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Citizenship identity of a person in news media space: Training program

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Introduction. Current political, economic, social challenges which most societies encounter require high media literacy from a person in order to resist negative media effects. Destruction of citizenship identity can be considered as one of hybrid war aims gained through media especially news media. Different types of fake news or perverted facts can undermine essential citizenship related attitudes and lead to destabilization of citizenship identity.

Mass media effects on citizenship identity cannot be overestimated. In situation of receiving doubtful information which can be the result of significantly perverted facts a news media consumer should think over the goals of spreading such information and who can benefit from it especially during war period.

In time of high speed, excess of knowledge and information as well as complicated systems of social relations and social media consciousness of an information consumer is overwhelmed with information so much that some basic skills are required to protect oneself from destructive news media effects taking into consideration lack of time for information check. Consequently, an issue of trust towards news media inevitably arises.

In conditions of low trust towards media in Ukraine priority is to focus on type of trust rather than on level of trust. Extreme distrust towards all media hardly can be considered as successful achievement of media literacy goals.

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Instead of that formation of reason-based trust connected with rational decision-making among news consumers can become a conceptual basis for media literacy trainings development.

Objective. Assumption that optimization of the type of trust towards news media is instrumental in maintenance of citizenship identity of youth in conditions of destructive news media effects implies development of corresponding technology in training form.

Results. The training can be divided into two structural parts covering notions of citizenship identity and news media literacy implying reason-based trust. Media literacy related tasks were taken from a manual “Media Competences for Youth” edited by Katarina Görig developed by Goethe-Institute Ukraine and Schwarzkopf-Stiftung and online course “News literacy” edited by Diana Dutsyk and Dariya Taradai developed by Detector Media.

Media literacy structural part of the training goals:

1. Development of critical usage of mass media.
2. Awareness of “fake news”, its characteristics and purposes.

Task 1. Media identity chart. (“Media Competences for Youth” modified by author). Participants draw a chart of their media identity describing themselves through “I”-statements. For example, “in order to find information I use ...”, “I left (social network)”, “I have profile in (social network)”, “I use (social network) for ...”, “I seek / obtain news in ...”, etc. Personal media identity charts are discussed in small groups to find similarities and differences. Groups present their results.

Task 2. Creating video news (“Media Competences for Youth” modified by author). In small groups participants create video news (interviews, situations, etc.). Each video should include: what happened, who was involved, where did it happen, where did this information come from. Groups decide themselves

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whether their news convey facts or fake information. Videos are presented to other groups and they should substantiate whether they were facts or fake.

Task 3. Brainstorm “How is it possible to uncover fake news?” (“Media Competences for Youth”).

Task 4. Developing strategies to uncover fake news (“Media Competences for Youth” modified by author). In small groups actions for uncovering fake news are generated and listed. The following questions can be used:

What would you do to verify information?

What sources would you rely on? Why?

What information would you share with others?

Results are presented for general discussion.

Task 5. Mini-lecture “News media in Ukraine” (“News literacy” online course <http://video.detector.media/special-projects/novynna-gramotnist-i22>).

Task 6. Practice makes perfect.

Several news are presented some of which are fake (possibly taken from StopFake www.stopfake.org/de/wie-identifiziere-ich-ein-fake/). Participants implement developed strategies to uncover fake in small groups. Results are presented for general discussion.

Task 7. Self-evaluation of news media skepticism (modified and shortened scale of News media skepticism in News media literacy questionnaire developed by A. Maksl, S. Seth and A. Stephanie in 2015). Please reply to the following questions using 5-grade scale with 1 – strongly agree and 5 – strongly disagree.

I trust news media.

I think news media are fair.

I think news media are accurate.

I follow news media.

Results are followed with group discussion among those willing to share.

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Citizenship identity structural part of the training goals:

1. Awareness of personal citizenship identity.
2. Understanding of citizenship identity as a complex structure containing values, attitudes, styles of behavior and behavior in concrete situation of interaction.
3. Development of tolerance towards people with different meaning content of citizenship identity components.
4. Understanding difference between citizenship identity and ethnic identity.
5. Awareness of news media role in constructing / effecting citizenship identity.
6. Awareness of news media role in promoting citizenship behavior.

In general and simplified way we describe citizenship identity through belonging to civic society. Citizenship identity is considered to be a type of social identity co-existing in the system of social identities with others, for example, ethnic, gender, professional identities. A corresponding model of citizenship identity reflecting its structure was developed (Bondarevskaya, 2016).

The proposed model of citizenship identity is shown on Figure 1. It consists meaning content, citizenship activity in which it is revealed and behavior in concrete situation of interaction. Meaning content includes system of citizenship values and citizenship attitudes, while citizenship values lie in the center (the most stable component), citizenship attitudes (more apt to changes) lie in the layer next to the center. Third layer, citizenship activity, is even more apt to changes than the previous ones. The outer layer, behaviour in concrete situation, is the most apt for changes.

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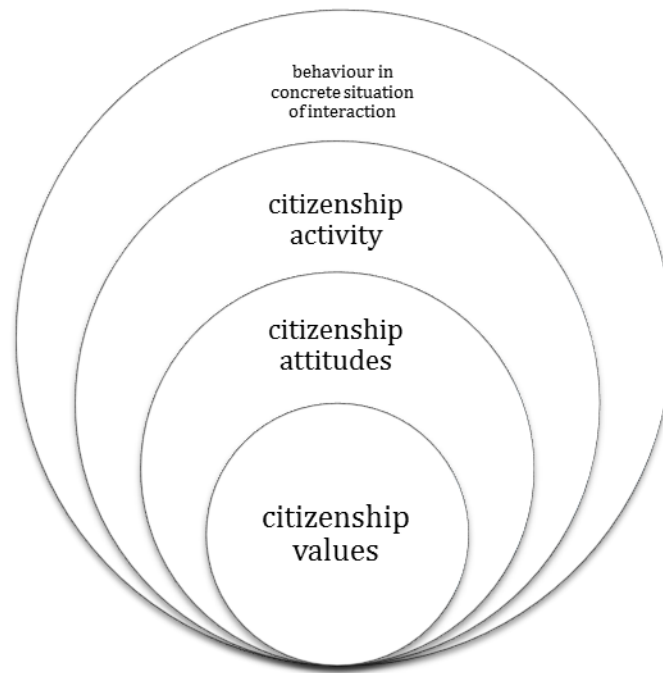


Figure 1. Citizenship identity model.

In accordance to Citizenship identity model (Bondarevskaya, 2016) we designed the part of the training concerning citizenship identity. Through training we can effect citizenship attitudes, citizenship activity and behavior in concrete situation of interaction. Citizenship values are the most stable component in this model and hardly can be changed through training. Selected tasks of the training part devoted to citizenship identity include the following.

Task 1. Please individually draw a chart continuing a phrase “I am a citizen of Ukraine and I ...”. Results are followed with group discussion among those willing to share.

Task 2. Mini-lecture “What “citizenship identity” means” followed by group discussion.

Task 3. In small groups please role-play a situation when one of you is Ukrainian and all others have never been to Ukraine. The group interviews a

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Ukrainian about life in Ukraine, civic society in Ukraine, everything meaningful for Ukrainians. Results are presented to the whole group.

Task 4. Group brainstorming “Name as many ethnic groups living in Ukraine as you know”.

Task 5. In small groups choose a historical event or a hero in Ukrainian history. Describe this event or hero. Reply to the question who can think differently and why. Present results to the whole group.

Task 6. In small groups discuss how you decide what news information to share in social media. Do you check if it is fake news before sharing? Present results.

Task 7. General group brainstorming “How news shape citizenship identity”. Memorize news during Revolution of Dignity, news regarding war in the East of Ukraine. Discussion of results.

Conclusions. In conditions of hybrid wars accompanied by information wars stable citizenship identity can be considered as the main source of state security. Citizenship education is an important tool in formation of citizenship identity as belonging to civic society by showing values, attitudes and behaviour patterns acceptable in current civic society. News media is another powerful tool for citizenship identity formation or destruction. Citizenship education is essential in confronting destructive media effects on citizenship identity. Citizenship education should include media literacy development programs in order to prevent destruction of citizenship identity by mass media.