

GLOBALIZATION AND MASS-MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

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Globalization is a reality that we cannot deny or run away from. The economic, political or social issues, even if they have a starting point, spread very quickly, covering large areas in a very short time. Modern communication systems enable crisis transfer. They also bring us information about the actions that have been taken in order to overcome those critical circumstances. Does recession have positive aspects, too? If it has, what are these positive aspects and how can they be used to produce highest benefits? We will try to describe the concepts we maintain by means of some notorious works written by authors with a vast experience, some of them being Noble Prize winners. The idea that we propose is to bring hope out of this situation generated by crisis and globalization. The economic crisis has created a huge opportunity to the mass-media system: it brings the required information to citizens from different nations. Taking this into account, mass-media has played and still plays an important part in making the people involved find solutions and communicate whenever the decision makers are trying to hide facts. With the help of innovation and transformation, let's look for solutions to develop our abilities, relationships, products, markets and results. We should never forget that the greatest and most impressive changes are often born in times of crisis.

Key words: globalization, media, economic crisis, TV, Internet.

JEL Code: L82 - Entertainment; Media; D12 - Consumer Economics: Empirical Analysis

I. Introduction

Is it professionalism or pure coincidence? This question arises every time we look for success factors when dealing with crisis situations. Is it enough being happy with the reality of globalization and copying other people's solutions, hoping they will also be good for us, or should we do more? This is our main concern when approaching the globalization phenomenon, a concern which is deepened by mass-media in the context of economic crisis. This is the reason why, in the first part of this study, our aim is to approach globalization and present economic crisis on a positive note, emphasizing the opportunity we have to find appropriate solutions to the complex circumstances we are facing. In this process, the first winners are those who overcome crisis successfully and manage globalization skillfully. In the second part, we will try to demonstrate the link between globalization and mass-media, having in mind the dissemination of the flow of information. We would also like to reveal the dark side of mass-media; the costs regarding time and resources which especially the young generation pays for this modern vice called multimedia. The perspective from which we approach this subject is related to immediate every day reality. Our aim is to provide a descriptive and explanatory study. From this point of view, our analysis will sometimes become passionate, but will be strongly rooted in the reality that is shaped by each and every action of man.

II. Globalization and economic crisis

When discussing about globalization and future, we cannot ignore economy and mass-media, because both are essential and decisive factors in modern man's life. Globalization can be analyzed in 2012 from the perspective of economic crisis and of the adopted solutions as well as from the perspective of its consequences on the entire world. The economic crisis we are now

undergoing is one of the deepest crises ever existed. „When crises acquire worldwide dimensions, as it is often the case with the worst ones, their end depends on the possibility that the international reaction should be characterized by cooperation or conflict. In this case there are so many things at stake. If they are not given much attention, crises will bring about huge losses, wiping out industries from the face of the earth, destroying wealth, leading to massive dismissals of employees and overloading the administrative department with heavy taxes. But it's even worse than that. Crises overthrew governments and bankrupted nations; they forced countries to apply the *lex talionis* and get involved in commercial wars. Sometimes crises paved the way to armed conflicts, in the same way The Great Depression prepared the ground for the Second World War. We are not allowed to ignore crises.“ (Roubini and Mihm 2010:36). In this respect, both on a macroeconomical and microeconomical level, the present stage is characterized by all kinds of challenges, unknown things as well as opportunities which should not be overlooked.

A Crisis or growth?

It seems that in every person's life moments of crisis mingle with moments of growth. Is giving birth to a child a moment of crisis? What about weaning? Are puberty, adolescence, looking for a job, marriage, having the first child, all moments of crisis which indicate each person's growing up and development? We can ask ourselves if all these elements in somebody's life are crises or growth stages. It is true that when we undergo them, we feel pain rather than pleasure and disappointment instead of hope, but when all these become simple memories, we understand that they actually were growth stages. We forget all the pain and remember only the beautiful part. „In economic analysis, we start from man and his needs. The evolution of human society is actually the history of a constant growth process, multiplication and diversification of needs and this evolution process interwove with the entire development and progress of society.“ (Bădulescu and Vancea 2011:7)

Similar to man's life, but on a much larger scale, the life of nations and of all mankind carries on. There are many records which prove that difficult economic stages have given birth to spectacular ideas, which turned hardships into opportunities. In 1937, Howard Stephenson wrote a book, *They Sold Themselves*, about people who could easily find a job during the devastating economic crisis in the 1930's. He says that those who were successful in finding a job were „people who didn't have a brother-in-law to hire them to sweep the floors of a warehouse; these people were full of creativity and managed to fill good positions or even started their own business which brought them satisfaction and prosperity.“ (quoted by Roubini, Mihm, 2010:41). In this respect, we have the example of George Washington Carver, who was born into slavery, lived till the age of 10-12 on the cotton plantation of his first master and afterwards worked as a servant in different households. He finished high school after he had been 20 years old, then he took the degree of Bachelor of Science and a master's degree at the Iowa State Agricultural College. The Alabama state built him a national monument because after the cotton crops had been devastated by the cotton beetle, Carver promoted and organized the cultivation of fields with peanuts, sweet potatoes and beet root, helping people in Alabama become rich.

The moments of crisis are difficult especially when you experience them personally. But your whole perspective will change when you see them as growth stages. Here is how, in 2009, a year after he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for economy, Paul Krugman spoke about the Great Depression from the 1930's: „When they think about this topic, most of the economists consider the Great Depression from the 1930's a free tragedy, which they think wasn't necessary.“ (Krugman 2009:7). Mister Krugman continues saying that three or four measures would have been enough and, if they had been adopted in 1929, they would have led the following year to a „kindergarten recession“. Even to this famous economist, the crisis that started in 2008 carries within itself a much deeper anxiety than the one from 1930. Why is it so?

B. Trust or mistrust?

If we remember history well, when states emerged in Europe, people put their hope in the state. The state was the agent or the instrument which would solve all the problems. It was empowered to do justice by the laws it issued and applied. The state was also in charge with education, health and citizens' safety. Whether we refer to the communist or the capitalist state, each of them tried to show its almighty. First, the communist state revealed its real face and the most obvious aspects were the economic incompetence and the leaders' lack of ethics. At the end of the 80's, the European countries, some which underwent violent revolutions while others experienced „velvet“ revolutions, passed from communism to capitalism. In capitalist vision, the role of the state is still very important. In every election campaign, politicians promise to solve all people's problems. Of course, they promise more than they can do or even intend to do. Thanks to mass-media, the public opinion has become more and more aware of the discrepancies between words and facts. It seems that nowadays people trust less and less those who represent the state, no matter who these are or whatever state we refer to. Every day mass-media brings into light many corruption cases or, at best, cases of administrative incompetence. The „almighty“ capitalist or communist state went bankrupt.

Together with the establishment of capitalism, we have witnessed another worshipping, namely to the market. It was said that the market would bring solutions to every problem. „Let the market function and everything will be all right!“, was the idea we've heard from many political and economic decision makers. But lately we have witnessed the market bankruptcy. The instability is so big that we need more and more money to cover at least the critical part of deficits. Disappointed by the state, by the market and by the system, people have started going out in the streets. Last year we saw what happened in London, in New York, in the African states and in Greece, when extremely unhappy people protested and almost all these demonstrations degenerated into acts of violence. Unfortunately, in the first part of this year people from Romania have gone out in the street, too. It seems that their protest does not regard only one aspect, but is caused by dissatisfaction on multiple levels.

Beyond what it can be seen, a collective conscience seems to take shape and this phenomenon is prompted by the modern means of communication. Nowadays, information spreads at a very high speed. We read or listen to the news, but the whole process is much more complex, we take over unconsciously and involuntarily the mentality of those who convey us the information. Here is how the famous psychologist C.G. Jung explains this phenomenon: „Each Roman was surrounded by slaves. The slave and his psychology invaded ancient Italy and every Roman became in his own self a slave, without even noticing it. Because Romans lived on a constant basis in a slave context, they were unconsciously infected with their psychology. No one could avoid such an influence.“ (C.G. Jung 1928:135). C.G. Jung's diagnosis is also valid for our society. Dissatisfaction as well as a negative vote is rather a rule than an exception.

If we come back to the economic field, in our opinion in this period of time the nations' leaders, especially those involved in the economic sphere, have adopted an anti-panic management strategy. Therefore, they speak of debt guarantee funds in order to „settle down markets“. They also speak of a „negative economic growth“, instead of an „economic decrease“, so different communications strategies are set up rather than some practical recovery measures. In this context, we wonder how big will be our losses in reestablishing a proper balance? And our second question is how big will be the invoice or the share each of us will have to pay for? Will this generation try to pay the bill or will it condemn the next generation to cover its cost?

II. Globalization and mass-media

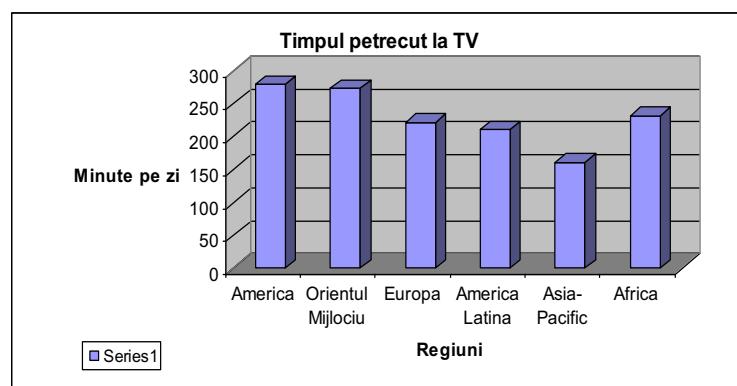
We live in a world which absorbs more and more information. The economic crisis has increased both the amount of information that is supplied and the demand for information. More than that, the flow of messages carries the deep mark of the worldwide area. The interest of the citizens

who live in more developed countries is not limited to the events taking place in their own country, but to all the factors involved in the worldwide stage which have an impact on the entire world's economy. In the same way, the community members of less developed countries have learned from the very first days of the economic crisis that what happens in their countries is the direct result of the worldwide economic situation or, more precisely, of the events taking place in the more developed countries. Thus, we can see the interest of all parties in finding out more and more. Mass-media has proved to be extremely skillful and examined this issue in every possible way. Each news bulletin has received a double amount of space from the time allocated to the economic field. Analysts, economists, politicians, jurists and other specialists have been invited to debates, which turned either violent or peaceful, each debate trying to meet the increased demand for information. In this way, mass-media represents an important tool in the globalization process. „In the last few decades, the world became more and more «globalized». Goods and services trade reached an international dimension and this is also the case with migration of work and spreading of information. Globalization went hand in hand with technological progress, each supporting the other.“ (Roubini and Mihm 2010:498) As Roubini suggests, on the overall the main feature of globalization is the continuous flow of information, propagated all over the world by media industry at a very high speed. The development of the communication system had a huge impact on all countries.

A. Mass-media – globalization accelerator

One of the accelerators of globalization is television. This filtering tool and means of broadcasting information on a global level enables social exchanges and also promotes and

outlines behavioral patterns and lifestyles. The impact of movies on viewers is not limited to the time spent in front of the TV set, but extends to the values which are presented, taken over and eventually adopted. Mediafax quotes from a research made by Eurodata TV Worldwide, which shows that the inhabitants of the earth spent in 2009 an average of three hours and 12 minutes daily in front of their TV set,



Source: Mediafax

which indicates an increase of 3 minutes compared to 2008.

„Therefore, this research shows that as a result of recession people haven't changed their behavior towards their use of mass-media. As far as a region analysis is concerned, the North America consumers spend the longest time in front of their TV sets, with an average of four hours and 40 minutes daily, followed by those from Middle East, who, on the average, watch TV four hours and 34 minutes daily and by those from Europe, who watch TV programs three hours and 42 minutes. In Latin America, a normal consumer watches TV around three hours and 30 minutes daily, while those from Asia-Pacific region spend around two hours and 41 minutes in front of their TV sets. Africa is the only region where the average time spent by consumers in front of their TV sets hasn't increased, but remained constant to three hours and 52 minutes.“ (Mediafax)

B. The dark side of modern systems of communication

It seems that television remains one of the most enjoyed sources of information for the postmodern man. Nowadays man's life without a TV set is unconceivable, even if many things have been said or written about the dark side of the television impact. In almost every home, the

TV set, whether it is bigger or smaller, expensive or cheap, represents a props element of the living room and sometimes of the bedroom.

As a globalization tool, the internet skips some of the underdeveloped regions, overlooking the population from the poorest areas of the earth which, out of economic reasons, doesn't have access to internet. Even if internet represents an efficient means of communication and information, its participants being able to exchange messages quickly in spite of the huge distances between them, it can have negative connotations. Especially for children, internet is time and resource consuming. In our globalized world, internet tends to become a life pattern changing tool.

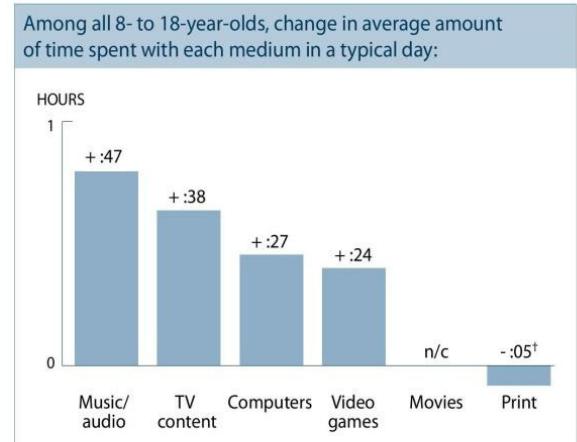
A research on the behavior of 8 to 18 years old mass-media consumers, initiated by Kaiser Family Foundation and published in 2010, shows that the time children spend in interaction with mass-media is gradually growing. (Kaiser Family Foundation)

According to this research, children spend 7 hours and half daily interacting with mass-media. In 10 years, we notice an increase in mass-media use to 79 minutes daily. This research also shows that a portion of time children are connected to several media channels and, if we sum up all the hours, we come to an average use of mass-media services of 10 hours and 45 minutes per day. So, in 10 years we have an increase in mass-media use of 3 hours and 15 minutes daily.

Media Use Over Time

	2009	2004	1999
TV content	4:29 ^a	3:51 ^b	3:47 ^b
Music/audio	2:31 ^a	1:44 ^b	1:48 ^b
Computer	1:29 ^a	1:02 ^b	:27 ^c
Video games	1:13 ^a	:49 ^b	:26 ^c
Print	:38 ^a	:43 ^{ab}	:43 ^b
Movies	:25 ^a	:25 ^{ab}	:18 ^b
TOTAL MEDIA EXPOSURE	10:45 ^a	8:33 ^b	7:29 ^c
Multitasking proportion	29% ^a	26% ^a	16% ^b
TOTAL MEDIA USE	7:38 ^a	6:21 ^b	6:19 ^b

Changes in Media Use, 2004–2009



^tNot statistically significant. See Appendix B for a summary of key changes in question wording and structure over time.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

If we study the behavior associated to mass-media use during 2004-2009, we notice an increase in the average amount of time spent daily as follows: music-audio 47 minutes, TV 38 minutes, computer 27 minutes and video games 24 minutes. In 2009, there was a decrease of printed materials. It seems this was only the beginning, because after 2009 we witnessed an accelerated decrease in printed media product use.

But the biggest difference in TV watching is that nowadays 8 to 18 year-olds, on the average, watch daily around one hour (56 minutes) of TV content and movies on other platforms, too, including internet (24 minutes), cell phones (15 minutes) and iPods (16 minutes).

Talking and Texting on a Cell Phone

Among 8- to 18-year-olds, time spent in a typical day using a cell phone for:												
Among all	AGE			GENDER		RACE/ETHNICITY			PARENTS' EDUCATION			
	8-10	11-14	15-18	Boy	Girl	White	Black	Hispanic	HS or Less	Some College	College +	
Talking	:33	:10 ^a	:36 ^b	:43 ^b	:28 ^a	:38 ^b	:25 ^a	:46 ^b	:37 ^b	:35 ^{ab}	:41 ^a	:28 ^b
Texting [†]	1:35	~	1:13 ^a	1:51 ^b	1:14 ^a	1:58 ^b	1:22 ^a	2:03 ^b	1:42 ^{ab}	1:40 ^{ab}	1:56 ^a	1:21 ^b

Note: Statistical significance should be read across rows, by section.

[†] Among 7th–12th graders only.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Concerning the use of cell phones, the research indicates an obvious tendency in using this terminal more for texting than for talking. Only one third of the time the cell phone is used classically, two thirds being used for written communication.

Time Spent with Cell Phone Media, by Demographic

Among 8- to 18-year-olds, time spent in a typical day using a cell phone for:									
Among all	AGE			GENDER		RACE/ETHNICITY			
	8-10	11-14	15-18	Boy	Girl	White	Black	Hispanic	
Listening to music	:17	:08 ^a	:18 ^b	:23 ^b	:16	:18	:08 ^a	:35 ^b	:21 ^c
Playing games	:17	:06 ^a	:18 ^b	:22 ^b	:17	:16	:09 ^a	:29 ^b	:24 ^b
Watching TV	:15	:06 ^a	:15 ^b	:22 ^b	:14	:17	:09 ^a	:23 ^b	:19 ^b
TOTAL CELL PHONE MEDIA	49	:20 ^a	:51 ^b	1:06 ^b	:47	:51	:26 ^a	1:28 ^b	1:04 ^c
Percent who did any of the above	43%	28% ^a	48% ^b	48% ^b	42%	44%	33% ^a	59% ^b	53% ^c

Note: Statistical significance should be read across rows, by section.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Our contemporary society joins the virtual media on a constant basis, which is increasingly accessed from mobile terminals. The cell phone is often used for listening to music, playing games and watching TV. Almost half of its use time, the cell phone is used as an internet access terminal. Coming back to the economic aspect, internet is the medium in which on-line orders and financial transactions are made, being the new human interaction platform. Optimism or skepticism regarding internet doesn't change the reality of on-line expansion in all fields. The use of the internet is vital both for local and worldwide economy.

IV. Conclusions

„Nothing lasts forever, and crises will always come back. But they should not darken our horizon; they should not overshadow permanently our economic existence. If we set up protective dams around our financial system, we will be able to overcome the crises of the coming years. Although high waves will roar against us, we will be protected. But if we don't manage to get ready for inevitable hurricanes – if we deceive ourselves, thinking our obsolete defenses will never be broken – , the danger of future floods will surely lie ahead of us.“ (Roubini and Mihm 2010:460)

In the first part of this study, we tried to show that globalization and present economic crisis also have a positive aspect, emphasizing the opportunity we have to find appropriate solutions to the complex circumstances we are facing. In this process, the first winners are those who overcome crisis successfully and manage globalization skillfully.

In the second part, we tried to demonstrate the link between globalization and mass-media, having in mind the dissemination of the flow of information. The negative aspects are related to the costs regarding time and resources which especially the young generation pays for this modern vice called multimedia. The perspective from which we approached this subject is related to immediate every day reality.

We've got crisis, globalization and mass-media, but what are we doing about them?
„Globalization is a reality, the reality of our times, having positive outcomes, as science

propagation, but also vicious effects, as the lamination of national cultures. Nowadays the idea of refusing or accepting globalization cannot even be raised.“ (Guetta 2000:328) With the help of innovation and transformation, let's look for solutions to develop our abilities, relationships, products, markets and results. We should never forget that the greatest and most impressive changes are often born in times of crisis.

We have got crisis, but can we make an opportunity out of it!?

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