

Mass Media in National Public Sphere and in European Public Sphere*

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The paper analyses the role of mass media in the construction of the national public sphere in relation to the Europe identification. The success of European integration is linked to a common public space. This means the Europeanization of identities, lifestyles and frames of reference. A European public space is constructed with more difficulty. Mass media will have a crucial role in setting up and supporting the European public space.

In communist societies public space was limited because the propagandistic discourse of official newspapers influenced it decisively. In post-communists societies mass media encourage the point of view of parties' elites, but not equally the opinion of different social groups. It analyses how these contextual conditions affect the role of Romanian press as a contributor to the formation of consciousness about Europe, to the feelings of common identification with Europe at the same time.

We start from the premise that the role of mass media in the Europeanization of national public sphere is important not so much in the communication of political messages, but in the ability to transmit information on European lifestyles.

The National Public sphere and European Public sphere

The public sphere is defined as a space where citizens interact through their acts of public debates. Habermas connects the public sphere to analytically dualistic model of deliberation: "Imagine the public sphere as an intermediary system of communication between formally organised and informal face-to-face deliberations in arenas both at the top and at the bottom of the political system" (Habermas 2006, 10). quoted in (Heikki & Kunelius, 2006, 75)

'Europeanization' of the public sphere is not the prolongation of the national public sphere at the supranational level, to form a supranational European public sphere. In the virtual absence of transnational Europe-wide mass media and the predominance of national ones, the most likely location for 'Europeanization' trends will be within national public spheres (Schlesinger, 1995; Statham & Gray, 2005, 64). The idea about segmented Europeanization quoted in Brüggemann et al. (2006, 16) is useful. The Europeanization of the national public spheres is seen as a gradual process on four different dimensions: 1. monitoring governance, 2. mutual observation, 3. discursive exchange, and 4. collective identification with Europe (Brüggemann et al. 2006, 4-7). From all four dimensions only monitoring governance is a real transnationalization of national public spheres. We think that most important for the study of public sphere is not the debate of the relation between national framework and European framework, but an analysis of the relation between local public sphere and national and European public spheres, because only in this way can we know if "European citizens must be able to see themselves not only as rights bearers but also as community-members." (Eriksen, 2005, 346). The studies show that public debates in Great Britain are centered rather on the national state than on the creation of transnational politics (Statham & Gray, 2005, 61). We ask what is the Europeanization beyond the political public sphere? European integration is more than a political problem. The Europeanization creates a

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