

# Media Reflection of Social Recognition

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**Abstract** - The article deals with issues related to social recognition in global and transnational space. We focus on the issue of solidarity, as a form of recognition that does not have adequate parallel beyond the nation states borders, which is manifested mainly in the environment of transnational economy. We orient ourselves to the articulation of extraterritorial recognition of carriers of social rights for international and transnational level of justice. We point out that the states themselves should strengthen their influence in the global and transnational organizations and the media should equally strengthen its information function and should relevantly inform about happening in the developing parts of the world.

**Index Terms** - informative role of the media, media reflection, social recognition

## 1. Introduction

Concept of recognition originates in Hegel's philosophy, especially in the Phenomenology of Spirit [1]. In this tradition, the recognition represents the ideal reciprocal relation among subjects, in which everybody understands others as equals and, at the same time, as separate from himself. This relationship is considered to be something that constitutes personality. Social status is not necessarily a given reality, but on the contrary, it may be a social construction of misrecognition [2], which different actors do not have to tolerate, and they can turn against it. Recognition is an essential prerequisite for self-realization, development, freedom and autonomy of every individual. A central motive of the issue of recognition seems to be related to the examination of an individual identity creation as an effort to "obtain" mutual recognition from entities, which the individual interacts with in the social environment. Misrecognition is a dynamic counterpart of the recognition, from which social conflicts rise [3]. When analyzing the misrecognition, we start from social tensions and deprivation that result from the misrecognition of normative expectations of individuals, as well as a driving force of the society development. The misrecognition is a phenomenon expansively intervening not only to micro-level of routine inter-human relations, but also markedly manifesting itself especially in the level of socially and culturally defined relationships, while its intensity increases at global and transnational levels that exceed national and local patterns and thus crystallize the concept of misrecognition in all aspects and directions [4]. Mutual relationships emerge on more complex way at global and transnational levels, as opposed to local misrecognition involving the more isolated elements determined by its simpler structure [5]. In the submitted article, on the background of Honneth's recognition theory, we make an attempt to point out the problem of social recognition in the global and transnational contexts and to identify lack of media interest in the issues related to solidarity at the global and transnational levels. In developing countries,

there are some differences in the arrangement of the media in comparison with models of media systems. Media system is directly related to the political order respectively, which is on different levels in each country [6]. Media select from wide range of events on daily basis and pay their attention only to marginal segment of information [7]. At present, raising an agenda and preferring certain information are determined directly by certain interests groups, which enter to the sphere of public communication where the degree of relevance of the topics plays an important role [8]. Following the issue of recognition in the context of globalization and transnational economy, we cannot ignore the ways of presentation and subsequent interpretation of media contents or information from the regions in relation to the processes that ensure their dissemination. Exchange of information under current conditions of global communication is connected with existence of supranational communication conglomerates. Those may be considered key actors in the global system of communication. Although the large communication groups operate on global market, almost all of them are located in North America, Europe, Australia or Japan.

## 2. Articulation of Social Recognition and Transnational Relations

Axel Honneth defines three forms of recognition – love, justice and solidarity [9]. Honneth sees love, the first form of recognition as different kinds of friendship, relationships between parents and children, as well as erotic relationships associated with strong emotions. This form of mutual recognition is particularly relevant for creation of basic individual self-confidence. The second form of recognition, as Honneth states, is a right; he works with an assumption that we understand each other as bearers of certain rights and entitlements. As a result, practical relationship to oneself arises in form of self-respect. Honneth has promoted higher level of morality in the world's politics and he argues in favour of strengthening of human rights [10]. The third form of mutual recognition (solidarity) is being obtained by participating in the activities of the human community and contributing to the way of life. Such a form of mutual recognition results in the practical relationship to oneself in the form of self-esteem, being a type of social evaluation of specific features and capabilities of individuals [11]. In contrast to the environment, in which the second type of mutual recognition (right) rises, this community differs from other social groups by its values and objectives. It is not a universal recognition of a status equal to that of the law, but solidarity with the particular community. Therefore, this type of recognition is not focused on a universal recognition of statuses as in the case of rights, but on solidarity with the

particular community instead. In case of solidarity, as the third form of recognition, the problem is compounded by the fact that solidarity has not sufficient support in the shared values at international level [12]. Similar argues M. Hrubec, who notes that solidarity does not have adequate parallel beyond the nation state borders, namely there are not any sufficiently developed global values that would be the basis for such type of recognition [13]. Unequal valuation of work at transnational level apparently misrecognizes and thus discredits persons, who perform for lower evaluation than they would get in developed countries.

In case we strive for determination of normative requirements of the globally poor people, who are being confronted with social misrecognition, we cannot focus solely on publicly articulated normative goals. People are accustomed to expect that the dissatisfaction will be expressed in way typical for traditional subject of moral and political protests on the West. Western way of public expression of experiences with injustice constitutes an essential role in the struggle for justice, but the sole public expression of dissatisfaction cannot be the essence of importance, even if the suffering of globally poor people becomes publicly manifested. The usage of such indicator keeps us from taking other non-public forms of social insufficiency into account, even if they would deserve our attention. Indeed, this approach retains the typical limitations of the current level of articulation of misrecognition. So-called "Western style" of approach to social insufficiency disregards everyday forms of social injustice that are not publicly noticed. People who live in developing countries formulate their claims through the everyday struggle for survival in basic living conditions and in extreme poverty. It is clear that their conditions do not permit them to show disagreement by means typical for us, i.e. by street demonstrations. Their struggles for recognition are the struggles for water, food, shelter, etc. We witness the effort for redefinition of economic, political and cultural recognition of individual actors and the gradual transition from unipolarism and unilateralism to multilateralism and multipolarism. Individual countries and the whole macro-regions seek the recognition of their own version of modernization, which they do not want to reduce to the western (global) model. The ultimate question of the future of terrestrial civilization will have to deal with the co-existence of diverse modernities, particularly with the social and cultural rights, which are currently unheard and overlooked.

Everyday struggles for recognition must be remembered even if almost no attention is paid to them, while the development of social examination of global order should not be forgotten. An enhancement of current international law is only the first of a whole range of other requirements. A requirement for strengthening of current international law is only the first out of the whole range of other requirements. International legal system contains several progressive elements that would be appropriate to develop in order to contribute to the completion of a cosmopolitan legal system. International legal system includes several progressive elements. One of the most important elements that become

prominent is the extraterritorial recognition. As Hrubec says, "within the frame of Westphalian system of international relations, the concept of extraterritorial recognition was used only in small limited number of cases, which did not affect either bigger number of persons, or the system of international relations" [3]. Extra-territorial recognition allows the transnational regulation of the economy, but, at the same time, it limits capabilities of application of extraterritorial recognition. Transnational corporations enforce their interests and their policy brings loss to the most disadvantaged entities and to the poorest population of the world. We witness two antagonistic processes. On one hand, a rise of global and transnational economic structures (such as the International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, World Bank), and, on the other hand, a global and transnational social criticism starting to rise. People rebel against the negative impacts brought into many countries by various kinds of liberalization, ordered as a part of structural assimilation programs. Negative impact of these measures on the most vulnerable part of the world's population is a crucial argument in discussions about a regulation of transnational corporations and international financial institutions. Nation states have lost their original influence, while corporations and international financial institutions have strengthened their influence significantly. Globalization has eliminated the ability of states to cumulate profits in poor countries, transferring them towards transnational corporations. Iris Young [14] discusses this situation by an argument, in which a model of responsibility based on social relationships says, according to her, that the actors are responsible for the structural injustice, as they take part in processes leading to injustice which results from their actions. Neither criticism nor description of recent global order is developed enough to lead to normative excusing of a global state, thus its normativity is questionable.

### **3. Possibilities of the Media in the Public Articulation of Social Recognition**

Political system of the country and its economic level form the basic conditions for the existence of the media system and define their status in it. At present, we witness "transnational concentration" and "multimedia concentration". The consequence of these processes is that the media industry is more and more influenced by a small group of owners who make all the important decisions. This fact refers to the existence of opinion monopolization presented by dominant transnational media conglomerates operating on particular national and international markets [15]. The media should aim their activities mainly at matters of public interest [16]. At the same time, they function as organizations, whose primary concern is to generate profit and to export their products. The current global information flows are controlled by a small group of news-making subjects. Dominant position in international news-making conglomerates is held by Western Europe and North America. Since these areas of the world control majority of international information flows, their influence can affect the dissemination of the values and perspectives for creation of opinions on the world events. The

global broadcasting organizations become a major source of news from developing countries, and the impact of their news broadcasting is massive [17]. Globalization trends, transnational actions of media companies and concentration of information sources influence the selection of topics and ways of their visual presentation [18]. The concept of social responsibility of the media may be applied especially in the conditions, where the management or the owners of a media company respectively need not to deal with issues of financial security. Such a company is usually financially stable and its typical feature is high level of journalistic professionalism of its staff. Thus in the cultural and historical context of Europe [19] we can perceive the social responsibility as a tool that leads to increase of competitiveness towards other companies and the recipient perceives it as an added value, a sign of distinction from other subjects on the market.

Environment of developing countries does not offer such conditions; therefore the application of corporate social responsibility by domestic media cannot be fully realized [20]. But we remind, in several parts of this article, that the global flow of information (also information from developing countries) is, in most cases, provided by corporations that are situated in Western Europe or North America. Localization and geo-political background predestinate these corporations to take into account the interests of various influential groups (which include, *inter alia*, the public, the audience and the object) while producing and distributing the media contents. Forms of recognition of individuals, who function as the social base of developing countries, however, are not typically a part of the thematic agenda of global media corporations. The companies have to bring to attention serious up-to-date issues, respect the public's right to the truthful information, respect human rights of every human, guard democracy, not propagate aggressive wars, violence and aggressiveness or any form of discrimination and intolerance, provide space for publication of ideas. The current setting of communication channels and variety of information sources wipe away the space-time boundaries [21]. An active recipient is able to get information about course of events in developing countries, but habituation and trivialization caused by long-term influence of the media makes the question of solidarity related to the population in developing countries seem irrelevant. A possibility to obtain information is a privilege and right of an individual, but to change a status of the subject of our study on the basis of the found information is not in separate competence of the individual. Modern world is interconnected and time and space proximity have ceased to be indicators of ethical seriousness. Our thinking must be at least partly based on a sense of responsibility for others and awareness that people are responsible for the good of others and they participate in the same commitment to each other – that they will behave with dignity and respect. Critical approach to consequences of globalization and transnational overlap of various subsystems of societies opens the way to moral and ethical catharsis of the media.

#### 4. Conclusion

Struggle for social economic recognition presents fulfilment of basic needs for survival [22]. States should put more emphasis on its influence in transnational organizations and thereby positively regulate the extraterritorial activities of global and transnational economic actors, who should bear legal responsibility for their activities, so it could be possible to achieve the development of application of international standards of social justice. Between financial subjects on one hand and the home states (subjects to the international law standards) on the other hand, there should be legal relationship anchoring the corporations' liability for their transnational activities that would support the extraterritorial recognition of individuals and social groups in order to eliminate their damaging and misrecognition. Inability of states to implement such regulation constitutes the basis for motivation of misrecognized individuals and groups to create transnational mechanisms that would ensure social justice in a regional and global scale. From the functionalist and normative approach to studying the media, such conceptions should be enhanced to offer a media reflection of the situation in developing countries. The media would thus strengthen their information function and should relevantly inform about events happening in those parts of the world, where many of the world's commodities are produced, such as cotton, coffee, salt, or fruit, while these countries belong globally to the poorest. However, economic intentions of the transnational corporations will be probably a limit in this process.

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