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## **Paper**

### **Media literacy vs. Political manipulation as the Conflict resolution „conditio sine qua non“**

#### **Abstract:**

The Europe and the World has become exactly the same today, in 2018, as it was for the former Yugoslavia back in 1990! How has this happened? First – Unity, Brotherhood, Peace, Huge and Fast Development and Second – Populism, Exclusiveness, Nationalism raising and establishment of Chauvinism which led to the point that the Europe and the World is now on the edge of a new, extreme dangerous crisis (war dangerous one) based on the conflict reposed on the above mentioned reasons, just as it was for the former Yugoslavia back in 1990.

The basic hypothesis of this presentation is that media literacy is the basic prerequisite for the establishing of a society of developed democratic consciousness and social justice based on critical thinking or without it, vice versa, media illiteracy which is the case as it has happened above to the society back in 1990 and happening now, as well, in 2018, although in much broader and wider scale – The Earth itself. At the same time, the second hypothesis appeared as a logical sequence from the title and refers to the political manipulation of a subjects of political pluralism - precisely based on insufficient media literacy within the society itself. The third hypothesis also applies to the professionalism (having in mind ethics as well) of the intermediaries themselves, journalists and media professionals, the specific personality that exists between the public and the source of an adequate information. The mesh and mutual conditionality of the given hypothesis has also assumed the realization of scientific paper based on which conclusions were drawn that shapes this paper presentation as well.

Keywords: media literacy, conflict resolution, ethics, crises, journalism, society

## **Introduction**

What is the knowledge within the world of developed society?

What does it mean for us to be aware that every 11 hours the knowledge in the world is doubled?

We are so developed and yet so uncivilized. How it can be? It all depends on how you “read” an understanding of development and civilization.

Especially, if development and civilization means neo-liberalism, and the “exporting” of “my way of thinking-democracy” as it “should exist all around the world” and let the markets to do everything – to liberalize the liberalism. It is amazing that those who were fighting against Mao Zedong’s “flourishing of thousand flowers” are doing nowadays exactly the same thing, but instead of operating with the system of “communism” they are doing it now within the guise of “capitalism”.

But first, let us go back and try to answer the two questions from above.

We are on the edge of solving medical illnesses, such as cancer, thanks to knowledge.

We have astronauts who spend 340 days in space and return home fresh and ready to go further, thanks to knowledge.

But, the main question is a methodological one: How are we using knowledge around the world, really?

The answer is more than painful, but thoughtful:

1. Manipulation – the establishment of bureaucratic societies regardless of ideology and/or race and/or religion, for the benefit of a few, instead of for the benefit of all;
2. Devotion – to the unreality of the money – we all will, at the end be buried in a grave – only on the surface, above ground will we be different, but then who gives a peanut about it;
3. Destruction – connected with Item 1. above, by all means, within creating wars around the world and accusing the locals that they have the exclusive guilt for causing the wars (from Ruanda to Bosnia and towards Syria and on, and on...). Yes, the locals bear some guilt, but only we cannot ignore those from Item 1

above, who are the executioners that have misled the people towards Armageddon.

How can we stop this and make the world to become better place?

It will be very difficult, but possible, for sure.

Through the creation nothing similar to the mastadonian-like institution named the United Nations, which is *contradictio in adiecto* of its own, being incapable to stop any war anywhere in the World. Ups. Sorry, I made a mistake. The correct answer is being capable to make *intermezzo* between the wars with the help of blue helmets.

Through the creation of the World Conscience Society (WCS) Association that will be made of:

a) Media literate scientists of all different kinds of science devoted to mankind's development and sustainability of the World without conflicts;

b) Media literate Intellectuals who have proved themselves (it is easy – just “Google” anybody, nothing is hidden within the today's virtual World information sources) as devoted to mankind's development and sustainability of the World as the conflict resolution;

c) Media literate people who think about common good against the conflict, knowing that only through that kind of devotion we will create individual good as well

And, finely, to start to execute the wishes of many of the great world leaders of the past – the creation of the world of equality, respectability and survival, instead the current World of refugees, death and destruction.

Can we do it? Wrong question. The correct one is: Should we do it? Answer is: We must do it.

Again, why?

For the survival of the mankind and humanity, against those 1% of the people who control the other 99%, and who will not survive either. Are they masochist? They are both: masochist and sadists of the worse kind.

So, why sacrifice 99% for 1%?

Knowledge has an answer.

We just need to use it<sup>1</sup>.

Not to abuse it, as usual.

So, can people, and under what conditions, express their opinions, ideas and attitudes freely? The ability to think nature has given us, or how it is interpreted in a different way - God. I think; therefore I exist<sup>2</sup>. This right and freedom cannot be taken away by us by any authority, even the most rigid totalitarian order. Simply, everyone can think and to shut up. The problem occurs if the thoughts that he/she thinks about - when he wants to tell that to others.

## 1. World as Global Sin: Crippled with populism and „alternative facts“

Although the sentence, “If facts contradict to my theory, the worse for the facts,” has been attributed to the famous German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, within the world of 21st Century we can see a lot of examples of that phrase hidden under the two magic words of “populism” and “alternative facts”.

Europe has been united and nowadays, „thanks“ to unprecedented ignorance of the Brussels leaders within the European Community we have a huge development, and even worse, extreme development of extreme right populist parties and *eo ipso and vice versa* leaders of that kind in Europe – this info is from BBC , London, UK - presented on 10.9.2018 what you see on the presented slide.

Although, they haven't included Croatia and Belgium where we have extremist-populists who are knocking on heaven's door of the Government through the right-wing parties led by nationalists Zlatko Hasanbegović in Croatia and Geert Wilders in Belgium. Moreover, at the borders of EU we have Bosnia and Herzegovina (so call „impossible state“ with 3 nationalistic parties (Parties with the majority within of: Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox) on power for almost 30 years and more than 240 ministries. 2 entities, 1 district and 10 cantons within the country of 3,3 million population) and Serbia, where former radicals now became centrists populists, although *LUPUS PILUM MUTAT NON MENTEM* „A wolf can change his coat but not his character“ which is shown on daily basis. So, populism is also knocking from the outside on the EU doors as the possible new EU member countries.

While in Europe everything is falling apart due to the rising populism of the neo-right parties that have made the foundation of their political program out of the recent massive immigration wave from the Near and Middle East countries, at the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://worldclasscitizenrylabel.com/tag/margaritas-ante-portas>

<sup>2</sup> „Cogito, ergo sum“ - René Descartes (1596-1650)

same time, abroad, in the United States of America there has arisen a new sociological attempt of the creation of “alternative facts” with the appearance of the new US president — whose name I do not want to mention for the reason who knows what might happen even to me (after his spokesman confirmed on 24.1.2017 that his boss, the US president, is a „committed conspiracy theorist“). Also, I disagree with my respectable colleague Prof. Dr Slavoj Zizek’s (with whom I seated, back in 2013 within the International Advisory board of magazine “New Flame” in Zagreb<sup>3</sup>, Croatia) statement given to the New Republic magazine 2 years ago that the US president is a “liberal centrist<sup>4</sup>” because behind, or even more, on the scene we have visible devotions of him being a “neo-liberal populist”.

I am really afraid that regardless of having already survived one war (back in ’90s of the 20th Century during the dissolution of former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – in Bosnia and Herzegovina) that now the word “truth” has lost its meaning, and is being faced with adaptable and vivid “alternative facts” within the creation of the new recreational political establishment whose goal is to continue making totally “blind” those who are living within the reality of being already slightly-blinded people of the Earth.

The attacks on the mainstream media, coupled with a lack of media literacy within the wider areas of population, along with the information that eight people hold 50% of the world’s wealth<sup>5</sup> as stated by The Guardian back in January 2017 and has more money than 3.6 billion people of our planet, all simply shows that we are faced with an abyss that is just one step in front of us, while, in the same time, behind us we just have lost hope.

What is the solution for the World as Global Sin in this moment of living for all of us, and, above all, for the future generation, if there will be any?

Before answering that question, an aside to note that we might be soon faced with the plot of possible election hacking in Europe by Russian hackers, as US intelligence service have warned their allies<sup>6</sup> in Europe this January 2018. However, having on one side a new president who is really a New World Order leader, a populist and a person devoted to alternative facts (and who does not hide that a “lie” for him is just a tool within his agenda of gaining a new “truth” of the World), and on the other side we have a deeply and destructively divided

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<sup>3</sup> <http://sabihadzi.weebly.com/novi-plamen-13122013.html>

<sup>44</sup> [https://newrepublic.com/minutes/134505/slavoj-zizeks-take-donald-trump-zizek-y?utm\\_content=buffer0f7a&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://newrepublic.com/minutes/134505/slavoj-zizeks-take-donald-trump-zizek-y?utm_content=buffer0f7a&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jan/16/worlds-eight-richest-people-have-same-wealth-as-poorest-50>

<sup>6</sup> <https://euobserver.com/foreign/136474>

intellectual power of the World, we can just hope and try to shake up this new status quo by the following:

1. 2019 might be a new light for the World – only if liberal, conscious and open and free-minded people of all ethnicities, race and/or gender and/or age, using, above all, Media literacy rise up and establish a new conscious of the World, respecting the differences among us as our advantages for the benefit of all.
2. The goal is the survival of the World, but not for the benefit of a few.
3. The tool for that is our consciousness in connection with the ultimate objective that we are humans in the first place, and after that everything else.

Although, the loss of consciousness is simply connected with consumerism, neo-liberalism, must have it that everyday society within which the using of new technologies does not exist, as mentioned, for the benefit of all, but for the benefit of the few. The introduction of robots working instead of people creates new unemployed, instead of creating a society within which less work will be more devoted for more inspirational creation of other skills, that is focused on our own social development through knowing more about other cultures and by the creation of more cultural competencies for the benefit of the masses.

Is that a new vision of devil word of “socialism”?

No, and my opinion is that we have to establish a new word that will suck into its meaning the full and devoted respect for others who are different from us, and establish a World of mutual trust and joint work that is devoted to the creation of an education system that will be devoted to skills and critical thinking – through the communicating of hope and trust in our time, as Pope Francis<sup>7</sup> underlined on January 24, 2017 and we keep forgetting, again and again...quote „*I wish to address this message to all those who, whether in their professional work or personal relationships, are like that mill, daily “grinding out” information with the aim of providing rich fare for those with whom they communicate. I would like to encourage everyone to engage in constructive forms of communication that reject prejudice towards others and foster a culture of encounter, helping all of us to view the world around us with realism and trust.* “ ...end of quote.

Furthermore, being faced with terrorism we have to stress that when we say “Muslim terrorism” and/or “Islamic terrorism”<sup>8</sup> we have to understand that those terrorists are not Muslims at all and they do not belong to the Islamic religion. No, this terrorists are simply the trash of the humanity, because terrorism has no

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<sup>7</sup> <https://zenit.org/articles/pope-francis-message-for-51st-world-day-of-communications/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.daily-sun.com/post/200261/Islam-and-terrorism-are-not-same>

religion, and the same goes for even those who committed extremist acts supposedly on behalf Christianity<sup>9</sup>, hiding behind so-called “white supremacy” and/or defending a faith, even in the USA, or as we have seen recently in Poland just a year ago, having a request for the “White Europe” by 60.000 nationalist demonstrators, as reported by The Guardian<sup>10</sup> on 12.11.2017.

So, is the religion an answer? What is needed is not just a proper, joint and open discussion of the religious leaders of the leading religion of the world, but also an open and fair talk about the real issues for the world’s survival within conflict resolution.

Let us call this new word *SOCIO-ALTERNATIVISM*, because, believe it or not, if do not start talking and talking and talking about the alternative solutions to our problems, we will be faced with the further development of the World as Global Sin – regardless of our race, ethnicity, gender and/or religion. Simply put, the first part of the word is related to society in general, focusing on a hypothesis of a society of developed democratic consciousness and social justice based on critical thinking under the media literacy education, while the second part shows that we have to seek for alternatives, as the current societies in the World cannot show us the light at the end of tunnel.

Having in mind that, as mentioned above, the new US president is a conspiracy theorist ... will the lies of conspiracy theories become the alternative facts of the New World Order?

The answer is within the consciousness of all of us. We have to start working on a Brand New World Order of socio-alternativism for the conflict resolution as well. For the benefit of all, through the interactions, integrations and innovations of the souls within and around all societies of the World.

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## *2. Media Literacy: Information blizzard pros political manipulation*

Theoreticians<sup>11</sup> from different scientific disciplines (politology, sociology, communicology) recently conducted an analytical observation of the different processes exactly within the aspects of political manipulation which are a joint

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.alternet.org/tea-party-and-right/10-worst-terror-attacks-extreme-christians-and-far-right-white-men>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/12/white-europe-60000-nationalists-march-on-polands-independence-day>

<sup>11</sup> . Lea Tajić “Media Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, 2013, Publisher INTERNEWS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA („MEDIJSKA PISMENOST U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI“, 2013.g. , Izdavač INTERNEWS U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI), Street Hamdije Kreševljakovića 50, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, [www.internews.ba](http://www.internews.ba)

denominator of the fragmented cultural, social and political area of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>12</sup>. However, as stated (Lea Tajić, 2013) *media literacy still belongs, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the pioneer category of the research efforts*.

Every day there is a bigger risk that the citizens will, within the time of effusive offer of media contents, be lost in the “information blizzard”. Paradoxically this is, but true, that the possibilities of the manipulation and allurements has increased parallel with number of media and strengthening of their mutual competitions. Being thought with a few bad (mainly manipulation within the preparation of war interventions) examples, the public reacts in decreasing the general trust into the media. Those are, for the science, known reasons with which has been explained the support of the citizens, and which they gave for the establishment either regulations or self-regulations which has, for the goal, the increase of the media’s responsibility and journalists – for the public word.

Within the field of public politics, the described mood of the citizens did not stay without echo. Many European states have destined to provide their own contribution for the strengthening of the Bodies that will create codex’s of the professional ethics (Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, Cyprus...). They have initiated creation of the Press Council<sup>13</sup> (or Media Council) ensuring for them the premises and funding’s for the beginning of the work.

After that, they leave to those bodies to take care about the responsibility for public word of the media and journalists without interfering into their work. In other examples, and especially when in question are codex’s and editorial

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<sup>12</sup> Info: <http://www.media.ba/bs/publication/medijska-pismenost-i-civilno-drustvo>

<sup>13</sup> Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina: <http://english.vzs.ba/>: “The Self-regulatory Body for Print and Online Media – MEDIATES between unsatisfied media readers, and print and online media; SUPERVISES the application of the BH Press Code; IMPROVES professional standards in print and online media of Bosnia-Herzegovina; PROTECTS THE PUBLIC from unprofessional and manipulative journalistic reporting; PROTECTS THE MEDIA from political, economical or any other pressures that jeopardize freedom of informing and freedom of media;

**Vision** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- To be recognized by the BH public as an expression of good will of the media industry to apply self-regulatory system in the print and online media, adhering to the Press Code in everyday work of the print and online media journalists <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- To be recognized by the public as an expression of readiness of the print and online media industry to fully protect citizens from the irresponsible print and online media and unethical and unprofessional journalistic reporting

**Mission** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- Improvement of ethical and professional standards in the print and online media, by supervising the application of the Press Code, and by permanent education of journalists and the public about necessities to respect freedom of expression and responsible, professional reporting <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- Sustainable Press Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina as self-regulatory body for print and online media, recognized by the media industry and the public as a tool for protection of media freedom and professional journalism from political, economic or any other pressures that jeopardize freedom of informing

**Values** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- First self-regulatory body for the print and online media in the Region of Western Balkan and SEE, whose establishment is supported by the BH print and online media industry and journalists’ community <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- Genuine in Bosnia-Herzegovina, registered at the state level <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- Has representatives of the media industry, public and journalists in its bodies <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- Has multiethnic structure <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>- Decisions on the public complaints on unprofessional print and online media reporting, are adopted in accordance with the BH Press Code standards”



guidelines of RTV companies like Public broadcasting service – the representative of the state has their word within the bodies which adopts and bring their own documents. Mainly, indirect presence of the representative of the state ensures through the way of choosing/electing of the members of the independent regulation agencies which monitor the work of electronic media<sup>14</sup>. Finally, aside of strengthening of the self-regulations, the state, in case of the need, which is allowed in democratic society, intervene also by its legislative activity. At the same time, the state creates legal norms through which “covers” appearances which has been overlooked by codex’s of professional ethics, or which one has not been overlooked, or which one is not approbates.

Media literacy<sup>15</sup>, if it is, in an appropriate way entered the society, through suitable and adequate educational process, can be a help in the defining of the possibility of the development of society of immediate democratic consciousness, by creating open minded and critical thinking of the population in general.

However, there is one more thing which we cannot avoid at all, when we are talking about the truth within one society, regardless about which ideological array it is about. Namely, Martin Luther<sup>16</sup> sealed off the end of visual culture of the metaphysical era, in which the people have not been reminded on divine order through the listening of Latin articles but through the watching of the painted biblical messages with the saying: “Christ’s kingdom is the kingdom of listening, and not the kingdom of watching.” But, the speculator of today, who, under the impression of slashing universalism of its culture, proclaimed and founded revisualization of the communication culture as the promise of the future, was the Hungarian artist Bela Balasz<sup>17</sup>.

He underlined the visual as the new truth, and it is visible that we have anesthesia of the social order as domination of visual in comparison with what is in written and/or spoken word. Today, 90 % of information that goes towards our brain is visual<sup>18</sup> and we are getting to the social media that encircles visualization with written and spoken word within virtual reality. Sometimes we really do need to ask ourselves the question: Is our real world really the real world or is it within a virtual online world?

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<sup>14</sup> The right of the State to, within national borders, issue the license for work up to now nobody denies.

<sup>15</sup> Of course that I recommend, for the start: “corner stone”, ŠKOLEGIJUM: <http://www.skolegijum.ba/>; Editor in chief Prof. Dr. Nenad Veličković from Sarajevo, BiH – magazine that works on “literacy” of the public within the “empty shell” within educational politics on the all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless if we are talking about “Bosnian Muslims-Bosniaks” schooling; “Croat” schooling and/or “Serb” schooling system.

<sup>16</sup> Book “Media Democracy: How the media colonized politics”, author Thomas Meyer together with Lew Hinchman, Publisher Polity Press, 2002, UK, page 57.

<sup>17</sup> Book “Visible Man and Spirit of Film”, 1924-1930, Publisher Berghahn, USA, in Association with Screen, September 2011 – <http://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/BalazsEarly>

<sup>18</sup> <http://blog.wishpond.com/post/70300587846/10-reasons-visual-content-will-dominate-2014>

This study, within the scientific sense, continues and widens possible debate about the role and importance of media literacy within the society, as a basic presumption exactly of the development of the society, and not the creation of the obedient followers who will carry out simple wishes of the principals. Simply, to avoid arbiters/intermediators with the possibility of executing conclusions, on time and based on arguments, for the benefit of the society as the whole<sup>19</sup> within critical observations, thinking and, by all means, through the adequate actions.

### **3. Journalists – possible teachers, being a student in the same time, of media literacy vs. political manipulation**

For the speakers of the public word, primarily for professional journalists, it's a question of what I can and what I can not, not to know, but to publish. Only by this act the journalist's testimony becomes public, and the author's responsibility for the announced word immediately follows that. Ultimately, in all countries, best journalism would be the one in which all journalists could, and should, publish everything they know. However, such a situation rarely came to fruition. Every public speaking messenger who has tried to work in journalism has a certain experience of what he/she knew and what he/she was not able to publish. He/she knows, too, and for which he/she has abandoned the public word - whether he/she was prevented by the force of law and some authority (censorship), or was afraid to take responsibility for the consequences of his/her public word (auto-censorship).

The conflict, the desire to speak publicly and the fear of the consequences of this act or the burden of responsibility derives from the fact that the right to freedom of expression of the thoughts and feelings is the natural human right. It belongs to the corpus of human rights and fundamental freedoms that are aboriginal and fundamental, such as the right for life, for freedom, to have property, to the integrity of a personality ... And, in a healthy sense, such rights have always been considered undeniable. As no one has ever denied that the sun is coming up and going down, so there has been no doubt about the existence of basic human rights. But many conflicts around this notorious fact (sunrise and sunset) came about when the question arises: Why is this happening? Is it because the Earth is turning around the Sun, or *vice versa*. If you have given this question an answer that has

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<sup>19</sup> Sabahudin Hadžialić, Eurasia Review, USA – “World As Global Sin: Intermediaries Lead Dawn To Dusk – Essay (7.11.2016): <http://www.eurasiareview.com/06112016-world-as-global-sin-intermediaries-lead-dawn-to-dusk-essay/>

opposed to the valid "truth" or dogma, you could have been, because of the given public opinion, end up at the bonfire.

#### **4. To trust, or not to...**

Thus, the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms have been discussed, but also opened, a multitude of disputes and dilemmas when asked the question: Under what conditions can they enjoy it and if there are limits beyond which they can not be practiced? Responses to these questions were of importance to the journalistic profession because, their work, it was focused on public insight, ie. public opinion.

The audience in most cases blindly trusts media, ie, journalists, and many "reporters" report on what they heard from others and publish untruthful information. Journalists always must ask: are the facts presented true and how can they interpret them (why something happened, what are the causes and what will be the consequences of it)? The basic rule of journalistic profession requires that the publicly announced facts be objective but permits their interpretation to be different. In the professional jargon of journalism, this is the rule to differently creates presumptions of the creations for the information that are presented, but also differently be responsible for the news and opinion, commentary. And again, as in the past, due to some interpretation of the facts, journalists will be "rewarded" and because of different facts, criticized and even punished.

The media have tremendous power. What it's suppressed or overlooked, as if it did not happen. What they emphasize or repeat, as if it were the most important in our lives. Hence, it is socially and democratically justified to have journalists, due to the proportionately high power they possess, journalists and the media simultaneously undergo greater responsibility.

The Doctrine of Social Responsibility of Media and Journalists starts from the good faith that abuse through public words will not come. It also confirms that the boundaries of media freedom must exist. However, this was not the most important issue regarding the responsibility of journalists in practice, which is: who and how it makes the boundaries of the press freedom, that is, all the media *sui generis*?

When we talk about freedom of criticism, Winston S. Churchill, a British state governor, in an interview with *New Statesman*, the British magazine for Social and Political Issues, issued on January 7, 1939. said<sup>20</sup>: "*Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body; it calls attention to the development of an unhealthy state of things. If it is heeded in time, danger may be averted; if it is suppressed, a fatal distemper may develop.*"

## **5. Above all, moral respect of the laws**

Journalistic independence is not, as stated in the book "*Elements of Journalism*"<sup>21</sup> of the authors: Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentiel, an neutrality. While the words of editors and commentators are not neutral, the source of their credibility is their accuracy, intellectual justice, and the ability to inform them of their attachment to a group or result of the very consequences of their work.

However, professional journalists, those who respect professional ethical standards, must avoid wandering into arrogance, elitism, isolation or nihilism when implementing their own form of independence. At the same time, without integrity, journalism is suspicious and unreliable, and cannot be trusted within its appearance. Integrity gives the reporter the authority to investigate questions, "cast light" on "dark places" and to dig up where others will not. As mentioned earlier, information aimed for the development of a democratic society of different subjects of political pluralism, it is of the utmost importance that a concrete public debate on matters of importance to society is settled based on reliable solid professional journalism.

Professional ethical standards must stimulate moral imagination, recognize behavioral rules in ethical issues, and direct the subjects of political pluralism to work on the development of analytic abilities, as well as work on acquiring the sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility with the expressed tolerance on disagreement, that is, with a simple vocabulary said - it must work on acquiring an ethical condition. Most of all because ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with moral behavior issues. Lawyers and judges tell us that the laws are within the foundation of our civilization. They are not right and that is not true, and here I emphasize that - *The foundations of our culture(s) lie in moral respect*

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<sup>20</sup> Info: <http://www.newstatesman.com/archive/2013/12/british-people-would-rather-go-down-fighting>

<sup>21</sup> „*The Elements of Journalism*“ Bill Kovach & Tom Rosenstiel, Izdavač *Crown publishers*, 2001, USA - Info <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism/elements-journalism/>

*for the laws and that is one of the best tools for the conflict resolution which is gained through media literacy.*

What is the function of the media in the system of professional ethical standards? Mass media are among the most influential companies in a democratic society (especially social networks in XXI century), at the crossroads between citizens and their political, economic and social institutions.

How can we overcome the problems faced by journalism when faced with a situation of overwhelming social networks? Rumor problems, manipulation of disinformation, lies, deception and hypocrisy of politicians who are even ready to change the laws if it suits them personally or in other words - to adapt legislation to their own interests and thus directly or indirectly usurp all the possibilities for forming a deliberative society democracy which may be the only outlet not only for the local areas of South East Europe, but also for the wider, global meaning of that word<sup>22</sup>.

This is something that, when social networks are concerned, also pointed out by the founder of FACEBOOK, Mark Zuckerberg in his status on 19.11.2016<sup>23</sup>: "Bearing in mind that the problem of disinformation and false (fake) news is a technical and philosophical complex, the most important is the discovery of a specific area to handle. In that sense, Facebook is working on a better detection system. "

At the same time, how to be ethical in society, where no matter what political option they belong to, the principle exists "in a society where everybody steals, nobody steals"<sup>24</sup>?

Today, the truth is an integral part of professional ethical standards, honesty (objectivity), impartiality, appropriate relationships with sources of information, respect for persons who are subject to information, elimination of any discrimination and journalist's responsibility.

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<sup>22</sup> Eurasia Review, USA (14.6.2016), author Sabahudin Hadžialić:  
<http://www.eurasiareview.com/14062016-world-as-global-sin-deliberative-democracy-as-the-only-way-out-essay/>

<sup>23</sup> Mark Zuckerberg – FACEBOOK status (19.11.2016):  
<https://www.facebook.com/zuck/posts/10103269806149061>

<sup>24</sup> Prof.dr. Mladen Mirosavljević - „Korupcija kao način života“ (Corruption as a way of living) - Al Jazeera, 19.12.2015: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/korupcija-kao-nacin-zivota>

## **6. Conclusion - Media literacy as „condition sine qua non“ of Conflict resolution**

So, we come to the main issue of today's presentation – what links media literacy and conflict resolution.

Answer is very simple:

**First**, the knowledge based on fostering critical thinking as another key component of media literacy (Buckingham 1998<sup>25</sup>) which will lead towards conflict resolution. However, like media literacy, neither critical thinking, nor its cousin critical autonomy (independent critical thinking) are clear-cut concepts (Ruminski and Hanks 1995<sup>26</sup>; Wright 2002<sup>27</sup>). According to Kurfiss (1988<sup>28</sup>), critical thinking is the result of an approach to teaching and learning that raises questions for class discussion, as opposed to a strict presentation of material. Ediger (2001<sup>29</sup>) defines critical thinking as a learning process that centralizes questioning truth, accuracy, and honesty, which is best achieved through a teacher-centered introduction followed by a student-centered discussion and questioning everything what we see and hear from any of media on one side and on other side, an establishment of the schooling system (from primary and secondary school) which will encircle all positive understandings of other and different one – outcome is conflict resolution.

**Second**, that will create a positive awareness for the future adults that it might be no truth that everything what we hear from our national and/or political and/or social and/or religion leaders. Sometimes, for the need of so call “daily politics” they above mentioned might use semi-truth and/or even lies to support their presumptions and conclusions.

**Third**, media literate person will not be conflictive person and will not play “on the first ball” received from his/her above mentioned leader(s). He/She will first analyses it and then make a conclusion.

**Fourth**, in the second half of the 20th Century, UNESCO (Media Studies in Education, 1977) has raised the issue of education about the way of reading the media. Basing on the idea of the importance that media has within the lives of individuals, families, and the wider community, UNESCO has called for the

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<sup>25</sup> Buckingham, David. 1998. Media education in the UK: Moving beyond protectionism. *Journal of Communication* 48(1): 33-43.

<sup>26</sup> Ruminiski, Henry J., and William E. Hanks. 1995. Critical thinking lacks definition and uniform evaluation criteria. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 50(3): 4-12

<sup>27</sup> Wright, Ian. 2002. Challenging students with the tools of critical thinking. *The Social Studies* 93(6): 257-261.

<sup>28</sup> Kurfiss, Joanne G. 1988. Critical thinking. ASHEERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education

<sup>29</sup> Ediger, Marlow. 2001. Assessing methods of teaching in the school setting. *Education* 122(1):123- 128.

meeting of international scientists to explore ways of involving media education in the education systems of all developed but also of the less developed countries. Since the signing of the Declaration on Media Education (1982) to date, the concept of media literacy or media education has changed, but remained based on the basic idea – communication rights that comes out from the basic human rights that are guaranteed through the documents of the international community, and above all by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UN, 1948) and by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950).

The essence and significance of media literacy is, primarily, reflected in the influence of the media on the major democratic processes. In order for the citizens to participate, in a democratic way, in democratic processes that directly affect their life as well as the life of their family and the wider community, media literacy or knowledge within the above mentioned enables a complete population, and especially younger categories of population to future citizens – to make decisions on understanding of the wider social discourse – political choices, as well as direct participation in the stated, for the benefit of society as a whole.

However, adolescents, young people and adults, but also the oldest citizens often need to be media literate, especially due to the fact that in the age of new media and new technologies, the knowledge that we possess becomes obsolete very quickly and it is certainly necessary to participate in lifelong learning and within the media literacy of all generations of citizens.

The media today influences the shaping of opinions, beliefs and attitudes. Although there are differences in the level of media influence, all researchers involved in the analysis of the media of the *sui generis* agree that the media have a tremendous impact on the society, and thus *eo ipso* on each individual and persons narrow circle. That is why media literacy is so important for conflict resolution. In the moment when we understand the influence of the media, with the help of media literacy, we are on the right path to prevent dependence on the media – *apropos*, to use them as a tool for making judgments and attitudes within the creation of a healthy, educated society of direct democratic consciousness and not the main dish of manipulation on the table of bad individual, or narrow group ones, intentions and interests<sup>30</sup>.

**Fifth**, Media literacy in itself carries two meanings: as the term is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and transmit messages through the media while the essential focus of media literacy is in acquiring complete knowledge of critical and creative skills, knowledge that helps to connect complex ideas, constantly questioning the appearances, trying to identify responses that will satisfy the

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<sup>30</sup> Sabahudin Hadžialić, May, 2018: <http://sabahadzi.weebly.com/poland-may-30-2018.html>

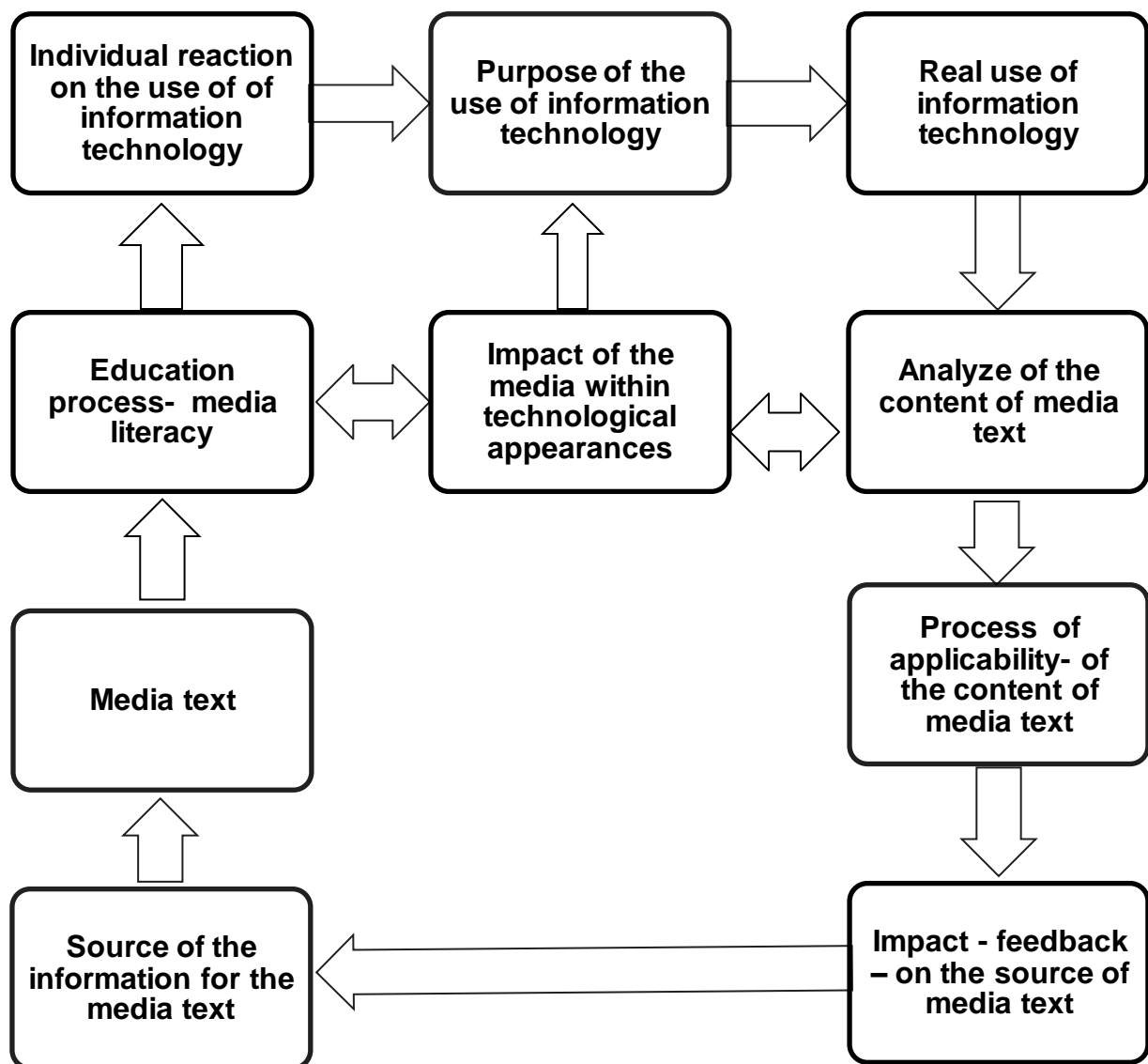
congenital curiosity of each of us, but it also identifies the individual, and also wider, social misconceptions and delusions that might appear as the outcome of the media literacy and lead towards a conflict.

Of course, in the aforementioned case, we focus on the media literacy concept that starts as a positive source of information – the one we are getting from the teachers at schools – directed towards positive manipulation of the formation, maintenance and development of a society of good intentions and interests intertwined for all purposes, not the negative manipulation of the formation, maintenance and development of society (we mainly get from the media channels of all kinds, and especially through social media) the intended orientation of satisfying individual and / or particular minor group and/or party intentions and interests all for one and / or one for all. I am presenting scientific relationship diagram in regards “critical vs. creative thinking about the media and vice versa” and methodology focused on media education and/or education of the media and how to upgrade digital literacy with media literacy by the author in 2018, based on the model of Venkatesh & Devis<sup>31</sup> (2000):

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<sup>31</sup> Venkatesh V. i Davis F.D. (2000), *A Theoretical Extension of the Technology Acceptance Model: Toward a Unified View*, „Miss Quarterly“ No 27.





*Diagram 1. Critical vs. creative thinking and vice versa*

**Sixth**, having media literacy as presumption “conditio sine qua non” for the conflict resolution is the main precondition for the overcoming of all possible obstacles within any kind of conflict, from verbal, over writing and, finally, to physical one. How?

1. Media literate person is capable to understand a position of other and different one and will do anything to find compromise for the benefit of both sides within the conflict.
2. Media literate person will not put on pedestal his truth as the only truth, but as a truth worth questioning and, by doing that, improving for the benefit of himself and the one with which is in any kind of conflict.

3. Media literate person understands his/her own ignorance of other and different one and he/she will do everything to find more about others from independent sources to be able to understand differences and common connections.

**Seventh,** Media literate education inspire the people of all ages by providing opportunities such as communication activities, role plays, empathy building, mediation skills and understanding compassionate action. Those mentioned facts are the specific cures for the conflict resolution as well.

**Eighth,** the constant exposure of populations to different information blizzard presents an educational challenge, which has increased in the electronic and digital age. Evaluating information sources requires skills and critical thinking ... Separating fact from opinion, evaluating text and image for bias, and constructing and deconstructing a text based on principles of logic are teachable skills for the conflict resolution. Media literacy instruction is not widely recognized for its importance as an aspect of civic and peace education and therefore few instructional programs have been developed as part of basic modern education<sup>32</sup>. And by that, avoiding political manipulation as well within the all levels of appearance.

**Ninth -** Why media literacy vs. political manipulation? Because, media literate person will not be easily manipulated by the side of any politician and led towards any kind of conflict. Media literate person will be a clear example how difficult to be manipulated by any kind of spin from politicians and media literate person will help wider population to understand the way how politician manipulate through all different kind of spinning of the information.

**And, finally, the tenth,** the process of solving five steps to conflict resolution<sup>33</sup>:  
**Step 1: Identify the source of the conflict. ; Step 2: Look beyond the incident. ; Step 3: Request solutions. ; Step 4: Identify solutions both disputants can support. and Step 5: Agreement;** cannot be done among media illiterate persons / people / nation(s). We might be able to „swim“ down to the Step 3. of the mentioned, although at that step we will be faced with exclusivity and disrespect towards other and different one.

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<sup>32</sup> United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, *Report of the High-level Group* (New York, United Nations, 2006), p. 26. Available from [www.unaoc.org/resource/alliance-of-civilizations-report-of-the-high-level-group-13-november-2006/](http://www.unaoc.org/resource/alliance-of-civilizations-report-of-the-high-level-group-13-november-2006/).

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.amanet.org/training/articles/the-five-steps-to-conflict-resolution.aspx>

Media literacy empowers people not only to be a focus on being critical observers, but also to be creative producers of the unprecedented number of messages using image, language and sound. Communication technologies transform society, they affect the understanding of ourselves, our community, environment (immediate and extended) and our different cultures, making exactly media literacy very important life skills of XXI century (Hadžialić & Murinska-Gaile, 2017)<sup>34</sup>. Within the conflict resolution as well, above all, using media literacy vs. political manipulation.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://journals.ru.lv/index.php/SIE/article/view/2408/2390>