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STRUCTURAL CHANGES OF THE MASS MEDIA AND IT'S IMPACT
ON THE ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA

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Keywords: mass media, democracy, elections, United States of America, social media

Summary

The present research is an attempt to map an evolution model regarding the transformation of the mass media¹ in the last decades, which led to the form we know at the beginning of the third decade of the third millennium. With the evolution of technology and media communication channels, the written and audiovisual media have not only adapted to the new technological conditions, but have folded on the possibilities offered by them in order to expand their communication horizons for the widest possible masses. During this process of change and adaptation, classical media acquired new attributes, but also lost some classic ones. Technology and the advent of the Internet led to the diminishing influence of print media and classical communication channels and opened the door to new opportunities.

The mass media experienced a decline and a revival at the same time, printed newspapers and classic television shows, dedicated to information and information processes, also changed their structure, becoming more versatile and more adapted to the public and the masses targeted by them. The flow of information and the speed of its propagation has accelerated, news and information are no longer the finished product of a technical process of a few days, but have become the basic material of a real-time process. If news about the war in Vietnam, coups in Africa or Latin America, or wildfires in Australia reached the public in democratic states within a few days, the Gulf War became a watchable conflict in real time.

¹ The term designates the sum of modern technical means and instruments for informing and influencing public opinion, such as radio, television, press, Internet etc.; mass media.

The CNN effect/phenomenon² of the last decade of the last century contributed to the evolution of real-time news feeds for the general public who had access to television. Live broadcasts from conflict zones³, such as those from Kuwait, the Gaza Strip, Sri Lanka, Congo or the Western Balkans, have brought wars and their stories closer to people. Live reports from the decks of American aircraft carriers became emblems of the new media, which took advantage of technological developments and expanded the horizon of information to a spectrum that included an ever-increasing number of people.

The development of the Internet, respectively the expansion of the use of personal computers, represented new steps towards changing the mass media and the rules on the basis of which information flows propagated. Slowly but surely, information flows have transformed and become closer to real time, which has also led to a number of positive or negative effects in terms of the quality of information or its usefulness. Live information became a defining element of the new media, and newscasters, broadcasters and reporters were put in the position to provide explanations and warmly describe the events that were unfolding. Accelerating globalization has touched and transformed the media. This transformation becomes more visible and multifaceted with the emergence of social platforms, streaming or web pages, which are dependent on traffic and which rely on a fast and diverse flow of information propagation. Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Reddit, Twitter, etc. represents only the last segment of this evolution. Mass media has become a tool that is not limited to print media or television, but is an almost permanent presence in people's social life. Through this diversification of propagation channels, there was also a phenomenon of deprofessionalization of the mass media and the emergence of some less positive effects from the point of view of evolution, but whose role became a relatively significant one in the economy of political decisions.

² Eytan Gilboa, "The CNN Effect: The Search for a Communication Theory of International Relations", in *Political Communication*, no. 22, 2005, pp. 27-44.

³ Steven Livingston, *Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention*, Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government, Research Paper R-18, June 1997.

The present study aims to analyze and provide a theoretical map of this process and how these developments have contributed to the political and electoral decision-making process at the level of states and the international system. In the last decade, it has become increasingly clear that the mass media and the metamorphoses it has undergone have radically changed not only perceptions, but also political and social attitudes towards everyday developments at the political level and beyond. We can ask ourselves whether these changes represented a step forward or are only an uncontrolled effect of a process of informational globalization, lacking structure and predictability. Of course, here we do not want to discuss the concept of freedoms and rights, but simply want to analyze the evolutionary framework of a global process, which has led to certain difficulties in the evaluation and running of some political and electoral decision-making processes, with effects on the processes international decision-making.

From this perspective, we will study some significant elements of this media transformation process and try to provide a picture of these metamorphoses from the perspective of the impact on the political and electoral processes of our days. These elements include:

- a. What were the main pillars in the evolution of mass media that led to the current changes
- b. How relevant and significant are these changes from the perspective of political and electoral decision-making processes.
- c. What are the benefits and what are the negative effects of this process of media metamorphosis on international politics and electoral processes.

These questions, which form the basis of the analysis of this study, have their relevance not only in specialized studies, which address the issue of mass media and its transformations in recent decades, but also in personal and professional curiosity, which wants to provide some answers to developments in this field and provide a study tool for understanding these changes. On the other hand, we can see that both the general public

and the academic environment are interested in this phenomenon, a fact proven by the appearance of several studies on the developments inside the media world, which try to provide often punctual and less systemic answers , or through perspective analyzes of the mechanisms of globalization and the creation of the informational world and new information flows. Mass media often becomes a subject of analysis, where more attempts are made to emphasize specific dimensions of the evolutionary process, but the general and social context that led to these changes is often ignored. Of course, here we must be cautious and not venture too easily into the world of global interconnections and their effects on society and implicitly on information channels, we must look and analyze contextually and on the basis of legitimate process studies relevant to the subject .

To exemplify this correct analysis mechanism, we need only think of the multitude of biased studies that have often interpreted the social and information world evolution in a light that served relatively harmful purposes. Mass media has become the subject and object of discussions related to professional degradation or the dilution of its importance from the perspective of the process of correctly informing the general public regarding current and past events. False information, pseudo journalism, unprofessional communication, inappropriate language or adapting messages and information to the widest possible spectrum of people have led to a not necessarily beneficial change for the global media. Discrediting or self-discrediting has also played a significant role in the perception of the media and the information it provides, with the public becoming suspicious of traditional channels. In this framework, parallel and alternative channels of information have appeared, they are often managed by people who do not have the necessary training from a journalistic and communication perspective, and often their prejudices generate antipathy towards traditional channels that do not call on pseudo-expertise their. The present study wants to analyze these changes at the mass media level and wants to provide a comprehensive mechanism for analyzing this phenomenon.

In the present study, the problems already stated will be addressed, where the comparative analysis will allow the elaboration of a virtual map on the phenomenon of

"metamorphosis of the mass media", starting from the definition of its classical character and that of the 21st century. One of the chapters will focus on defining the character and communication structure of the classical media (television, radio, print media) and will try to identify the processes that led to a change in these structures, respectively the main attributes lost and gained by the media 21st century. On the other hand, the study will also focus on an analysis of the evolution of contemporary international society, especially the problems and opportunities surrounding the process of technologization and globalization, which have enabled the evolution and change of mass media. Globalization itself has played an important role in the evolution of mass media, by bringing local communities closer together and transforming local issues into global ones and global ones into local ones, through the flow of information and through the creation of links between various geographical areas, which have allowed the evolution of empathy and rapprochement processes between different groups of people. The media of our century is also about people and not only about the flow of information, and from this perspective, the case study will address the connection between today's media and the electoral processes that underlie the political processes that define domestic and foreign policies in states democratic. But in order to narrow the spectrum of analysis, the present study will refer in particular to the electoral process in the United States of America and its effects on post-election political decision-making processes.

The case of the United States is a significant one not only from the perspective of the controversies and the role of the media in the electoral process itself, which propelled Donald Trump to the position of president of the Republic, but also from the perspective of the mechanisms through which politicians modified and used mass media to transform or distort public perception on domestic and foreign policy issues in order to maintain political power and set a public agenda. We can say with certainty that, in the last decades, the mass media has had a significant effect in shaping national and international public agendas based on currents of support or resistance built eminently through mass communication channels.

