraine took part (the sample is homogeneous according to the age indicator and is balanced by gender and place of residence).

Mathematical processing was carried out using SPSS program. In processing, the responses were converted into dichotomous scales. An analysis of the test data of the MSO showed the internal consistency of the test scales (verified using the Alpha-Cronbach coefficient). To determine correlations, a nonparametric Spearman correlation coefficient was used.

RESULTS

Approbation has shown that mediatized optimism and pessimism are two different phenomena that are not poles of the same continuum. Social optimism or pessimism in the media space are behavioral strategies for perceiving and processing information that can be molded.

The questionnaire included a depression scale for non-inductive assessment of a suicidal tendency associated with personal optimism. This made it possible to test the connections of mediatized optimism and pessimism with depressive personality states. It was found that the scales of MSO and mediatized social pessimism (MSP) have weak correlations with statements of depression scale, but at a high level of significance (correlation coefficients - 0.12 and 0.23, respectively, at the significance level of 0.01, N = 1298).

One of the hypotheses was that increasing the level of media activity to the creative (Voznesenska, 2011) through creative media practices will contribute to the increase of the MSO and, consequently, the improvement of the overall level of psychological well-being of a person.

The analysis of survey data showed the tendency to directly link various aspects of media creativity with social optimism (but correlations are weak). Considering the data in details shows the following.

The media art scale consisted of three sub-scales-indicators:

- “*Creating Your Own Content*” (the questions contained manifestations of various types of media creativity in respondents based on modalities of creativity – literary, visual, video, music);
- “*Distribution of own media content*”;
- “*Motivation for media creativity*” (the scale includes questions about different motivations of media creativity – self-realization, fame, emotional self-regulation, material well-being, emotional support).

The internal consistency of the subscales, “Creating your own media content” and “Motivating the media-literacy”, was tested using the Alpha-Cronbach coefficient (0.65 and 0.7, respectively).

Table 1. Correlations between scale MSO and sub-scale “Media creativity”

*

Sub-scale of the scale “Media creativity”	Spearman correlation with scales*	
	social optimism	social pessimism
Creating your own content	0,28	0,13
Distribution of own media content	0,14	0,04
Motivation for media creativity	0,22	0,17
Scale “Media creativity”	0,25	0,14

*N=1481, significance at the level 0,01

We can definitely consider connection between MSO and media creativity, however, this relationship is weak (all correlations are highly significant). Below, correlations between individual questions of the sub-scales of the scale “Media creativity” and the indicators of the MSO are presented (see Table 2).

*Table 2. Correlations between scale MSO and sub-scales of the scale “Media creativity” **

Question of sub-scales of the scale “Media creativity”	Social optimism	Statistical Indexes
Mostly on the Internet I work with images: I post new photos, create collages, and more	0,226	,018 not significant
The most interesting thing for me is work with sounds: songs, music, voice recording, etc.	0,239	,137
Through media creativity I realize myself	0,208	,093
The greatest desire for creativity in me appears during the period of serious emotional shocks (when I feel very good or very bad)	0,199	,172
The most interesting for me is that activity on the Internet that gains popularity, for example, receives the most likes	0,190	,039

*N=1463, significant at the level 0,01

All correlations of the questions of the sub-scales of the scale “Media creativity” with the indicators of MSO are direct. The strongest correlations (at a high level of significance) have been identified with issues related to work with images and music. This is due to the prevalence of creating images and working with sounds in senior pupils.

The biggest motivation for media literacy in youth is related to emotional reaction in the form of media creativity and popularity (“likes”), in the third place – self-realization. Both pessimists and optimists tend to creativity for the restoration of mental status, balance and self-regulation.

In order to confirm the hypothesis of the link between MSO and media creativity, differences in aspects of media creativity in the subjects were checked, that showed high and low values on the scale of “MSO”. The first group included those with a “low MSO” by the MSO test (291 persons). In the second – persons with a level of MSO above average (341 persons). Comparison of indicators of sub-scales of the scale “Media creativity” was carried out using the Mann-Whitney U-test. Indicators of all components of Media creativity scale differ significantly among people with high and low MSO (see Table 3): all indicators of MSO group above the average are higher than MSO group indicators below the average.

Table 3. Comparison of groups with high and low MSO for sub-scales of the scale of “Media creativity”

		Creating your own content (sten)	Distribution of own content (sten)	Motivation for Media creativity (sten)	Media creativity (sten)
Group with MSO below average	N	291	294	292	290
	Standard deviation	4,01119	1,41256	5,20990	9,11021
	Median	6,0000	1,0000	8,0000	15,5000
	Average value	5,9931	1,4456	8,1884	15,6517
Group with MSO higher than average	N	341	341	340	340
	Standard deviation	4,04967	1,54879	5,24430	9,22473
	Median	9,0000	2,0000	11,0000	22,0000
	Average value	9,0557	1,9648	11,1588	22,1765

Similar procedure was conducted for the MSP scale (see Table 4). There are significant differences (at a significance level of 0.01) among those surveyed with high and low levels of MSPs between indicators of “Creating your own content” and “Motivation of media creativity» sub-scales.

Table 4. Comparison of groups with high and low MSP for sub-scales of the scale of “Media creativity”

		Creating your own content (sten)	Motivation for media creativity (sten)	Media creativity (sten)
Group with MSP below average	N	351	350	350
	Standard deviation	4,28603	5,28605	9,46861
	Median	7,0000	8,0000	18,0000
	Average value	7,0997	8,7486	17,5114
Group with MSP higher than average	N	338	339	337
	Standard deviation	4,46890	5,42039	10,05902
	Median	8,0000	11,0000	22,0000
	Average value	8,4734	10,9676	21,2789

People with high level of MSP have significantly higher level of motivation for media creativity. Consequently, the level of media creativity and MSOs are related in the following way: higher MSO students are seen as having higher level of media creativity than those with low level of MSO. These differences are statistically significant. The same trends are observed in people with high and low levels of MSP.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that formation of social optimism is determined by the level of media culture in society, which is determined, inter alia, by the level

of media creativity dissemination. The factors of formation of social optimism as a means of counteracting media influences, we determine the high level of media activity of an individual – media-literacy, selectivity of attention and critical attitude to negative information received from media.

Media education can become a means of forming and strengthening social optimism through formation of an active civic position, readiness to act, development of flexibility of behavior and awareness of itself as socially meaningful power.

Development of media creativity is an effective means of developing creative, self-sufficient and critical thinking personality in a context of rapid growth in information volumes. A person consciously and actively engages in media communication and media creativity and begins to control his / her psychological security. Media creativity can be regarded as an effective coping strategy of youth in conditions of social upheaval.

We believe that a high level of media creativity contributes to the development and mediatized social optimism and mediatized social pessimism as strategies for dealing with media. People with higher level of social optimism are likely to be more inclined to media creativity.

Consequently, our hypothesis about increasing media culture of high school students by means of media creativity in order to promote the development of social optimism and increase the ability to counter media traumatization and destructive information influences, has a reverse side. Similarly, development of media literacy can contribute to increasing the level of mediatized social pessimism and reduce individual's sustainability of media traumatization.