

S.E.E.M.O - CONFERENCE
MINORITIES AND THE MEDIA IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE
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MINORITIES - A CHALLENGE FOR THE MEDIA
General Remarks

1. Understanding Minorities:

Minorities are social and discursive constructions of the majority-society, based on the experience of (any) difference, in order to establish a unified social identity. Identity building needs borders, symbols and symbols of border. As identity-building is a discursive and communicative process, it always happens in connection with power, use of power and forcing through the power's interest.

2. Minorities as a Factor of Integration:

Minorities are a challenge for majorities to reflect their social, ethnic, cultural, religious or political sources of national identity, to keep the discourses of identity open, flexible, and in shape of dialogue. In that sense minorities have a function of a catalyst of integration.

3. Media as Agencies of Observation:

Society needs self-reflection, as it is done by the media - not only in order to have an authority of control, but also - and more - in order to get in a balanced understanding of itself. In that sense the media is necessarily an agency of the social construction of identity.

4. Minorities and the Media - a special proportion of Responsibility:

As the media AND the minorities are factors of a critical challenge of the (national, cultural, social) identity of societies, they share a special obligation of responsibility of preventing a community from getting self-saturated and self-satisfied on being represented (just) by majorities .

A community develops from differences, which are brought into balance and contact by communication. The sense of communication is not to affirm the same with the same, but to bring different points of view into a project of common construction of reality.

5. Consequences for the Relationship of the Media and Minorities in South Eastern Europe:

- a) All countries in the South-Eastern Europe region are rich on minorities. Therefore this region has a diversified cultural frame of reference for building a multiple concept of identity. Any (political) concept of unification of identity from outside or inside would neglect that diversity as load instead of a resource - and would just affirm stereotypes.

b) There is a political and cultural need of cooperation between minorities and media, in order to communicate the richness of diversity and multiplicity

c) Two models of cooperation:

minorities have to give active attention to be publicly present by media (mass- and net-media),
the media must give an active attention to minorities in order to play their role of discourse agencies,
the politics (media and communication order) must give conditions for both (production, program structure, professional education).

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